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Publication Date

2015

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

THE HALFBREED:
A TRANSLATION OF BALDUIN MÖLLHAUSEN'S
DER HALBINDIANER

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

LITERATURE

by

Gabriela A. Gavande

December 2015

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Abstract

Gabriela Gavande

The Halfbreed: A Translation of Balduin Möllhausen's *Der Halbindianer*

This dissertation offers the first translation of Balduin Möllhausen's 1861 narrative *Der Halbindianer* [*The Halfbreed*]. Although Möllhausen is often mentioned in recent scholarship, he is only named in passing or in connection with Alexander von Humboldt, whose protégé he was. The following translation and the accompanying introduction seek to rectify this omission and, further, to add to the body of work striving to replace taxonomies of national origin with a vision of American literature as the product of new cultural and linguistic networks. *The Halfbreed*, which appeared after Humboldt's death, marks Möllhausen's first foray into fiction. The action ranges widely, from Cuba and New Orleans to the upper Missouri, Utah, and California. Published on the eve of the Civil War, the novel "chose a story that displays the prejudices of the Americans against those with darker skin, but also describes and the consequences that result from them." While Möllhausen certainly addresses slavery and the prevailing racial attitudes of the era, the unique feature of the novel is its portrayal of the marriage between the protagonist Joseph, the half-breed, and a young German immigrant girl, Franziska. The best-known nineteenth-century novels that address intermarriage are Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* (1824), Catharine Maria Sedgewick's *Hope Leslie* (1827), and *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish* (or *The Borderers*) by James Fenimore Cooper, first printed in 1829. All three novels

displace the action into early colonial times and portray marriages haunted by the specters of war, abduction, and captivity during which white women are assimilated into Native American culture. *The Halfbreed* was published roughly three decades later, after Indians were removed to the west of the Mississippi, when actual intermarriages were in fact even rarer. The text portrays the union of the educated, Christianized Joseph to the younger, less educated Franziska, which apparently took place in 1852 or 1853, as a harmonious and happy one, marked by peaceful domesticity and mutual acceptance of differences, and ultimately productive of children, thus making the text not only exceptional for its time, but also among Möllhausen's oeuvre.

To my patient and wonderful children,
Gregory and Bianca.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to librarian Frank Gravier for his absolutely invaluable help in obtaining all the books for the project, his kindness and patience, always taking time to meet with me, and helping me when I reached an impasse. Without Frank this project would not have been feasible.

I would like to thank my committee members Loisa Nygaard, Susan Gillman, and Hunter Bivens. Thank you for your patience, for the countless meetings, suggestions, invaluable feedback, and being a true role models for scholarship. Hunter Bivens, thank you for teaching me and letting me observe a brilliant mind that helped me rediscover German literature. I would like to thank Professor Gillman for the encouragement to embark on this project and co-chairing it with Professor Nygaard.

I would like to thank the Literature Department for encouraging intellectual exploration, and Sandra Yates in particular for keeping me on track and promptly answering all my questions.

My deep gratitude goes to the Division of Graduate Studies for awarding me the fellowship that enabled me to finish this dissertation.

I would like to thank my husband Neil for answering endless questions about firearms, traveling to the Amon Carter Museum in Dallas and the Autry Museum in Los Angeles, and accompanying me to a conference. Thank you for everything you have done on a daily basis to keep me writing.

Critical Introduction

One curious result of the scientific, literary, and artistic work of these German followers of Humboldt was that for a time Europeans were more knowledgeable about the trans-Mississippi country, particularly of the peoples who inhabited it, than were the Americans who were so busy conquering and subduing it.

Laura Dassow Walls, *The Passage To Cosmos*

The young adventurer Balduin Möllhausen comes to the United States for the first time on his own initiative in 1849. He remains for two years exploring the Mississippi and Missouri Frontier while making his living as a hunter and trapper. During that time, he meets Duke Paul of Württemberg— independently wealthy and adventurous—, who, like Alexander von Humboldt's, had set out to discover the New World. Möllhausen joins him for what was in the middle of the nineteenth century still considered a rather daring trip from St. Louis to the military outpost Fort Laramie in the Rocky Mountains. They reach their destination on October 5th, 1851. While the initial journey was likely rather uneventful, the misfortune and catastrophes that begin to haunt them on their return journey shapes the young Möllhausen profoundly. They are caught in a snowstorm and the axle of their wagon breaks, forcing them to return to Scotts Bluffs, Nebraska fifty miles from Fort Laramie. Möllhausen falls severely ill and begins to suffer from fever seizures and hallucinations (Graf 77). Perhaps in an attempt to drive out game for the

winter, the Indians set the prairie north of the Platte River on fire, making it impossible to see the horizon. It is impossible to navigate and, and in late October the Duke, too, begins to fall ill. He begins to experience fainting spells as a result of malnourishment and lack of food. Finally, in a tragic-comic episode, the Duke, who is transporting his collection of plants and animals in the wagon, becomes hopelessly stuck in a sandbank in the middle of the Platte River while attempting to ford it. Refusing to abandon his collection in order to save himself, he spends the night in the middle of the river atop his wagon, while Möllhausen camps on the banks. In the morning, a group of Cheyenne warriors circle in on them and demand their supplies, but the fortuitous arrival of the Postal coach drives the belligerent Indians away. They two German explorers are on their way once more, but soon after, one of their horses dies from exhaustion, and they are taken captive by a large band of Cheyenne. Miraculously, they are eventually released. Möllhausen, who had been sketching the natives all along, claims that his book of images held magical power for the natives; the Duke, on the other hand, insists that the Indians simply recognized his authority (Graf 78). While the incident itself was certainly not humorous, and in fact ended might have ended quite differently for the two explorers, yet each man's insistence that he was the reason they were released, speaks to the size of their respective ego. On November third, a red wall of fire indicates that the prairie is burning once more and they are forced to seek refuge on an island in the river;

approximately two weeks later, on November nineteenth, it begins to snow. Another horse perishes, the wind makes pitching a tent impossible, and wolves, which will appear time and time again in Möllhausen's writing begin to circle them ominously. On November twenty fifth, the Duke deserts Möllhausen by securing the last seat on the postal coach passing through for himself. Promising to send help, which never arrives, he leaves his young travel companion behind to fend for himself on the frozen prairie. Möllhausen spends six weeks alone in the wilderness near Sandy Hill Creek. He is gravely ill, and after his provisions dwindle, he survives on Laudanum and Quinine, but death seems imminent. Two Pawnee attack him, and he kills them. In the end, he is rescued by some Otoe Indians, and would later write that he considers that period the most awful time of his life (qtd in Graf 81). In his biographical sketches on Möllhausen's time in North America, Graf goes even further and writes: "*Sechs Woche hungerte er, fror er, und fürchtete sich allein in der winterlichen Einsamkeit. Die Beschreibung dieser Wochen gehört zu den eindrucksvollsten Überlebensberichten der deutschen Literatur.*" (He suffered from hunger, cold, and fear because he was alone in the wintry and desolate environment. The description of these weeks is most certainly one of the most impressive survival narratives of German literature) (81).¹

¹ For an excellent summary see Dinkelacker's chapter "Die Robinsonade auf der

The hardship of the trip left a lasting impression on the young adventurer that echoes through his oeuvre, the expedition also furthered his skills as a topographer and helped him perfect his drawing and sketching skills; he also collected geological and botanical curiosities, and even took charge of a consignment of animals destined for the Berlin Zoo (Taft), Essentially, he became what might be called a naturalist. Upon his return to Berlin, the collection and the lively stories surrounding his journey caught the attention of the aging Alexander von Humboldt (Humboldt famously wrote that he was bitten in the finger by a cheeky raccoon that Möllhausen had brought with him). He became Humboldt's protégé and received valuable recommendations, so that he was recruited as a topographer and reporter in two more journeys. In 1853, Möllhausen left Germany for the United States again, and for a year he traveled across the country to California with an expedition party led by Lieutenant Arniel W. Whipple that was to evaluate the feasibility of the extending the railroad along the 35th parallel to the Pacific Coast. His second expedition in 1857, under Lieutenant Yves, took him up the Colorado River and into the Grand Canyon, where he produced the first sketches of the Grand Canyon.² Yves, by the way, found the Grand Canyon useless—Möllhausen would later write something similar in his appraisal of Bigler Lake in the chapter of the same name in *The Halfbreed*.

² One of the more famous of the sketches, the one of the rather small steamship "Explorer" they navigated up the Colorado River is currently at the Autry Museum in Los Angeles. The sketch shows Native Americans watching in what was probably disbelief. For more on Möllhausen's pictorial record see Taft and Huseman. Incidentally, the Autry also has a large and excellent collection of firearms of the old West.

Altogether then, he spent seven years in the United States in an epoch that witnessed dramatic changes in still the relatively young country. Recording his account of the Whipple and the Yves expeditions respectively, he produced two very popular travel diaries— *Tagebuch einer Reise vom Mississippi nach den Küsten der Südsee* (1858) and *Reisen in die Felsengebirge Nord-Amerikas* (1861).

Der Halbindianer (*The Halfbreed*), which follows here in its first translation, holds a special place among Balduin Möllhausen's fiction. It distinguishes itself by being the author's first foray into fiction and is in a very real sense his apprenticeship work. He self-consciously refused to call it a novel (*Roman*)—a term I will at times use for convenience—and insisted instead on the term narrative (*Erzählung*).³ In fact, he would continue to use the same term for his "novels" for another decade, publishing twelve more works— *Der Flüchtling*, *Der Mayordomo*, *Palmblätter und Schneeflocken*, *Das Mormonenmädchen*, *Reliquien*, *Die Mandanen-Waise*, *Der Meerkönig*, *Nord und Süd*, *Der Hochlandpfeifer*, *Das Hundertguldenblatt*, *Der Piratenlieutenant*, and *Der Kesselflicker*— before publishing what he now referred to as a novel, *Das Finkenhaus*, in 1872. Although *The Halfbreed* was a venture into a new genre for him, the work continues the visual aesthetic of his two travel diaries mentioned above. In fact, Dinckelacker writes that Möllhausen's contemporary critics found that he painted with the paintbrush as well as he did with words, and that he should be compared to George Catlin and James Fenimore Cooper (47).⁴ Here is a

³ For a discussion of this reluctance see Graf's chapter "Roman oder Nicht" in *Abenteuer und Geheimnis*.

⁴ Cooper, too, 'painted' with words. See Nevius's discussion on *Cooper's Landscapes*.

passage from the chapter "The Strait of Panama" that illustrates not only the power of his landscape descriptions quite aptly, but, also how close his style mirrored Humboldt's.

Although it is somewhat long, it deserves to be cited in its entirety:

This small area of land, which was framed like a picture by the most luscious, impenetrable tropical vegetation, was reminiscent of the enchanted gardens in *One Thousand and One Nights*, where everything splendid nature had to offer lies without being used, and where all living beings attracted by so much beauty immediately fall into a deep slumber. No breeze stirred, the heated atmosphere trembled and glimmered, and along with it all objects the eye could capture trembled and glimmered. Dark palm trees let their slender fans hang dreamily; almost as if conscious of their power, there stood blossoming magnolia trees and broad-leafed maple trees. Glossy lianas and other vines wound themselves around the mighty tree trunks, and most gracefully connected the crowns of separate trees with one another. House-high bamboo drove itself shyly between leaves and branches, nestling itself in its attempt to seek protection from the hurricane that might arise at any moment and break it. Powerful leafy greens and ferns, here resting high in the trees, there supporting itself on the black earth, spread their luscious, emarginated and serrated leaves apart fan-like. Among the thousand

shades of green, which evidenced an inexhaustible potency of the earth, shone blossoms, fruits, and flowers in an indescribable splendor of colors. Here some were visible like little stars; there they were prominent, large chalices in rainbow colors. Here, fibrous coconuts ripened half-hidden under the opulent canopy of leaves, and there in the mighty banana tree hung the queen of fruits. Not even a gentle breeze could be felt, yet everything trembled and glimmered visibly in the heated atmosphere. The animals, which had made the landscape come alive so cheerfully in the morning, slept; some in the shade, some in the sun, depending on how much they loved warmth. A bearded monkey and a resplendently colored parrot sat neighborly under a broad leaf. They were immobile, and from time to time their lids drooped over their clear pupils as if they were too heavy, and thus made the two different animals look similar in their shared overwhelming fatigue. Immobile, like a stone heraldic emblem, the great vulture was enthroned on the peak of the highest tree, holding his wings spread to catch the rays of the sun, and only came alive when he closed his wide-open beak once in a while. A black forest snake lay uncoiled on the dusty ground, the gecko on burning rock. The first too lazy to hunt birds, the latter lasciviously breathing in the hot air with a wide-open mouth. The

locusts and the crickets made their chirping racket only once in a while, while the tireless hummingbird, like the busy bees, flew from flower to flower and dipped his tube-like beak deep into the flowers rich with honey.⁵

Finally, It may be noteworthy, and to the best of my knowledge has not been addressed in scholarship yet, that Möllhausen turned to fiction after Humboldt died.

In his introduction to the novel, Möllhausen writes that his aim was to "add an illustration" to his travel works because he felt that there was still material left that he had perhaps overlooked and anyone who will engage with the travel narratives and *The Halfbreed*, will likely agree that they exhibit the same meticulous attention to detail in their vivid descriptions of nature and the American wilderness of the West in particular.

This brief introduction will highlight some issues in the text that will that hopefully will generate a conversation and an impulse for new research.

⁵ In comparison, here is Humboldt's often quoted observation: How vivid is the impression produced by the calm of nature, at noon, in these burning climates! The beasts of the forest retire to the thickets; the birds hide themselves beneath the foliage of the trees, or in the crevices of the rocks. Yet, amid this apparent silence, when we lend an attentive ear to the most feeble sounds transmitted by the air, we hear a dull vibration, a continual murmur, a hum of insects that fill, if we may use the expression, all the lower strata of the air. Nothing is better fitted to make man feel the extent and power of organic life. Myriads of insects creep upon the soil, and flutter round the plants parched by the ardour of the Sun. A confused noise issues from every bush, from the decayed trunks of trees, from the clefts of the rock, and from the ground undermined by the lizards, millepedes, and cecilians. There are so many voices proclaiming to us, that all nature breathes; and that, under a thousand different forms, life is diffused throughout the cracked and dusty soil, as well as in the bosom of the waters, and in the air that circulates around us. (qtd in Helferich n.p.)

The novel is lengthy and a partial summary of the narrative is helpful. A sequence of locations and chronology (if dates or indicators of time were given in the text) is below as well.

The Halfbreed's narrative begins in Cuba, where a meeting between two men takes place. They plot a conspiracy, but the exact details are not revealed. The reader is introduced to the protagonist Joseph, the *Halfbreed*, when he visits his foster father, an old missionary, in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The missionary urges him to travel to New Orleans to find his biological father. Accompanied by the old French Canadian trapper Monsieur Lefèvre, another father figure who assures that Joseph will know of his Indian history, he sets out. They part ways in St. Louis, and Joseph travels to Mississippi alone. In New Orleans he is turned away at the door of his father's plantation by a slave with whom he gets in a scuffle. This is significant because after he arrives back in St. Louis, he is made to believe that he has killed the slave. In St. Louis he also meets the beautiful German girl Franziska's and her father Andree, a former veterinarian. After being accused of aiding a political adversary during the 1848 uprisings, Andree and his family left for America. In a chapter that is rich with meticulously detailed information about mid-nineteenth century St. Louis, Franziska is kidnapped, but Lefèvre, who returns at the eve of the abduction, and Joseph rescue her with the help of a fire brigade. They decide to travel to California together, where they can leave the past behind and be more economically successful. Along the way, they pick up Franziska's brother Robert, a young forester working as a smith's apprentice. The smith's son, Sidney, and an Omaha Indian couple also join the

traveling party. When Joseph is finally reunited with his father in a California mining camp, which allows the plot to be resolved, he has married Franziska.

While the reality of the two expeditions, and hence the travel diaries, was one of geographical limits, Möllhausen's fiction takes the opportunity to not only reinvent geography and borders, but also to skip from one location to the next, while being able to eclipse time. Even though he creates a western, uniquely American sense of place, he breaks with what might otherwise approach the conventions of the typical Western novel by taking readers to Cuba and Panama, and the narrative he crafts in these new parameters is more of a wide-angle panorama than a focused "illustration". The geographical setting of the novel changes almost continuously, perhaps to such an extent that the leaps become confusing at times. Following the translation is a table of the locations of the forty-two chapters. Time is indicated if known.

Chapter one and chapter twenty take place in Havana, Cuba and Panama respectively. In both chapters, which are strategically placed, the reader becomes privy to secret meetings between the men who seek to keep the *Halfbreed* from his father and the large fortune he stands to inherit. In both instances, the chapters draw the reader in, giving him more knowledge about the events to come by granting him a place not to the omniscient narrator, and thus generate empathy for the protagonists. Unlike in a detective novel, for instance, where the reader uncovers the crime bit by bit alongside the characters, *The Halfbreed* provides advance information. In a clever tactical move, and the desire for justice for the protagonists and punishment for the

schemers takes precedence over solving, or wanting to see the plot unravel. The opening chapter in distant Havana, for instance, generates a feeling of heightened significance for the conspiracy and structurally generates the tension needed to read on until the intrigue slowly unravels for the reader. The same is true for the meeting in Panama, which comes after Franziska's has been freed by the fire brigade—a part that is a sort of false climax. The Panama meeting, with its beautiful descriptions of the jungle and its animals, thus gives the reader once again the sense of ominous foreboding, while the characters seem to think they will be leaving all their misfortune behind in St. Louis.

The narrative is, according to Möllhausen's introduction, about race and race relations in the United States, and although slavery has a presence in the text,⁶ my focus here is on the marriage between Joseph and Franziska, whose feelings for one another become stronger after they depart St. Louis for California. The two eventually marry and have children, but both events are textual lacunae—there is neither a wedding, nor any mention of childbirth in the narration.

The union between Joseph and Franziska is portrayed positively, and Möllhausen's "desire to portray Indians sensitively and sympathetically, even to identify with them on some deeper level" is obvious throughout the novel (Dassow Walls 132).

⁶ Newfort, of course, owns a plantation with countless slaves and for most of the narrative, Joseph, his illegitimate, mixed-race son, stands to inherit the ill begotten gains of slavery. More interestingly, and perhaps in paying homage to his mentor Alexander von Humboldt, Möllhausen inserts the following, with emphasis, towards the end: *Most of the North American slave holders and slave traders, however, will only realize the disgrace of their attitudes when those who are the most dear to their heart bleed to death from the revenge the unleashed race is bound to take, that is, when it is "too late."*

It is interesting to consider for instance how the text describes Joseph and how this description contrasts to his *doppelgänger* Louis, who poses as the Joseph. Here is the initial description of Joseph as he sits by a campfire:

The full light of the flames fell on their features and revealed two men whose figures, origin, and skin color showed noticeable differences. To a stranger, the younger one must have been more interesting since his skin was marked by a slight bronze tone that the North American natives have, thus revealing him to be a half Indian or *Halfbreed*. The features of his face showed less indication of his descent, but the large, dark eyes and the simple black hair, which parted on the forehead and fell to the shoulders on both sides, made his Indian race irrefutable. Like most *Halfbreeds* his features had something unusually soft, and with the softness of the skin and the beardlessness even something feminine. He could not have long passed the twentieth year, and even though he sat hunched over, he had a high, slender figure, almost too tall for the small, slight hands and feet, which were another inherited trait from his native mother. ()

The Potawatomie *Halfbreed* Louis, on the other hand, who passes as Joseph for a while to the unsuspecting Newfort, is neither part of a civilized tribe, nor does he have the innate characteristics required of a member of civil society. He drinks, gambles, and ends up murdering a French woman who runs the gambling den. He flees to a cave on the shore of Bigler Lake (Lake Tahoe) and seeks refuge with a band of Indians, and he once again becomes the savage he was born to be.

He had undressed completely and painted his limbs from top to bottom with a mixture of wood- ashes and water, and his face with a paste made from charcoal and grease. His hair, too, had been rubbed with a mixture of wet ash, and consequentially stood so stiffly tousled on his head, that he could have easily been mistaken for a full-blooded California Digger Indian, if his regular features and strong built had not been in such noticeable incongruence to the companions squatting next to him. (518)

Not only is his appearance in stark contrast to the "real" *Halfbreed*, but the narrative details his uncouth behavior and unsavory companions as well. In the cave, Louis finds himself in the company of "a young man and an old man— two haggard, ugly looking creatures with crooked limbs and thick, swollen joints." (519) The climax of the scene is when an Indian woman intentionally spills the boiling contents of a large kettle onto all the children in the cave because a little boy tried to steal some meat. "Louis found the entire scene so comical that he entirely forgot how hungry he was and how uncertain his situation was, and he fell on his back and laughed with wholehearted, satanic joy." (520) Aside from the consideration that the plot needed suspense and therefore a 'bad guy' like Louis, the text seems serious in its assertion that some Native Americans were in fact dirty, and hostile, and had a propensity for drunken revelries. Clearly, not all natives could be civilized.

There are two explanations for that. Huseman in his book on Möllhausen's frontier art, *Wild River Timeless Canyons*, also sees "Möllhausen's inclination to classify

Native Americans by 'types' in his sketches led to stereotyping, but also reflected the importance of tribal identity on the frontier, where mistakes could prove fatal." (18)

The other reason art, literature, and science focused on racial, or perhaps even intra-racial, differences and dividing lines was perhaps more a trend of the era in general. Ulrike Pirker in her essay on Theodor Storm's 1865 novella *Von Jenseits des Meeres* explains this new interest in race succinctly. She argues:

The emergence of a bourgeois class was accompanied by a new idea of man (and, woman) and a reallocation of societal roles; scientific interest in the recently formed disciplines of anthropology was paramount. Prominent early representatives were the French Comte de Buffon and the German ethnographer Johann Blumenbach in the late seventeenth century, and later the Austrian Franz Joseph Gall and Samuel George Morton whose research was popularized by Josiah Clark Nott and George R. Gidden in the 1840s and widely read. (7)

While fictional marriage between Franziska and Joseph is thus conceived against the background of geographical expansion and the rise of new scientific disciplines, the *doppelgänger* motif symbolizes Möllhausen's conviction that political reality and historical necessity demanded that Native Americans adapt to the white world. In comparison, Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* and Catharine Maria Sedgewick's *Hope Leslie* — and they typically set the bar in "American" literature's depiction of intermarriage between a Native American chief and a white woman — were written almost three decades earlier, in 1824 and 1827 respectively, and firmly subscribe to

the incompatibility between the races. Even though Möllhausen would return to the marriage between Native Americans and whites nine more times,⁷ the marriage in *The Halfbreed* is unique. Joseph meets Franziska where the narrative should have ended: She has settled in a cabin with her father and they farm the land. Franziska embodies all that is good and desirable and thus in harmony with Joseph's Christian upbringing; because of her German work ethic, but also her innocence, age, selflessness, and sincere ability for empathy—qualities that increasingly emerge while they travel to California—, she is the ideal *Bürger*— someone Möllhausen's German audience could identify with. Further, she detests slavery and since she is a recent immigrant, has not been exposed to the racial prejudices of Americans. Her marriage to Joseph and their children portray an ideal. Joseph, of course, wins her heart because he shares her qualities. The fact that he is half Indian is of lesser importance because his racial heritage is counterbalanced by the fact that he was raised in the Christian environment of the mission. Dinkelacker correctly observes that Möllhausen disregards the, always negative, contemporary depictions of mixed marriages altogether, and his optimism, or at least his ability to eclipse⁸ the problems such unions might lead to is too strong to convey any trace of the social and cultural dilemmas that might ensue (107).

Möllhausen never had the financial clout of Humboldt or Goethe. He did not come from a privileged background, and never was a gentlemen scientist. one among

⁷ See Dinkelacker "Rot-weiße Mischehen."

⁸ *ausklammern*

the famous paintings of Humboldt that depicts the aging Alexander von Humboldt in his library in 1856, three years before his death. Humboldt is dignified, gentlemanly, composed, and surrounded by his life's work and writings. In comparison, there is a painting titled "Möllhausen als Trapper," which will likely always show up if one searches his name on the internet. Here, Möllhausen is clad in a deerskin outfit, with a full beard. He looks proud, defiant, and is leaning on his rifle. He looks directly at the viewer. There is a lowbrow adjective in German that seems to fit not only this picture but also his fiction in general: *hemdsärmelig*. Literally translated it means shirt-sleeved, but the implication is one of let's-roll-up-your sleeves-deal-with-it pragmatism. It is this characteristic that infused his writings and made them so popular in his time, but it seems time now, when ever new books on Humboldt are published, to take a look at Möllhausen as well, since the deerskin-clad trapper was, after all, his protégé.

Notes on the Translation

The aim of the following translation is twofold. First, it seeks to complicate and question the prevailing paradigm of American literature. Following Werner Sollors and Marc Shell's *Multilingual Anthology of American Literature*, the translation seeks to open up future possibilities for critical work that are congruent with current trends in scholarship that interrogate taxonomies of genre, canon, or national belonging for instance. If American literature is in fact conceived not only as

a product of one or more mother countries, as Sollors and Shell argue, but also in terms of linguistic and cultural interactions, the concept has the potential to generate a new network of generically diverse texts (travel narratives, sensation fiction, historical novels), written in this case in particular in German and English by authors identified with different national traditions and loyalties. As such, my work is designed to produce a translational and transnational frame for nineteenth-century studies.

Second, the translation seeks to mediate between the text *The Halfbreed* and its contemporary readers. First and foremost I wanted to "translate" Möllhausen's original intentions and facilitate reading and understanding of the text this way. The main problem was that Möllhausen himself seemed to be unsure of what it is he was writing. Dassow Walls observes the following about Humboldt, but this most certainly applies to Möllhausen as well:

Had Humboldt's interests been narrower, his writing would have been better. He labored with his prose and never felt satisfied; his friend Schiller had made it clear he was no poet, and so he apologizes for his lack of stylistic elegance. But the real problem was that no single genre could contain all he wanted to say, even as every genre came with expectations he felt he must meet. His journal, which he downplayed as little more than careless and fragmentary first expressions, is a highly personal record of awe before great beauty, poetic flights, anxieties, sharp disappointments, and social sarcasms. (40)

He is explicitly writing a "narrative" or story designed to "add an illustration" to previously published diaries. Further, he wants to "specifically lay out the prejudices of the Americans" and pay close attention to the "the *all- influencing natural environment*." Immediately, there is a problem with genre. Like Humboldt, Möllhausen too labors with his writing, and composed the narrative in the *Biedermeier* style, which is rather ill suited to convey the wilderness of the Rocky Mountains in conjunction with the racial prejudices of the Americans.

What follows is a short explanation of *Biedermeier* characteristics using Adalbert Stifter's 1857 work *Der Nachsommer (Indian Summer)* as the archetypal *Biedermeier* text (Schorske 283). Stifter's novel chronicles the coming of age of a young man, Heinrich, whose wealthy benefactor promotes his young protégé's aesthetic development. The novel's setting, although not exclusively, is the interior of a stately country home, the *Rosenhaus*. where the benefactor lives. and introduces Heinrich to his vast collections. Heinrich's humanist *Bildung* takes place as he explores paintings, furniture collections, and exquisite marble patterns in the floors. The text is full of lengthy descriptions of the house's interior and Heinrich's inner life. The language is at all time measured and seems to follow the same pace throughout, so that it is often described as conveying *dumpfe Dauer* (dull constancy). Möllhausen's style in the *Halfbreed* is somewhat similar—although in all fairness, Stifter does not seem to struggle with his prose by any means— in its lengthy sentences and measured back-and-forth dialogues. Although the *Biedermeier*

language is perhaps not the style one would expect in an adventure novel—it is certainly ill suited to describe some of the more climactic moments in the mountains for example—Möllhausen's contemporary readers were familiar with it, and the *Biedermeier* is appropriate for the development of Joseph and Franziska's relationship.

Although I am aware of the debates regarding faithfulness in translation, I have chosen to modernize the language because Möllhausen the novel is first and foremost *Unterhaltungsliteratur* (light and popular fiction that was often serialized, widely available, and designed to entertain as well as educate). My translation regards *The Halfbreed* as a humanist, at times slightly didactic⁹ text in the guise of an adventure novel, which was conceived by Möllhausen to bring the America of his personal experience to a German readership through an adaptation in language, in what Lawrence Venuti refers to as a "domesticating practice" (23). The original text is thus a translation in the true sense of the word, a carrying-over of culture through language. Just as Möllhausen intended to create a picture of the America he knew, my translation aims at not only bringing this America back to life, but also to provide the contemporary reader with a glimpse of how the text spoke to readers through its style.

Since *Biedermeier* is difficult and awkward to render in English, since the sentences are extremely long at times and German is an inflected language, making

⁹ There are for instance the numerous landscape descriptions with meticulous geographical details, facts on Indians, and description of emigrant life. *Amerikasehnsucht* (longing for America) drove many Germans across the ocean, and Möllhausen's expertise not only played into that longing, but also drew readers who yearned for information because their relatives had emigrated.

the use of pronouns necessary that often cannot be matched in English since they tend to make the sentence unclear. Whenever possible, I left sentences intact and only judiciously broke them up if they interfered with clarity, but retained all paragraphs and line breaks. I also retained the original's use of em dashes, which are the equivalent of three periods. I added footnotes, which I hope will replicate the didactic aspect to a degree. They often contain peculiarities of the German language or antiquated expressions and terms that the translation may not be able to capture with precision.

The inability to render tone exactly was also an issue in many chapter beginnings. Many chapters open with landscape description or general observations. In the original the text uses the impersonal *man* (one) to convey these impressions. While the use of the term "one" is antiquated in English, *man* is still widely used in German. Additionally, *man* is often used as an alternative form to the passive, and in this way it functions to draw the reader into the action, inviting him to observe alongside the narrator (a brilliant example of an entire work written this way is Daniel Kehlman's 2006 novel on Humboldt *Die Vermessung der Welt* [*Measuring the World*]). Here, again, I have attempted to preserve readability and at times translated it as "one" and other times I have used terms such as "traveler" for instance. My criterion for deciding on what terms to use was simply narrative flow.

Names have been "retranslated" to give readers the same familiarity that the original produced by inserting German sounds.¹⁰ The Mormon villain Joël, for

¹⁰ The term used in German is *eindeutschen*, literally to make something German.

instance, has become Joel again in the translation, Wabasch became Wabash, and Jo, which is short for the *Halfbreed's* proper name Joseph, became Joe. The exception of course is the *Halfbreed*, which this translation has not only retained, but also italicized. Even though the name of the work is *Der Halbindianer*, which literally translated means the half-Indian, Möllhausen chose the English term *Halfbreed* throughout, which must have been more foreign to a German audience.

Tribal names have been historicized according to the official tribal designation which was compiled in 1902, of the Bureau of American Ethnology and the Indian Bureau and follow the convention of making no distinction between singular and plural, except in cases where the plural is different such as Blackfoot and Blackfeet for example.¹¹

Finally, I have worked from the Georg Olms version after carefully comparing it to the original I obtained from the University of Marburg. Needless to say, the text was extremely fragile and thus simply impractical to work with over an extended period of time. The Olms version is an accurate reprint—including editorial oversights if there was such a thing like missing punctuation (which I inserted), and slightly cut-off print on a few pages.

¹¹ These designations have changed over time, so that the Blackfeet of today have the official title "Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana." For more on this see Kappler and Washburn.

The Halfbreed

Introduction

By writing the *Halbindianer* or *Halfbreed*, I intended to some extent add an illustration to my earlier published travel writings.

During a stay of many years on the borders of civilization and in remote wilderness areas, material accumulates to such an extent that it cannot well be used in the travel works without altering their character significantly or even compromising them.

But when I cast a glance back at those times when I led a life of erratic, restless wandering, scenes and occurrences emerge that I overlooked earlier, or did not deem as important. I relive every day anew, and it seems almost as if the mental eye in searching the past sees more sharply and grasps more keenly as the bodily eye did on the spot.

It was my task to consolidate the pictures that emerged in this fashion into a whole in the following pages, and to this end I chose a story that displays the prejudices of the Americans against those with darker skin, but also describes and the consequences that result from them .

In the course of the narrative, I mingled with pleasure in the life of the people; I found rich enjoyment in the description of luxuriant as well as neglected nature, the creatures that inhabited it and their wonderful goings-on; I followed the wild natives onto the bloody warpath into the impenetrable deserts with a certain feeling of

suspense, and in each instance I deliberately sought to bring the ways of the various nations and the *all- influencing natural environment* into harmony.

In instances that required exposing the weaknesses and dark sides of human society, I went to work ruthlessly.

Whether I was carried away here and there by strong emotions, and how far I succeeded in absolving my self-imposed task, I must leave to the judgment of an indulgent audience.

1. In Havana

Nocturnal darkness and secretive silence had settled on palm-shadowed Havana. The lazy sea breeze was faintly blowing across the majestic harbor in short, barely perceptible intervals and rippled the mirror-smooth waters in small strokes, on which vehicles of every sort were fastened to tight anchor chains, lying motionless as if in deep sleep.

It was one of those starry and humid tropical nights that usually follow burning hot days and under whose influence the vegetation, which had been suffering under the enduring drought, was righting itself and regaining life. The full moon was reflected in millions of dewdrops, and its lovely picture quivered on the water's expansive surface. The wide roofs of the beautiful city, the picturesque towers and walls of the harbor's fortifications, the innumerable masts, and the slender palms appeared to be magically lit up from blue fire. Only once in a while a faint light fell through the open windows, behind which yellow fever was fought with human

ingenuity (albeit successfully in only a few cases), or where hot-blooded Señoritas and languid Señores were sipping cool champagne, smoking slender cigarillos, listening to the gay sounds of well-tempered guitars, or harkened to sweet but empty words of love. But upsurges of pain and pleasure vanished in the silent night, and nothing diminished the impression evoked by the setting, the festive quietude, and the deep blue moonlit firmament.

On the south side of the harbor, where longer, uncultivated sections stretched between coal repositories and the fortifications across the western end of the city, one could see a lonesome walker that night. The latter appeared to wait for someone, since, walking slowly back and forth, he intermittently send glances to the middle of the harbor where one of those mammoth steamboats used to maintain the traffic from New York to Havana was anchored. He frequently and impatiently pulled out his watch and, holding it against the moon, confirmed to himself the time while murmuring his discontent over the outbreak of the yellow fever that made it impossible for the passengers to leave the steamboats and mingle freely with the inhabitants of Havana.

The clock towers of the city announced the midnight hour, and with the usual eight tolls the numerous bells of the ships marked the changing of the watch. The walker listened; as soon as the last sound's vibrations had vanished into the atmosphere, he pulled the light cloak, which already largely covered him, completely over his head, put a hand on his mouth, and let out a short whistle. Soon a figure that was immediately recognizable as a half-naked Negro rose on the opposite shore,

about thirty cubits away. The latter, without waiting for further commands, grabbed two oars that had lain next to him, and disappeared behind a small outcropping where a small gondola lay hidden in the shadow. Moments later, the vehicle was gliding into the open water propelled by the forceful but silent strokes and took its course toward the steamboat.

The gaze of the mysterious man on the bank attentively followed every move of the Negro whose oars reached deep into the floods causing phosphorescent whirls, which in combining themselves with the blinking waves behind the gondola clearly marked the covered way. Approximately in the middle between the bank and the steamboat the Negro stopped rowing; the vessel kept gliding a short distance, finally laid completely still, and quickly the water smoothed and darkened behind it.

The stranger now watched the black, undefined silhouette of the steamer, apparently with great anxiety. A series of faint sparks, like steel striking a flint, or a match being struck, now appeared on the bowsprit. The stranger breathed deeply; the Negro lowered his oars almost imperceptibly into the water, and two minutes later the unsteady vehicle glided into the shadow of the colossus. Almost as fast as it had disappeared, it reemerged back on the moonlit surface to begin the course back. The Negro vigorously worked the oars, and as he was approaching the bank, a second figure became visible that guided the gondola in the intended direction with a small rudder. As soon as the man on the bank noticed that the Negro was not alone, he quickly stepped down to the water; and as the bottom of the vessel grated on the sand,

he called out in a muted voice to the man he had been expecting : “Finally you are coming! I have been waiting in vain for weeks!”

The man thus addressed skipped onto the bank and greeted the waiting man in a few brief words, and after the Negro had received the order to row a way into the harbor and to wait quietly, the two men moved silently to a nearby hill whose grassy surface did not offer the least shadow to hide unwelcome listeners.

The light of the moon now fully fell onto their countenances, which they had uncovered after the Negro had left.

The first man, who was about fifty and whom we shall call Antonio, was tall and gaunt; his figure only enhanced the drapery of the cloak because the latter largely concealed him. His face, which was shaded by a wide- brimmed straw hat, was of the usual southern yellow paleness, which is often considered sickly. Through their uncanny glint his shiftless eyes indicated a whole array of passions, but the narrow, pinched lips on the other hand pointed to a strength of will, while the black hair, brows, and the cropped whiskers lent the entire physiognomy a dark character.

The other, whom Antonio called by the name Browns, had likewise, thrown a colored plaid around his shoulders for protection against the dew, or perhaps more to not draw attention to himself in his light, white suit. Smaller than his companion, he nevertheless seemed to be superior to him in physical strength. But considering the different physiognomies, one had, in light of the different mental abilities, to necessarily grant the first man pre-eminence, even if the round, common face, and more so the eyes, of the latter did not lack an expression of slyness.

Both, although engaged in intimate conversation, showed through words and gestures that they were used to moving in cultured social circles; once in a while Browns used expressions that indicated that the lowest class of human society was also not foreign to him.

“You see, Browns,” began Antonio, “ that I brought you to a place where we are completely safe from traitors. You must blame the yellow fever and the quarantine for any lack of comfort since they prevented me from receiving you in my house.”

“No excuses are needed, “ answered Browns, “ you could not have found a more suitable place. Walls sometimes have ears, and we can talk freely if there are no witnesses aside from the silent moon. By the way, you know that my message is important because I undertook the cumbersome journey from New Orleans in order to avoid the danger of exchanging of letters.”

“Let’s get down to it then” Antonio replied while he seated himself on the grass and prompted Browns to follow suit. “Have you managed to gain precise insight into the financial circumstances of my stepsister’s husband?”

“Of course my effort was not in vain, even though it was not as successful as I had wished. As I already conveyed to you in my letter, the plantation isn’t burdened by any debts, and if I value every Negro as eight hundred on average, and every Negress as five hundred dollars, that way the entire sum will not be less than one million, without considering the four houses in the city.”

“Well, one million,” relied Antonio in a pensive manner. “My sister will be a rich widow. But how are matters concerning the old Nabob’s health?”

“His stomach ailment now appears to be incurable, and one can hardly assume that he will live for more than two years. Besides, the thought of being childless eats away at his heart doubly and we must fear that he may have the idea to look for his progeny among the Pawnee Indians. You probably know best whether such investigations might be successful.”

“Does he have any idea of the existence of his Indian child?”

“Merely the faintest suspicion, as your sister herself assured me since the two letters have come into her hands, and they were without a doubt the only ones the old missionary ever wrote regarding the matter. Now it is barely fathomable that a letter from there could reach your brother in-law since your sister does not tolerate any other human beings in his proximity.”

“Don’t call him my brother in-law,” Antonio cried. “I have loathed this title ever since he closed his door to me. Now it is a matter of bringing my sister into full possession of the fortune. Once that has happened, then it is not difficult to transfer the entire mass from New Orleans to Cuba, and in light of her obedience to the religion in which she was raised, she will hardly refuse to make the church her heir while she is still alive.”

“I don’t doubt it,” replied Browns, “but I would like to remind you that I don’t belong to any church, and it is therefore of little importance who the heir will be. You realize that the fulfillment of your plans is largely in my hands, and I don’t like to

waste time and effort for nothing while additionally running the risk of being hauled before some court.”

“Aren’t you satisfied,” replied Antonio with displeasure, “that you are absolutely indispensable to the realization of my plans and hence can set your own conditions? Are you not satisfied at all with what you have gained through me so far? Not satisfied with the prospect of laying claim to one tenth of the entire estate after the successful completion of the matter?”

“Until now, yes,” replied Antonio, “but my last decisive step will only be done in exchange for a legally redeemable bond. You act for your church or, what is the same thing, for yourself, and I for myself,” he added with a scornful smile. “But months, even years may pass until this point; for now it suffice to have brought to my desires to your attention. Now, I am willing to take your further instructions.”

Without any alteration in the expression of his piercing eyes, or twitch of the facial muscles to betray his emotions, Antonio heard the words of his companion, and ignoring his demands, he addressed the last part of the disquisition.

“You wrote and spoke of a premonition,” he remarked. “What led you to that?”

“It doesn’t require a great mind to understand your brother in-law, I mean, your stepsister's husband. You know that twenty-two years ago, he went on a pleasure trip up the Missouri River in the company of the leaders of the Saint Louis Missouri Fur Company. You also know that he married in the Indian manner, which means he lived in sin for two months with a girl from the Pawnee tribe. His father’s

death abruptly ended his romance in those regions. The inheritance of the plantation with twelve hundred Negroes and his subsequent marriage to your fiery Cuban stepsister probably kept him from inquiring about the young Indian girl's fate; after all, what could any reasonable white man induce to care about colored people, except boredom and the momentary satisfaction of great passions?" —

“Later, when he had leisure to remember the blithely years of his youth, your sister made sure that he would forget them just as fast. She knew the matter well since the letters from the missionary, which luckily fell into her hands, gave her unmistakable proof that the Indian girl had in fact given birth to her husband's son. She told me that, she was initially secretive about the circumstances out of jealousy, but later from self-interest because she feared that her own childlessness might perpetuate an intimate relationship between father and son. You yourself witnessed years ago how this childlessness afflicts your sister's husband's mind.”

“Since the beginning of his illness, the discontent that is the result of such a relationship increased significantly, and more and more often he made his wish known to return one last time to those regions where in his youth he had held such delightful and successful hunts. I ask you then, do you believe that he only wants to see the cherished hunting grounds? Or does he seek to investigate the fate of the Pawnee squaw? I can only assume the latter. For hours I watched him recount his journey; his eye did not flash like that of a passionate hunter who remembered gay times, but rather he had a stared thoughtfully into space and kept repeating with a sad voice: ‘I would like to return to the upper Missouri just one more time.’”

“You see, this is the premonition of which I spoke to you; and it takes the constant influence of your sister to prevent him from boarding the next northbound Mississippi steamer, despite his physical weakness.”

“The worst is to be feared if your brother in law, favored by some coincidence, breaks the your sister's shackles for a couple of days and is able to be master of his own course. —I think he would accord me a nice sum, if I promised to lead him to his son”—

“Which you could spend in jail or on the gallows,” Antonio interrupted him.

“Or in England, California, or China,” replied Browns with sardonic laughter, “but don’t worry, it's not in my interest to join the *Halfbreed* and his father.”

“Do you have news from the young priest I sent up the Missouri?” Antonio asked after some deliberation.

“I saw him in St. Louis before his departure and received a letter from him in which he writes of his safe arrival at the mission in Council Bluffs. He reports further that he has managed to gain the trust of the old missionary—whose days are numbered—, but that the old man's silly affection for the *Halfbreed* may thwart our plans.”

“Have you let him know your last instructions in a secure fashion?”

“You mean your instructions? It happened in an entirely secure fashion; in fact, I sent him a copy of your letter, as far as it concerns the same matter, and kept the original myself. He will have understood the intimations and will have removed our only obstacle by now.”

“Since—and that is in fact to be commended—you only sent a copy of my letter,” Antonio said in an apparently indifferent tone, “the original can no longer have any value and you should return it to me, in order to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands.”

“ You are mistaken, holy father, “the letter hasn't lost its value. It's safe with me and may one day serve the purpose of procuring a more inclined listener for my wishes and most obedient pleas.”

“As you wish,” the priest replied, but without being able to hide his displeasure. “ Besides, the letter is written in such a manner that only the initiated are able to understand it.”

“Are you so certain of the skill and loyalty of our accomplice in the mission that you can trust him with such tasks and expect success?” asked Browns.

“Don't doubt it,” answered Antonio. “Harrison is a will-less instrument in my hand, and even though he has converted to the Presbyterian faith years ago, he still serves his mother church faithfully. During a long stay in the California missions, he has familiarized himself with the character of the natives, in order to be able to use them as willing helpers for his purposes. And then,” He continued with a ambiguous smile, “he owes me infinite gratitude and would sacrifice his life for me; his every day is a gift from me.”

“In other words, you can deliver him to the gallows any day?” Browns interrupted.

“Don’t worry about it,” replied Antonio curtly. “Now pay close attention to my words. I am bound to start a journey to San Francisco soon, but before my departure I will send you an address to which thereafter you will send all your correspondence to me. According to your earlier promise, take care that in case Harrison’s plan should fail, the *Halfbreed* will never make contact with his father. I leave it up to you how to accomplish this. Watch my stepsister closely and make sure that nobody gains her trust. I know your relationship with her; hence use your influence to strengthen her bond to the church to the utmost. Give her my regards and tell her that before my departure for California I will find a way to see her. Should unforeseen circumstances arise that make a decision from me impossible due to haste and distance, speak with lawyer Buschmark in St. Louis. I have a high degree of confidence in him, but for your own safety refrain from letting him look too deeply into our affairs.”

“For our safety,” corrected Browns.

“Well then, for our safety,” said Antonio. “Besides, given how things have been arranged now, our attention only needs to stay focused on the *Halfbreed*. — I have told you, and I repeat it once again: the *Halfbreed* must disappear, if you don’t want to wait for riches in vain. I give you two thousand dollars for your further endeavors; there are nineteen hundred in gold and a banknote for one hundred. I took the latter from a number of forged notes that you so cleverly prepared last year; you will likely recognize them, yourself, Mr. counterfeiter.”

Upon hearing these words, Browns drew back as if bitten by a poisonous snake. "Are you saying," he exclaimed, "that I am a counterfeiter?"

"Compose yourself," relied Antonio. "The proof of your forgery is indeed in my hands, but it shall only serve the purpose of procuring a more inclined listener for my wishes and most obedient pleas, as you have said, but will also to rob you of the belief that you have gained an advantage over me because you are superior to me in craftiness. You see, dear friend," he continued with derisive friendliness, "I don't trust anyone blindly, and only choose confidantes of whose devoted loyalty I can be assured. You will prove that I am not mistaken, and before you accept the sum, you will sign this little receipt." and he passed Browns a small, printed strip of paper, which the latter seized hastily and, holding it against the moon, read with a muted voice: "Two thousand dollars for the delivery of the news of the *Halfbreed* Joseph's death at the hands of the undersigned, hereby declared—"

"Simply to keep up appearances," said Antonio, as he perceived the indignation of his equally coward and criminal companion. "Simply to keep up appearances, but you better withdraw your hand from your breast without the knife because the Negro wouldn't row a murderer back to the steamboat; and if in case I don't return home, there is open proof of your forgery on my table, next to your name and description of your person. Don't threaten me, you said it yourself: I for myself and you for yourself. Sign your name and take the money." Antonio pulled a small writing implement from his pocket and passed Browns the ink-moistened quill.

Browns gnashed his teeth, seized the quill, but still hesitated to comply with the demand. When the calculating priest tossed the rolls of gold into the grass in front of him, avarice won over all other sentiments. With a quivering hand he placed the paper on his knee, and immediately his signature appeared under the words that marked him as a murderer without betraying the priest's influence.

“Here, take it,” he said then as he greedily concealed the money on his person, “take it and don't forget that you are as much mine as I am yours. Don't doubt my loyalty and attention and trust me that your sister will relocate to Havana as the absolute master of the estate within two years.”

“And you can be confident,” Antonio replied, “that after that has happened, I will hand over all papers that concern you and could harm you along with the tenth of a million.”

For a long time after that the two sat on the hill and exchanged words of agreement and advice for the future. On board of the ships the passing of the half hour had been indicated by the customary two tolls twice. When from near and far the end of the third half hour sounded, Browns asked his companion: “My time has passed and I must return on board. With the next toll of the bell, a sailor whom I don't trust is coming on look-out, and since the quarantine is strictly observed, I could easily draw the attention of the guards, which I want to avoid.”

The priest did not reply, but also rising he placed his hand on his mouth and whistled quietly, but penetratingly. Immediately the Negro who had been lying

prostrate in his boat rose, took up the oars, and soon found himself on shore, where the two men, now cloaked, awaited him.

They boarded and with skilled strokes the black boatman steered toward the steamer, under whose bow he paused a moment. Browns quickly reached for a rope ladder which, hanging from board, almost touched the water level, and without saying any words, he swung himself up, while the Negro gave his boat another direction and rowed toward the other end of the city.

The distance they had covered glowed phosphorescent behind the speeding vessel, the reflection of the moon danced on the waves in gentle motion, and deep quiet surrounded everything—the simple hut and the gleaming palace, the beautiful palms as well as the lonely hills, where the dark plans had been forged.

As if in deep thought the young priest sat on the low bench; with loud and rhythmic strokes the port guard rowed past. “Where from?” it echoed across.

“From a dying man!” answered the priest while he bowed in greeting.

“God bless you, Holy Father!” called the commander of the watch lifting his hat reverentially, and a long distance soon separated the two vessels.

When the priest finally landed, he handed the Negro a shiny piece of gold, ordered him to remember his salvation, and told him to forget the nightly excursion. The Negro kissed Antonio’s hand, promised complete silence, and then he stretched himself out in the bottom of his boat in order to dream away the night. The priest however strode to the next street and soon found himself in front of a small gate, which apparently lead to the garden of a large, stately house. He opened the gate; but

before he entered, he looked up and down the moonlit street, and with a balled fist, murmuring in the direction of the port, he threatened: “impotent instrument, you think me in your power, but beware that you don’t disappear before you reach your hand out for the hoped for riches!”

If one had overheard Browns in his berth at this moment, one could have heard no less spiteful words with which he wished the cunning priest's ruin.

2. The Upper Missouri

At almost the same time during which the scene described in the previous pages took place, a similar secretive rendezvous occurred several day’s journeys farther north, but with the difference that no perdition was hatched; rather, rough-hewn men of different colors and races, driven by noble and natural impulses, advised and protected one another with the greatest will to sacrifice.

It was close to the point on the upper Missouri where the Eau Qui Cours, how the Canadians call it—the Americans call it Running Water—, pours its crystal clear water into the Mississippi to be carried on to the Gulf of Mexico.

The atmosphere wasn't warm and humid, like on the tropical island, but bitter and cold after heavy thunderstorms had discharged themselves, and torrential rains that had significantly increased the river's waters, which were already swollen from the snow melt in the Rocky Mountains. Torn clouds hurried away from the harsh southeast wind. When the moon lit up the dark scenery for some minutes, it illuminated the high, grassy prairie, and the dark, indeterminate masses of densely

foliated forests that covered the valley of the Missouri and its tributary. It cast its gentle light on the whooshing Missouri, too, and onto the innumerable logs the river carried, which had been uprooted in the high north, or which had been delivered by its tributaries from far away. One log had pushed itself onto another on shallow patches where they had run aground and begun to form dangerous wooden cliffs. The unwieldy structures collapsed with a thunderous noise when the minute-by-minute increasing weight became too much, and causing thousands of whirls, the wooden masses tumbled into the wild floods as they sought a new path by pushing against each other, or hit other wooden cliffs with awful force.

In contrast, the Eau Qui Cours flowed there silently in the deep shadow of the overhanging trees. It came from the wood-lacking prairie, and only rarely did decaying logs that had fallen victim to the storm or old age grind against each other on its surface after having been swept from its banks by the swollen waters.

In the northern corner formed by this small river and the Missouri, roughly a hundred steps from the first and half an English mile from the latter, a small fire lit up the surrounding area in a forest clearing. The fire looked like it had been started by knowledgeable wayfarers and experienced hunters because they had used a mighty walnut log that had decayed for years in the shadow of its descendants as a flue. A small number of dry branches sufficed to feed the fire; its flames, driven by the wind, deeply licked into the log and created a sort of oven that radiated great heat, but without casting too much radiance onto the crowns of the neighboring trees, which in turn might have attracted unwelcome guests.

Only two men populated this hidden campsite. Their backs turned into the wind, they sat on their blankets and watched the blaze, where fresh venison roasted on red embers; from time to time they watched a structure made of thin sticks where their footwear, Indian moccasins, was drying.

Their weapons, the long western gun and the axe, were by their side, and the condition of the mostly buckskin attire indicated that they had covered a difficult route.

The full light of the flames fell on their features and revealed two men whose figures, origin, and skin color showed noticeable differences. To a stranger, the younger one must have been more interesting since his skin was marked by a slight bronze tone that the North American natives have, thus revealing him to be a half Indian or *Halfbreed*. The features of his face showed less indication of his descent, but the large, dark eyes and the simple black hair, which parted on the forehead and fell to the shoulders on both sides, made his Indian race irrefutable.¹²

Like most *Halfbreeds* his features had something unusually soft, and with the softness of the skin and the beardlessness even something feminine. He could not have long passed the twentieth year, and even though he sat hunched over, he had a high, slender figure, almost too tall for the small, slight hands and feet, which were another inherited trait from his native mother.

His companion, with whom he was seemingly engaged in an important conversation, was a French hunter. These men, known as *Voyageurs* or *Trappers*, had

¹² See also chapter 5 of *Reisen in die Felsengebirge*.

achieved certain notoriety in the western regions due to their daring and hardiness. The companion had a short, stocky, very strong stature and the few features of his face that were not hidden by a reddish-brown beard mixed with some white hair, revealed an easy, good-natured expression, a characteristic which one could almost accord to the French in general. The color of the skin, which was furrowed by some wrinkles, had weathered into a dark brown by external influences; in contrast, the brow of a sixteen-year-old girl could not have been whiter than the hunter's forehead peaking out from underneath the pushed-back felt hat. With a certain leisureliness he blew away the smoke of a short, little clay pipe, and without taking his eyes off the roasting pieces of meat, he continued the conversation, which had begun slow down.

“I tell you, Joe, or Joseph, how the Missionary likes to call you,” he began, “I tell you again, you don't have to thank me that I covered the distance from the mouth of the Nebraska to the Ponca where I met you. It was only a journey of ten days, a stone's throw; then I also tried to please the old man in the mission, who, if I am not mistaken, is about to depart for the eternal hunting grounds, as the Indians call it. A kind, old man; twice in the last twenty years he took me in and cared for me at the mission when I was ill and he let me sleep in his own bed. No, Joe, I couldn't have denied him the request. It is perhaps the last he directed at me, and he seemed to be unable to depart in peace without having seen you one last time.

“Your news has made me very, very sad, Lefèvre,” the *Halfbreed* replied, “and it saddens me deeply to think that my foster father will leave me. I owe so much to him; in fact everything I have learned and acquired, he taught me. My real father

has never cared for me or my mother, and he, who probably now lives in affluence, couldn't care less whether I have received the blessings of civilization, or range the wilderness hunting and fighting, or even robbing and murdering my red-skinned kin. Now, tell me how you left the old man; at my departure he seemed to be in a considerably better state. What made you so suspicious of Harrison, who came voluntarily to support my adoptive father and lighten his old days."

"I left your adoptive father in a sad state because his old heart condition had returned. His last words to me were: 'Since you have decided to do me a favor, I ask you urgently, as urgently as a distressed heart can, to hurry for the trading post of the Ponca Indians. You will find Joseph, who went there to work for the Fur Company. Tell him that I am sending my fatherly regards and urge him to hurry to come and to see me. Tell him I feel my end is near and that I have to impart news to him regarding his birth, and that if he cares for the final blessing of the man who loves him more than his own son, he shall not delay his return by as much as an hour.'" I found myself alone with him. As a farewell, he extended his rawboned, cold hand, urged me again, not for his sake, but for your sake, to not lose any time, and to send Harrison in upon my departure. After leaving the chamber, I saw the priest in the entrance hall. Evidently he had listened at the door and hadn't been able to withdraw from sight quickly enough. However, he didn't seem surprised, but approached me, shook my hand affectionately, and, with apparently sincere sorrow, spoke of your foster father's hopeless condition. 'I listen to every breath of the noble old man,' he said with a cheerless expression, 'and heard that you have decided to bring Joseph

here.' I affirmed this, and since he was concerned about your speedy arrival, I calculated to him the number of miles and day's journeys that were necessary in order to solve the task. He seemed to be surprised when I told him that due to the high water level we would have to travel on foot, and when I departed, he wished me Godspeed and likewise recommended to make haste."

"And such kind behavior made you suspicious?" asked the *Halfbreed* now.

"Not that," replied the hunter, "but his intimate relation with the four Pawnee families camping at the foot of the mission hill, procuring their livelihood by begging and stealing. Even though many Indians belong to your mother's tribe, I don't hesitate to tell you that I consider them treasonous dogs; especially the medicine man who on many occasions precisely predicted the death of his kinsmen."

"Don't assume, Lefèvre, that I defend this predacious band in any way. No, certainly not; because if it had even the meanest worth, then they would have never separated from the Wolf Pawnee, which unfortunately is no longer what it once was supposed to have been. Couldn't it be possible that Harrison is seeking this association in order to convert these wretches into better human beings and to prompt them to send their children to the mission?"

"Joe, I am more than twice your age, and I hunted bucks and Blackfoot Indians when you had not even seen the light of day. It is true, you can write beautifully, and read, and have learned everything the good missionary knew himself, but judging people, whether black ones, white ones, or red ones, that I understand

much better and” —here the hunter fell suddenly quiet all, put his hand on his ear, and motioned with the other to the *Halfbreed* to be keep silent.

After several minutes he asked hastily: “What did you hear?”

“I heard the far-off howl of the prairie wolf and the tiger owl.”

“But how many times the howl of the wolf?”

“Three times the wolf and once the owl,” answered Joseph.

“It is an appointed signal,” the trapper continued, “but let us listen some more. If it is Wabash-Ginga the Omaha, then the cry must repeat itself.”

The two wanderers silently remained in their positions and listened. After a little while, they again heard the howl of the wolf in the particular intervals, followed immediately by the eerie laugh of the owl.

Now completely certain, Lefèvre put the little pipe aside, brought both hands to his mouth in the shape of a conch and imitated the jubilating howl of the grey wolf so deceptively that even the animals could have been mislead by it. Throwing his head back and tapping his larynx quickly and successively, he created the muffled laugh of the owl just as naturally.

A simple owl call answered from a distance, as a sign of understanding, and no longer doubting the success of the whole affair, he turned to his companion.

“I told you, Joe,” he began, “that I have an unconquerable mistrust in the young missionary and his friendship with the Pawnee medicine man. I wouldn’t be surprised if that mistrust turned out to be justified now. Even when I left the mission after my conversation with the priest, pondering nothing in particular, I found it very

peculiar that this man had been listening at the door, since he was free to enter. The longer I thought about it, the stranger such furtive behavior appeared, so that I decided on a little detour through the village of the Omaha Indians. You know that I am well received there and Little Bear in spite of having severed the family ties between us since his sister, my squaw, died, still shows the greatest affection for me. I was lucky enough to immediately find Wabash-Ginga. I conveyed my fears regarding Harrison and his Pawnee friends to him and asked him to watch both parties closely. Then we agreed on the signals you just heard, to give him the opportunity to find me at any time in case he had important news for us. For this reason I asked you to stay in close proximity of the Missouri at all times where it is less likely for us to miss one another. I am only surprised to hear Wabash's call coming from the edge of the prairie, but he must have his reasons. –But listen, there is the owl's cry again, but more quivering and stretched out! Danger is coming and we can't remain by the fire.”

The *Halfbreed*, who had for some time looked into the fire with equanimity while listening to his friend's words, suddenly became animated when he heard of the approaching danger. Hastily he slid the damp moccasins on his feet, and wrapping several slice of half-rare meat into the blanket and hanging them on his back next to his powder horn and bullet pouch, he stood ready for action.

“We must hide,” said Lefèvre, “but in a manner that we can keep an eye on the fire and give Wabash-Ginga opportunity to join us. I want to leave him a sign that lets him that we are close by.” He took a torch , placed it across the walnut log and

then followed the *Halfbreed*, who was already moving cautiously toward the Missouri.

After having covered approximately one hundred feet, they stopped and climbed a tall oak tree, from whose densely foliated canopy they were able to overlook their campsite.

Half an hour passed and still neither of the two had spoken. Now the *Halfbreed* nudged his companion and pointed to a dark figure that crept out of the black shadow of the trees toward the burnt-down fire. After some moments of motionless waiting the figure suddenly jumped up, grabbed a torch and illuminated the log with it. Upon sight of the extinguished fire that formed a cross with the log upon which it rested, the Indian—because that's what he was—swung the torch-like branch several times over his head until the latter lit up again, then threw it into the dry sticks that had remained in front of the fire. When they lit up, he stepped into the full, wind-swayed light of the flames, let the blanket slip from his shoulders and exposed for several seconds the beautiful, warlike-painted and armed figure Wabash-Ginga's.

“They are on his heels,” whispered Lefèvre, “and since he knows we are watching him, he is warning us to not attract the enemy by making any premature sounds.” The Omaha had meanwhile wrapped himself back into his blanket and walked silently toward the Eau Qui Cours, where he soon disappeared behind thick brush.

“Now, quick!” Lefèvre exclaimed with a suppressed voice; and the two friends soon found themselves back on the ground crawling toward the outlet of the little river, where they intended to meet Wabash. But before they had even reached the Missouri, the Omaha joined them, and without delay they continued their route along the bank of the Eau Qui Cours until they heard the Missouri's sound. Then the Omaha spoke for the first time, telling the hunters that they were being pursued by eight Pawnee warriors, whose aim it was to bludgeon them in the territory of the Ponca in order to be able to blame the treacherous deed on that tribe.

They deliberated quickly and, then halted the floating logs and tied them into a raft with their belts while Little Bear reported in what manner he had been able to uncover the whole plot.

True to his promise, he had keenly watched Harrison and the Pawnee families in question and even overheard a conversation the first had one night with the supposedly ill medicine man in his tent. The conversation made clear that Harrison had promised the Pawnee help to regain the lost influence with his tribe. Exploiting the Indian's superstition, he advised him to go on a longer journey and to identify through dreaming and reflection the object that is to blame for the fact that he is effectively banished from the tribe of the Wolf Pawnees.

Already the next evening the Omaha eavesdropped on a gathering of the Pawnees living on the mission hill. At this occasion he heard that they were in unison in blaming the *Halfbreed* for the expulsion, and schemed to get him and his white companion out of the way. As a result, a group of eight Pawnees set out, supposedly

to steal horses from the Ponca, but in reality in order to execute the treacherous plans in the territory of the Ponca.

Unseen by them, Little Bear had followed their every step and had seen that they had set up camp at the crossover point of the Eau Qui Cours in order to ambush the party that was returning from the Ponca. They had been waiting there for two days and Wabash had given the agreed upon signal without receiving an answer. He did not dare crossing the small river because he feared that he might miss the travelers; at the same time he had to stay out of the Pawnees' sight. When he then sent the familiar cry from the edge of the prairie that night, he had seen the campfire in the canopy of the forest and walked toward it. Carefully creeping past the camp of the Pawnees, he considered that one of them had likely climbed a high tree upon hearing the howl of the wolf and the cry of the owl and thus had likewise seen the sheen of the fire from there. He waited just long enough to convince himself that the treacherous tribe had indeed set out for the fire in question to execute the bloody deed, in case the *Halfbreed* was resting there.

The hunters had finally managed to build a made of thick, floating logs. They were about to fasten their blankets and weapons to it, when suddenly the wailing cry of the nightjar could be heard from their old campsite; the cry was immediately answered from different locations, and once only a mere two hundred feet above them. Quick as lightning, Lefèvre and Joseph jumped onto the raft and tried to set it afloat with Wabash's help, who was pushing from the shore, but they tried in vain since one of the logs rested heavily on the sand, and it was too late to climb back and

move the raft with combined strength from the shore. A thin twig cracked and broke under the step of a pursuing Pawnee, which led them to make a quick decision. Lefèvre and Joseph hastily threw themselves down, and pressing themselves into the water in between the logs and in the deep shadow of the overhanging foliage, they hoped to remain hidden from the eyes of their enemies. The Omaha on the other hand sought shelter behind a thick sycamore that stood only several feet from his companions.

They had they remained in this position not even five minutes, when they saw two Indians cautiously following the course of the little river, apparently carefully investigating every shadow on the water's surface and every shrub on the bank. Suddenly, one of them bent down and felt the earth with his hands; then he prompted his companion to do the same. The three hunters realized that their hiding places would be discovered, since the tracks they had left behind in the wet soil had been discovered, and preparing themselves to fight, they reached for their weapons. Apparently the two Pawnees surmised their victims to be at the mouth of the river since they refrained from attracting their companions through signals that might have also warned the fugitives.

After a short counsel they agreed that one of them should return and fetch the whole pack of savages¹³ while the other continued the investigation.

Silent as a snake the figure disappeared; the remaining one in contrast felt the ground in front of him inch by inch and slowly approached the raft. Finally he found

¹³ *Rotte*. Here a derogatory term for tribe. Also means mob, pack, and horde.

himself only five steps away from it. His gaze was directed without fail toward the black mass, and he bent forward, looking as if his eyes penetrated the darkness of the trees' deep shadows. Again he took a step forward; in his right fist he held the tomahawk ready to strike, while his left moved toward the handle of the knife. He had positioned himself in a way that permitted him to defend himself against a surprise attack, but also to jump backwards and thus evade superior numbers of attackers. Deathly silence was all around, and since the fugitives held their breath, they could distinctly hear the soft crackling sound under the Pawnee's moccasins when the Indian bent over or leaned sideways, resting the weight of his body on one foot or the other. The call of the nightjar sounded eerily from afar and as if that sound had encouraged him, the Pawnee took another step. Now he stood barely one cubit¹⁴ from the drifting waters, which broke softly against the raft. He was close to the sycamore where the Omaha crouched like a tiger waiting for his prey.

The black object in the water held the Pawnee's attention to such a high degree that he didn't perceive the slight movement behind him. He had probably that the men were lying in the water since he took his hand from the handle of the knife and lifted it to his mouth, as if to call his companions to make haste. He had not parted his lips yet, when the Omaha's tomahawk sped through the air and cleft the Pawnees skull.

The man slumped forward with a heavy sigh; the waves had barely splashed beneath him, when Lefèvre jumped up as if hit by lightning, dragged the wounded

¹⁴ 45.72 centimeters, or approximately a foot and a half.

man into the deep water and pushed him under. He wanted to muffle the dying man's cries, but this was unnecessary since Little Bear had struck him so expertly that the floods carried a dead man.

The three men finally moved the raft away from the bank with combined strength. Then they climbed on with what little possessions they had; caught by the current, the vehicle was carried swiftly toward the Missouri.

Silently they drifted along; the wind roared, the black tops of the tress nodded, the heavy clouds flew by, and light and shadow chased across the gloomy landscape. The travelers left the wet grave of the slain warrior and their enemies who searched in vain behind.

3. The River Trip

After a short while the fugitives reached the point where a small, willow-covered delta marked the outlet of the Eau Qui Cours. They managed to keep the frail, lumbering vehicle in the main channel with some effort, and soon they realized by its rocking that they were drifting on the dangerous boundary waters that the Missouri formed with its small tributary. Even though they tried to reach the channel of the latter again, but the flow of the Missouri was too overpowering for their strength and their simple oars. After being tossed around on the churning eddies for a while, they were finally delivered to the middle of the river, where their vehicle assumed a steadier course.

“*Sacré tonnerre,*” the trapper now thundered; “Scalp me to the ears if the anemic priest isn't the reason we were forced to undertake this unpleasant river trip!”

“What reason could he possibly have?” the *Halfbreed* replied, without taking his eyes off the long tree branch he used like his companions to push faster moving, dangerous floating logs out of the way. “What reason could he possibly have? He preaches Christianity just like my adoptive father does; nobody has slighted him, so why should he wish ill upon us?”

“You think that all men of the cloth are no different from the good old missionary,” Lefèvre exclaimed with a hint of distaste. “Sapristi! I tell you, this Hendrichson, or Harrison, how you like to call him, has prompted the Pawnee medicine man to pursue us, and I wholeheartedly wish that he were lying where that fellow is whose skull Wabash split so deftly.

“Temper your wrath, Lefèvre,” the *Halfbreed* appeased him, “you are mistaken, and I assure you that the old missionary, whom you trust more than me, would tell you the same. I admit that the medicine man misunderstood Harrison’s intentions and wanted to destroy us in a fit of superstitious rage. His partner's death will bring him back to reason and he will feel ashamed to see us.”

“Jo, listen to what I am going to tell you, and I think that I am old enough to speak to you in such a way. You know that hundreds of Halfbreeds live among the tribes. Most of them have all the cleverness of the Indian hidden under their light brown skin and all the bad passions of the white race. Few on the other hand have the dispositions of the redskin and the love of peace and mildness of a good paleface.

You are one of the latter, and it does not take much astuteness to see how at times the blood of your mother and at other times the blood of your father gains the upper hand.”

“I admit that no full-blooded redskin has better beaver hunting and lynx tracking skills, and you read and write as well as the old missionary himself. In this case however, I wish you had a bit more Indian distrust and cleverness. But as I have often told you, you are sometimes white when you should be red, and sometimes the other way around, and many troubles in your life will be the result of it. Trust an old hunter.”

“You make the same reproach as my foster father and may be entirely correct,” replied the *Halfbreed*. “But I fail to see why I should mistrust or attribute treachery to a man who always meets me with the greatest affability. It's different with the Pawnee medicine man. I won't forgive him his betrayal, and even though he prides himself on his relationship with my mother, I'll make certain that in the future he will refrain from such deeds, or I'll singlehandedly put a bullet in his head. By the way, it seems rather suspicious to me that he was able to predict the demise of certain people so accurately, and I think t he was somehow able to get fast-acting poison form somewhere. But he shall speak!”

“Alright,” replied Lefèvre, “the medicine man must speak; not only about his prophecies, but also about his relationship with Harrison, and how he was so accurately informed about our trip. Joe, Joe, the priest is behind all this; only he knew the route we took. The open hostility, yes, the secret treason of the Indian is not half

as deserving of punishment as the quiet scheming with which the white scoundrel has made the country's native man into an instrument for his shameful deeds. That the medicine man likes to let himself be used for such shameful deeds is in accordance with his natural affinities, but then again also in his mad desire: to be considered equipped with supernatural powers in the eyes of his tribe. That fool," Lefèvre continued with a hearty laugh, "even once thought to be able to enchant me with his feats. He wanted to prove his magical powers by loading a bullet into his gun and prompted an Indian boy to fire at his chest from five feet away. The young man fired, but instead of collapsing from being pierced by a bullet, he stood unharmed and threw to the one who had shot him the bullet he had supposedly caught in midflight. What a fool! As if I didn't know that the bullet was made from balled up damp dirt and smoothed with lead after drying. Of course, it must have fallen to dust under the metal ramrod and mixed with the powder steam when the gun was fired. The Indian lad was understandably frightened beyond measure, dropped the gun, ran away as fast as his feet could carry him, and still today believes firmly in the invincibility of the powerful medicine man," the hunter ended his story with another laugh.

"I have known his trick a long time," remarked the *Halfbreed*, "but he was always hesitant to have me witness such deceitful acts. He must know well that I wouldn't hesitate to reveal them, and this awareness may have contributed to his feelings of revenge against me, but pay attention! We are drifting against the branch of a submerged tree!"

Lefèvre though had already noticed the dangerous cliff, and stemming his rudder against the latter, he endeavored to give the raft another direction.

At the same moment however the vehicle received such a violent blow that the hunters almost fell into the water, and the belts which held the logs together snapped in some parts.

The raft had run onto another hidden cliff and lay motionless for a minute. But after having swayed back and forth several times, it was taken by the current and spun around its own axis with greater-than-ever speed. Then, it glided away from the cliff, and like a toy in the surging floods, it shot on its way in the main channel without hindrance.

“Lucky escape!” Lefèvre called out, after having regained his composure. He was ready to face other challenges. “What do you say, Wabash, don’t you feel as if we are drifting to the opposite bank?”

“We are drifting to the opposite bank,” replied the Indian, who was occupied with tying the loosened logs together again. “A second hit like this will be too much for the belts,” he continued, “and I fear the eddies in the turns of the channel more than all driftwood and cliffs.”

“You are right, Wabash,” the *Halfbreed* replied, “even with decent oars we would hardly manage to negotiate the turns unharmed.”

“In any case, we are closer to the bank and may possibly save ourselves by swimming,” Lefèvre added.

“It's difficult to swim here,” the *Halfbreed* said, while looking around.

Indeed, it requires a brave heart to feel no trepidation in this situation and such surroundings.

When the moon shone through the torn clouds, it illuminated the expansiveness of the stream's waters, which seemed to have gained new life from the floating masses of wood. Mighty trees with towering crowns, whose heavy root ends dragged on the bottom thus curbing their speed, floated lazily on their way. Rushing past them were branchless logs that might have decayed for years at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. Short stumps, broken pieces of branches, and bark followed in a circling motion after them, or piled together to form small rafts, which were then torn apart by the next rapids. Half-decayed trees stuck their heavy, water-saturated roots deep into the sand bed of the stream, while the lighter part, half-swimming, rose above the moving water level. The rushing of the waters pushed them down, their own lightness lifted them back up, and up and down it went, below and above the surface, with the regularity of a pendulum.* Next to these clumsy divers, were upright, flexible little trees and twigs, which, being held to the ground in similar fashion, reached up with their scrawny arms. The current kept them, too, in constant motion, and like a worker who operates a saw bends down and stands back up,* these logs bowed and lifted over the churning waves; here in slow steady rhythm, there

* *In Amerika allgemein unter dem Namen Diver, Taucher bekannt.* (In America known as *diver*). Footnote from the original.

* *Sawer, Sawyer Säger nennt der Amerikaner sehr bezeichnend diese beweglichen Stämme.* (*Sawer, sawyer* the American aptly calls these logs). Footnote from the original.

with comical haste. Alluvial leaves and weeds decorated each branch like garlands and helped complete the whimsical picture that made the trees appear alive.

The waves thundered eerily and churned where they found the slightest resistance; just as eerily howled the wind across the wide stream, and the fragile raft flew along with top speed. The three hunters looked ahead and had the poles ready for immediate use.

A thick cloud veiled the moon now and then, making the shadows on the river and in the forest even darker.

“We are approaching an island,” the *Halfbreed* suddenly exclaimed.

“If it's only no log island,” answered Lefèvre, who was trying to make out the dark silhouette on the water.

“A log reef,” said the *Halfbreed* while he held his oar firmly and at the same time grabbed his gun and bullet pouch.

“And one of the nicest kind,” confirmed Lefèvre. “That dog of priest,” he continued grumbling and stepped next to the *Halfbreed* to help him to weaken the first impact. The Omaha didn't stay back either, but falling to one knee, he awaited the decisive moment.

The waves carried the three adventurers with the speed of an arrow; the island became bigger in front of them and they heard the churning water more conspicuously, while it broke foaming among the logs. A slight blow shook the raft; as soon as the hunters had regained their balance, the unsteady vehicle ran against the

wooden cliffs with such great force that the tied up logs were driven apart with a thundering noise and started to raise up steeply.

All three were thrown to the front by the heavy blow, and before they could find time to raise from the branches and trees that surrounded them, one log of the shattered raft smashed down in between the Omaha and the *Halfbreed*, so that thick trunks shattered under him like thin twigs and splinters flew far around.

Luckily the hunters had been unable to move because in any other position the heavy log would have meant certain doom for one of them. Now it was only the *Halfbreed's* gun that had suffered damage since a large splinter had broken its barrel.

“Here we are,” said Lefèvre as he left his uncomfortable position and climbed higher onto the raft. “Here we are, and thank God without having lost any limbs. But how we shall leave this island, that’s another question altogether. What good fortune that the blankets and the meat were not lost because this cheerful trip hasn’t lessened the appetite I have been feeling since before the Omaha arrived. No redskin has ever been deceived better than the Pawnees,” he continued with joyous laughter. “I would love to see how they investigate every tree when day breaks, only to finally reach the place where we left the bank. And then the clever tracking dog, how skillfully Wabash silenced him,” and here the hunter, whose hair had turned grey from such scenes, laughed as if the events of the evening had been more of an arranged pleasure than anything else.

“If we only had solid ground under our feet,” remarked the *Halfbreed*, who had taken a seat next to Lefèvre on a bleached log. “We must reach the mission before my benefactor dies.”

“I haven't forgotten that,” replied Lefèvre with the gentleness of a child, “I haven't forgotten, dear Joe. But I am of the opinion that some matters may keep the soul of a departing man a bit longer in his body. His love for you and the desire to see you again will keep the good old man breathing, so that you, if it has to be, may close his eyes for him. I will make sure that the venomous worm of a priest won't come near you. Of course, we will hurry as much as we can, and I have only shared my opinion with you to establish that not all is lost if we have to spend several more hours on this reef, where incidentally I wish Harrison and his Pawnee friends were instead. Wabash,” he now called to the Indian, “let's have a fire, our wet clothes can use heat just as much as the half-raw meat!”

Since his earliest childhood the *Halfbreed* had been instructed by the pious, patient missionary to judge human beings according to their best side, and to not measure their blameworthy characteristics against their good ones. Not guided by an instinctual feeling of mistrust like his older companion—which in Lefèvre had certainly been sustained by certain events—he couldn't come to terms with the thought that Harrison was really plotting against him. Therefore he did not respond to Lefèvre's charges, but simply voiced his satisfaction over the fact that they were able to continue their journey on the now more closely situated left bank, where they were longer in danger of being stalked by the Pawnees.

“The Pawnees won’t stop us, neither on the left, nor on the right river bank,” the Omaha remarked while breaking dry twigs off the closest tree trunks. “By dawn we will be in the territory of the Otoe and the Omaha, where we are as safe as in the mission's sanctuary.” He took the burning bushel of grass that Joseph had passed him and climbed from the reef to a suitable spot.

Almost level with the water’s surface, on a strong, damp tree trunk, he built the fire in such a way that it couldn't be detected from the mouth of the barely-three-miles-away Eau Qui Cours, yet at the same time the sharp wind wasn't able to drive the flames into the woodwork. Then he took over the preparation of the meat, while Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* managed to make relatively comfortable encampments by cleverly collecting driftwood blocks and washed up grass. After the simple meal, each man wrapped himself in his blanket to use the short time until daybreak to rest.

Lefèvre and the Omaha almost immediately fell asleep; the *Halfbreed* on the other hand contemplated the moving waters of the Missouri. He remembered the devoted missionary and his teachings, and all the blissful days he had spent under his faithful care.

The image of his poor, departed mother with her beautiful, big, black eyes appeared¹⁵ to him as well; pleasant, but indistinct since many, many years had passed since those eyes had looked at him. Time had faded her image, but the eyes remained unforgettable, and their impression inextinguishable. A tear rolled across his cheek, then he thought of his father and convulsively balled his fist, but only for a few

¹⁵ *Trat vor seine Seele.*

minutes, and when sleep overcame¹⁶ him and he closed his eyes, mild feelings had once again the upper hand over the Indian vengefulness. —

When there was sufficient daylight, so that the three hunters were able to distinguish distant objects, they were once again on the move. They explored the skeleton-like reef in different directions and carefully checked the depth of the water, which was foaming on both sides. The length of the peculiar island may have been close to two hundred feet, the width on the other hand no more than twenty-five to thirty. It was composed of tree trunks, branches, and twigs of every size, lying atop and next to each other in wild chaos, just as the push of the water had lifted them or had pushed them aside. The terrible ice runs of some years had gnawed on them, without unsettling them, but one could everywhere perceive the traces the drifting ice floats had left behind. Giant-like blocks of discovered wood exhibited deeply torn grooves; decaying logs of unusual thickness were, just like the thin twigs, broken off. Where an abundance of sap had prevented brittleness, one could find even strong trees turned and twisted like willow whips. From the atmosphere's influence the masses of wood had mostly been blanched white, and reminded one of mighty heaps of bleached bones of primordial creatures.

The three hunters then climbed around on scaffolding-like structure for quite a while and finally reached its southern end. There the two river channels that roared past the reef on each side took different directions and flowed toward both banks in obtuse angles. In the quiet water under the island, the sand-carrying waves had

¹⁶ *Schlaf ihm die müden Augenlieder senkte..*

deposited their solid particles a long time ago and laid the foundation for a sand bank, which had slowly gained such circumference that it spanned the entire width of the stream, leaving open deep, quick flowing channels only next to the riverbank. The width of the sandbank was noticeable from afar because the shallow water that covered it appeared like a mirror on the surface. Numerous dispersed snags, halfway covered in sand, broke through the smooth surface. White and blue herons stood in the still waters or on the dry logs, almost as still as the trunks themselves, and looked meditatively into the floods.

Now the hunters went ahead with their plan, and while the Omaha undressed and inspected the limits of the shelf close to the left river bank more closely, Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* built a raft strong enough to carry all of them—or at least get their weapons and clothes to shore—from light blocks of wood.

Not half an hour had passed, when they pushed away from the reef with united strength and drifted with little effort into the fifty foot channel that still separated them from the left bank.

At this point they all undressed completely and took up the poles that served them as oars. As soon as they saw the channel a short distance ahead and were certain that it was clear of large, dangerous snags, they pushed their vessel into the current with all their might while climbing aboard at the same time.

As soon as the raft was taken up by the wild waters, it shot ahead with terror inducing speed, and only due to their greatest effort the venturous men slowly reached the middle of the channel and then across the latter.

For almost a quarter of a mile they were carried along by the water like that, when they noticed that the channel turned away from the riverbank, thus placing them in danger to once again be carried to the middle of the large river. Every delay could mean harm, and since only four feet of water covered the bottom, they grabbed their belongings and jumped into the floods toward the shore. Their feet met solid sand, and they managed easily to reach the shore without wetting their weapons and shooting supplies.

“Well done,” exclaimed Lefèvre laughing, while he seated himself on the ground with his possessions and began to dress. “Well done, sacré tonnerre! But *Wabash*, now a piece of meat and then in a marching pace¹⁷ toward the mission.”

“Well done,” the Omaha repeated in his imperturbable manner, following Lefèvre’s prompt.

The *Halfbreed* on the other hand had fallen silent and attempted to patch the barrel of his gun with the help of moistened leather straps.

Soon the hikers found themselves a short distance from the bank of the Missouri on a well-trodden Indian trail, whose turns they followed southwards with fast steps.

4. At the Mission

A significant distance downriver of the outlet of the Nebraska, or Platte River,, until far, far upriver to where the Yellow Stone River unites with the

¹⁷ *Im Trabe*

Missouri, grassy green hills border the densely forested Missouri valley.¹⁸ These hills, which are only rarely decorated with sparse woodlands and more often with scattered, crippled oak trees, form the border of the higher grasslands, and they slowly came into existence from the water runoff of the plains. A wanderer can enjoy a delightful view of the stream and its valley, in which the wild waters rule deliberately as the powerful master of the valley. That is because the Missouri doesn't always follow the same course, but careens, where the topography allows it, capriciously back and forth in its wide valley. It deposits playfully on one bank what it has torn away from the other, carries islands and peninsulas together, digs side channels, just to close them back up thereafter, and is unremitting in its work.

White intruders, just like the red-skinned son of the prairie, often enjoy the view from the hills; but they choose them less often for settlement and wigwams. They prefer to live in the valleys where the winter storm that blows without resistance across the prairies does not hit them with full force.

However, those hills are not entirely deserted, since many great chiefs and warriors lie buried up there, and their resting places are recognizable by the long poles and small stone heaps their tribe members have erected as memorials.

¹⁸ *Schon eine bedeutende Strecke unterhalb der Mündung des Nebraska oder Flachen Flusses, bis weit, weit hinauf, bis dahin wo der Yellow-Stone-Fluß sich mit dem Missouri vereinigt, fassen größtentheils grüne, dichtbegraste Hügel das baumreiche Thal des letzteren ein.*

In a peculiar but not ungentle contradiction to the lonely resting places of wild, pagan men stands the Presbyterian mission in the Council Bluffs.¹⁹

Prominently situated on one of the treeless hills and visible from afar lies the great, white mission house and looks across the charming but still wild landscape. It beckons the weary traveler, whether black, red, or white man, kind reception is extended to all under the hospitable roof.

At the time our narrative takes place, the mission had already been standing for many years. Sure enough, an Indian tent and then a log cabin had been the scene of first conversion attempts, but under the blessed works of a wise missionary, the cabin had to make way for a stately, two-storied wooden house, in which numerous children of the neighboring tribes found a new home²⁰ and appropriate instruction.

The dignified old missionary, Mac-Neal, whom we had already mentioned to be the *Halfbreed's* foster father, had lived long enough to observe the fruits of his hard, self-sacrificing work and was able to enjoy them. That is to say, not far from the mission house, in a small, sheltered canyon, there was a row of small log cabins. In the course of time, the same were erected, one after the other, by adolescent Indian pupils, and were thereafter inhabited by a brown-skinned couple, who had been educated and married by the dignified clergyman. This newly created community was initially small, but it was to be expected that through further conscientious

¹⁹ The actual city of Council Bluffs was not incorporated until 1853. The “bluffs” here is a geographical area. The narrative begins in 1851.

²⁰ *Heimat*

management the young colony would increase its dimension, and thus preserve a not insignificant part of the otherwise doomed natives.

That was the life and the work of a man who could have served all the missionaries scattered over the earth— but who mostly misunderstood their work very much— as a noble example.

In the mission house's southern gable end, in a spacious chamber, in fact the only one which Mc-Neal had designated for his exclusive use, stayed the head of the family, how the dignified missionary liked to be called when he was assembled for joint prayer, for play, or for a meal with the numerous fellow housemates.

Even though dusk had already fallen, the windows were still partially covered; if one stayed in the chamber for a while and the eye became used to the semi-darkness, it was possible to discern the old man, who laid stretched out on his wide bed fully clothed, but with an expression of physical suffering.

It was a woeful picture, the old man with his snow-white hair, with the high brow and the peaceful blue eyes, which, even half-closed, touchingly animated the haggard, pale features. He had his hands folded on his breast, and held a small package, apparently letters and writings. One almost inaudible and irregular breath followed the other, and when he closed his eyes for a few minutes from exhaustion, he might have been mistaken for an awe-inspiring dead body.

By his head, next to a little table carrying several medicine bottles and a half-empty water glass, sat an old, withered Indian woman on a wolf skin. Her attire was made of materials delivered by civilization, but fashioned after Indian patterns and

taste. She wore a common Indian blanket, which she had cloaked over her entire person and most parts of her face as a sign of deep mourning. From time to time she glanced at the pale features of the old man with grief-stricken eyes. He had once taken her in caringly after his arrival in the area; he had given the homeless, deserted woman a home, taught her, and made her a part of his household. She, his faithful servant, had in return shared good times and bad times with him.

The Indian woman at times glanced toward the one window where a man of approximately thirty years sat and looked out through the dim pane. His suit revealed him to be another member of the clergy, even though the long, sharp beak-nose, the shifty, dark eyes, and the in-the-middle-of-the-forehead-parted hair, in spite of the devoted countenance, did only little to highlight the dignity, which, of course quite often unjustly, is ascribed to the clergy.

There was dead silence in the spacious house because thanks to foresight of the selfsame man, whom we know by the name Harrison, all the boarding pupils of the small colony had been accommodated. Only in the hall, which served as corridor and dining hall at once, two old Negro women and several Indian warriors sat in front of the faint fire. The first bemoaned with the garrulousness that is so characteristic for their *Race* the hopeless condition of their benevolent master, while the latter at times indicated their sympathy through serious words. —

“What time is it, Harrison?” the missionary suddenly asked with a quiet voice.

Harrison startled as if he had been in deep thought, fingered the hands of the antiquated wall clock, whose ticking had been the only sound in the room for a while,

and stepping toward the bedstead, he replied just as quietly: "It is in the ninth hour, honorable father; shall I serve you a drink?"

"Yes, I am thirsty!" lisped the old man. He turned his head to the side and prepared to take his regalement.

As soon as he had expressed his wish, the old Indian woman, throwing back her blanket, jumped up and wrested the half-filled glass of water away from Harrison. "Drink, good Master," she said in broken English. She propped the suffering man's head up with the tender care of a mother, and then brought the glass to his lips. "For the sake of my perished children and my bludgeoned husband, but also in remembrance of the first drink you handed me many years ago, no other shall serve you."

The dying man smiled slightly moistened his lips, and signaling Harrison with a glance, he whispered: "Forgive the faithful soul her coarseness, she grew old with me and is jealous of everyone who is kind to me."

"I honor the devotedness of the lonely woman," replied Harrison, and stepping toward the Indian woman, who had meanwhile assumed her mourning position again, he placed his hand on her head as if he was blessing her, and spoke in a loud and grave manner: "God bless your faithfulness, you good woman."

"Don't touch me!" replied the woman with vehemence, "do not touch me, and let me grieve for my Master."

Harrison again turned to the window, and murmuring a malediction through his teeth, he looked out onto the moonlit plain. The Indian woman on the other hand

began to sing with a wailing voice. Quietly the monotonous melody in a minor key faded away into the folds of the muffling blanket, the melancholic music accompanied by the clocks pacing rhythm; the old man was dozing and a unbearable dread overcame the lurking Harrison.

A quarter of an hour passed, the dusk had become darkness, and the moon painted fantastical figures onto the opposite wall through the small windows. Harrison now could no longer bear the eerie silence and the even eerier singing. Gingerly he tiptoed over to the Indian woman and, touching her on the shoulder, prompted her not to disturb her ill benefactor. The woman however did not pay heed to his words, and neither changed position, nor silenced her lamentations.

“Shall I light the lamp, good father, and read to you?” he then asked the missionary.

“I thank you,” the rudely awakened old man replied. “Let Nekoma sing her rough melodies; they come from a pious, grateful heart. The same God who counted my heartbeats knows to honor the faithful creature's thoughts, and they reach his throne as prayers. To my heart the sounds of true pain sound like greetings of bygone days; like regards I am supposed to carry with me to a better life. — Tears of joy fall onto the cradle of the newborn child, blessed be the one who after a long earthly life cries one single tear at his demise. It is a comforting thought after all: to be cried over sincerely.”

“He is talking madly,” said Harrison to himself while stepping back to the window. “I wish this night was over.” He looked pensively out onto the little mission

garden. His breast moved, albeit not peacefully like the dying old man's, or sorrowfully like the old Indian woman's; no, fear of the darkness, fear of death's image and his own conscience had won the upper hand in him. He considered how he had become a willing tool for the execution of criminal plans. The crowns of the young fruit trees in the garden swayed back and forth; his feverish imagination turned them into terrifying creatures, some of which beckoned encouragingly, while others shook their crowns threateningly. He considered his early childhood when similar feelings crept into his then still pure mind, when nightly darkness found him alone and his childish imagination made him see monstrosities in every shadow. He sighed; the memory of his first guilty deed appeared in his mind; it paled in comparison to the criminal deeds he had committed since, yet it was significant enough to provide the clever priest Antonio with means to put unbreakable fetters on him and to make him a obedient slave of his will. He had been too much of a coward to break the ties when there had still been time, but now? Now it was too late! — He thought of the sparkling gold that beckoned him as a wage. — But for what? For shed blood, it echoed in his heart. "I have gone too far to turn around now," he told himself; "but this shall be my last offense. Once I have sufficient means, I will escape the evil influences and become happy and content." —

Many, many times such thoughts had assailed him; and this, too, was not his last crime; it was only the darkness that instilled terror in him, and his not yet entirely quiet conscience that had been momentarily awakened by the angel of death that

hovered in the room. The rising sun would give him new courage. "I wish it was day!" he sighed once more while his gaze drifted into the distance.

Suddenly, his eyes fell on three shadowy figures that had appeared on the hill from the Missouri side and approached the mission with a quick pace. "If the Pawnee missed the *Halfbreed!*" Harrison said with a slight trace of joy. "I will be doomed if he reaches New Orleans," was his second thought. "But the distance to there is far, and I can't be doomed on account of a *Halfbreed.*"

The three wanderers had meanwhile entered the garden, and soon a movement in the hall indicated that they had sought entry.

"It's Joseph," the missionary said to the Indian woman, who had jumped up. "Call him in immediately; I knew I would see him again before the end. Call him now, I have many, many things to talk over with him, and my minutes are numbered and are running out fast. Lefèvre, too, shall come so that I can shake his hand and thank him for the service he did for me so that I can die in peace now."

When the Indian woman reached the door, Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* met her. Without paying attention to her or Harrison, both hurried to the deathbed, to where the moonlight had slowly found its way; deeply emotional, they took the hands of the old man. Lefèvre was the first to find words.

"Here, I am bringing you Joseph, venerable father," he began. "Here I am bringing Joseph, just as I had promised you! It was an arduous journey, and we slept little; but I shall be scalped alive," he continued with an agitated voice, "if I wasn't keen on bringing you such joy. Don't speak, don't speak," he said in the softest tone

his rough voice allowed; don't speak, but save your strength for Joseph. But if you are really departing this world and you want to do something for me, you know I am no Presbyterian but a Catholic and have seen few churches in my life, so put in a good word for me with the virgin Mary and the other saints. That is if you happen to meet them; and I think that all good humans reach the same place, regardless of differences in religion or color, if the good Lord does not want to be unjust. And now, farewell, goodbye.”

With these words the simple trapper squeezed the missionary's hand, brushed over his eyes with the sleeve of his leather hunting shirt, and without waiting for an answer from the old man, he turned to Harrison, who had not moved from the window.

Then, as if he was ashamed of his soft-heartedness, he muttered a string of his favorite curses, and ended with: that he considered himself happy to have met with Harrison, and that he entreated him to come down into the hall with him in order to chat in front of the fire, and to leave the missionary and Joseph alone during that time.

Harrison could hardly hide the displeasure he felt over this request and excused himself with the reason that his duty as a priest tied him to the bed of the dying man.

“*Sapristi,*” thundered Lefèvre, “do you think that your damned, sour face is necessary to make this noble man's departure from this earth easier? Come, we want to chat in the hall, and the most charming of adventures I will tell you about will most interest you. In particular, how your medicine man was most admirably able to find

the path I had taken, and how we deceived him and helped one of his comrades to the eternal hunting grounds.”

“You speak in riddles,” replied Harrison, who even in the darkness was barely able to contain his terror, yet followed the trapper to the door. “My medicine man?” he then asked, “my medicine man?” — What are you trying to say?”

“The Pawnee medicine man,” Lefèvre answered with suppressed sharpness, “the red-skinned Pawnee wretch, whose wigwam stands down here at the mission hill! Do you remember him now?”

“Of course I remember him,” replied Harrison, who had regained his composure in the meantime, “and I intend to visit him very early tomorrow morning. I haven’t seen him for several days, but today received a message from him, shortly before evening. He supposedly returned yesterday from a short hunting excursion where he had been gravely wounded; he took a bullet to the flank and asked me to come down and look at his wound. Only Mac Neal’s condition has kept me from following the poor man’s request today.”

Now it was Lefèvre’s turn to pause. “What!” he exclaimed, after he had silently shut the door to the missionary’s chamber, “the Pawnee medicine man here since yesterday and heavily wounded? It’s not possible!”

“And yet, it must be so,” replied Harrison, who really had received the message, but had interpreted the Pawnee’s return and wounding differently, according to his own plans.

“I don’t count this human being as part of the better Indian population,” he continued with a relenting demeanor, “but where it is in my power to help and to alleviate, I can’t ask about the moral worth of a human being. You may accompany me tomorrow in the early morning to the man’s tent to convince yourself of his condition.”

When Harrison then explained that after these disquisitions his presence in the hall should no longer be required, the trapper’s subdued anger welled up anew.

“I have respect for your position,” he called, “but if you think you can shake me off like a worn garment, you are wrong! As long as my name is Lefèvre, you will not enter the missionary’s room as long as he is talking to Joe, and if I have to hang on to you with my teeth! And what do you want up there? Do you believe that a man who never so much as hurt a bug requires your spiritual comfort? I am less than a worm in comparison to the pious Mac Neal, but this I tell you, I would rather have conjurers and medicine men at my deathbed and listen to their wild songs about the happy hunting grounds than listen to your blubbering about damnation that frightens the parting soul.”

“Don’t get upset, dear friend,” replied Harrison with false mildness. “You see how amenable I am now that I have taken a look into your open, honest heart. A man like you who spent his thirty years in the wilderness and whose opinions are shaped by nature deserves the utmost respect from the world. Despite the fact that the difference of opinion—I feel it—is only to be sought in the superficial forms, a conversation with you is most instructive for me, the naïve city dweller, so please take my hand as a sign of sincere friendship.”

The naïve city dweller, as he called himself, however seemed rather acquainted with the weaknesses of the western hunters, who in general liked to be reminded of their adventurous wanderings. The flattering words did indeed not remain entirely without influence on Lefèvre; but they only made him a bit more agreeable without unsettling his deep-rooted distrust the least bit.

“St. Napoleon,” the trapper exclaimed, since he believed in his naïveté that his name only needed to be uttered more often and somewhat louder in the civilized world in order to include him into the lengthy gallery of saints and semi-saints. “In the name of the holy Napoleon, you are either a very pious man or a cunning rascal because your smooth, peaceful exterior can conceal only one of the two. Meanwhile, I will think the best of you— until I uncover the Pawnee Indian’s tricks; but here we are,” he continued as he stepped to the fireplace and greeted the Indians and Negro women, whom Wabash had joined. “Sit with my Omaha friend and indulge in conversion attempts with him, he will listen attentively and not leave your side, in the meantime I will lay down for some sleep.” While he spoke, he unrolled a heap of fur, threw himself down on them, and after several vain attempts to keep his little pipe lit, he finally closed his eyes.

Harrison had not dared to respond to the trapper's unaffected speech; he knew his nature did not tolerate opposition where he believed himself to be in the right. Like those who are guilty of reprehensible acts, he feared to hear the truth, and after the latest outburst he could hardly doubt that that he would hear it from this simple man in a clear manner.

Thus he was silent, and in order to not provoke Lefèvre any further, he sat exactly as ordered, and deep silence reigned in the sparsely lit hall. The group of Negro women had fallen to a low whisper; the brown warriors sat huddled together in silence. Harrison on the other hand held a book, and, holding it against the flames, appeared to be reading busily. When he now and then turned the page, and his lurking eyes furtively glanced at Wabash, they met the Indian's big watchful eyes, then he lowered them back to the book in his hand as if he were ashamed.

5. The Death of a Just Man

After Lefèvre and Harrison had left the death chamber, the *Halfbreed* took a seat next to the missionary, and holding his hand in his own, he dolefully watched the closed eyes and the barely audible breaths of his benefactor. The moon now illuminated the entire group, making the gaunt features of the old man appear paler and those of the *Halfbreed* darker, just like the Indian woman. “Cover the window,” whispered Joseph to her, “the moonlight might hurt his eyes.”

“No, my child,” said the missionary who had heard these words, “the moon is not blinding me; let its light rest on my bed; after all, it is my oldest friend, the only friend that remains from my childhood. It was so often witness to my worries and my joys; let it hence be witness to our departure...” — — — — —

But I must save my strength—I can feel it—my end is near. In case you weren't able to meet me alive anymore, I had entrusted Nekoma with my last will and my advice to you. While I now prepare for eternal life, she shall convey everything to

you pertaining to your birth and your parents. I will heed every word, so that no error, no deception slips in. But moisten my lips beforehand, and then, Nekoma, you may begin.”

Silently Joseph heeded his foster father’s wish; his heart was seized too painfully for him to find words, and tear after tear rolled across his bronze-colored cheeks.

After he had assumed his position by the old man’s side again, Nekoma, without changing her position, threw back her blanket and looked at the *Halfbreed*’s sad countenance. The *Halfbreed* in turn watched the pale features of the missionary with care.

With clear words in which one discern the Indian manner of speaking, the old woman then began her narration:

“Joseph, your grandmother’s father was a mighty chief and warrior of the Pawnee Nation. Petalesharo²¹ was wise in council and undefeatable in battle. No pious missionary had revealed the teachings of Christianity to him, but his actions

²¹ Fact seems to mix with fiction here: Petalesharo (c.1797-c.1832) did in fact save a girl in 1817 that was destined for sacrifice by the Pawnees in the Morning Star ceremony. This was widely reported in contemporary newspapers. However, she was Comanche, not Sioux as Möllhausen’s text has it. Petalesharo was a member of the first Native American delegation to be painted by Charles Bird King in Washington. While in Washington, he was presented with a silver medal memorializing the heroic act. The medal was recovered in Howard County, Nebraska in 1883 and is in the collections of the Nebraska Historical Society. It is difficult to ascertain whether Möllhausen’s switch—making the captured girl Sioux rather than Comanche—was accidental or deliberate. Further, he chose to alter the spelling, omitting an ‘r’ from the American spelling Petalesharo and naturalizing the ‘sh’ into the German ‘sch’.

were those of a Christian. Petalesharo wife came from sunset, from a hostile tribe— she came from the Sioux Nation.”

“Before she moved into his tent and became his squaw, preparing his food and the soft-tanned hides of the game he had hunted, she had been in the Wolf Pawnee village. But she had been a prisoner appointed to be sacrificed and to be scattered with the four winds as ash, in order to make cornfields thrive. The day on which the antelope-eyed Sioux squaw was to be burned came closer. The ceremony promised to be grand, since wise medicine men had made many preparations for it. Two stakes had been erected, and they tied the victim in between them with outstretched arms. All inhabitants of the three Pawnee villages were present and formed a large circle; in it marched the medicine man singing and drumming for the sake of torturing the girl. Farther apart stood young and old warriors, each with an arrow on the bowstring, in order to send it into the victim on a given signal and to leave the body to the flames.”

“Then, the oldest medicine man moved the fire close to the bare shoulder of the girl, when suddenly the young Petalesharo burst into the circle. Coming to the stakes, he cut the ties from atop his horse, lifted the lifeless girl into the saddle, and before one could recover from terror over such boldness, he dashed away with his prize. Angry howling followed the fugitives, but Pawnee didn’t dare to use their weapons out of fear to hit the son of the chief. In some distance, the young Sioux

squaw was given a horse, and twelve hours later she found herself in safety and on the way to her family.” *)

“Petalesharo himself later snatched the girl again; willingly she followed him as his wife; Petalesharo daughter was your grandmother, and the blood of the great chief flows in your veins.”

“Many, many winters have passed sine then, and many human beings have entered the blessed hunting grounds, or, as my Master has taught me, a better life.”

“Of Petalsharo’s descendants only your mother lived, a young, fleet-footed squaw. —Then a young, pale hunter came up the Missouri, in a big, fire-breathing canoe, in the company of the fur traders. He was rich, kept beautiful weapons, and beguiled your mother’s heart. But he only lived among the tribes for a short while; he went to where he had come from, and left your mother to the mockery of the men, women, and children.”

“I already lived with him, my white Master, who at that time had pitched a tent and taught the Indians. All redskins loved him, since he had only one tongue, and divided his last piece of bread and meat with them.”

“Stop it,” the missionary interrupted the storyteller, “I only did as I wanted the people to do to me, and I don’t want to be reminded.”

Without changing the tone of her voice, the Indian woman continued: “It was a black, stormy night, only a few people were in our cabin. I had prepared food for

* *Bekannte Thatsache. Petalescharro’s Portrait befindet sich in Waschington [sic.] im Museum: Patent Office.* (Well known fact. Petalesharo’s portrait can be found in the museum in Washington: Patent Office). Footnote from the original.

everyone, and the missionary read wise words from a big book, when a weak female voice suddenly asked for entry. We opened the door, and in stepped your mother, the poor, crestfallen prairie flower. Her feet were torn by the stones and thorns, and warm blood marked her tracks. I translated, pleading with my master for her safety and shelter, and immediately he gave his own bed to the helpless creature.”

“On the following morning, you were born. After two days, your mother went where there is no work, no anguish.”

“You know where she lies buried, since the pious man taught you your first prayer by her graveside. I have always loved you like my own child; since my hands cared for you and my eyes watched over you, but into what you are today— for you are a wise man— this man here has made you; he was your second father.”

The Indian woman was silent now; and wrapping herself in her blanket, she started the subdued mourning song again, which was at times broken by deep sighs and sobs.

“Is it really true, dear father, that you have to depart from us?” the *Halfbreed* asked with emotion in his voice. “Should there be no measure at all to keep you with those who call you theirs? Skilled doctors only live five days’ journey farther down and” —

“My son,” the old man interrupted him, “when the inner sap begins to dry, then the tree withers. But entirely aside from my seventy-eight years, human powers are unable to restore my health. I am familiar enough with my affliction to know this. I have lived long enough and perhaps not entirely in vain. Don’t burden my last hours

with unjustified complaints and hearken my advice, which I shall give you as my solemn legacy at your entry into this world.”

After a short break, the dying man continued with a clear voice:

“You have now heard—what wasn’t entirely new to you by the way—the manner in which you came to my house. —All means were used to bring you in contact with your father. I wrote to New Orleans twice, where your father owns a large plantation and many hundred Negro slaves, but both letters remained unanswered. I hence assumed that he was ashamed of you or had special reason to not care for you.

“Several years passed; I didn’t execute my plan to personally bring you to New Orleans and to introduce you to your father, and this is the only time I reproach myself. You will forgive me, yes, you have forgiven me, your tears are telling me this and I feel by the pressure of your hand. I had become used to you so much, grown fond of you; only the fear of losing you and to know you possibly scorned because of your origin kept me from seriously considering a journey to New Orleans. I may have acted unjustly, but you forgive me, for the sake of my affection.”

“Even though I didn’t oppose your fondness for the nomadic hunting life, you have learned enough not to blush if you met your father.” —

“I depart from you with the heartfelt wish that you may be united with your father. To make this simpler, I give you everything here that will help you recognize him.” With these words that missionary gave the *Halfbreed* a small package with which he had not parted since the beginning of his illness.

“It is my sworn testimony of the circumstances concerning your birth. It also contains a letter; it is sealed and marked with the correct address. Hand it over personally, but only after he has met you. The package additionally contains a keepsake from your mother. It consists of a simple necklace, which, instead of valuable pearls, only displays small brass buttons, supposedly a gift from your father that your poor mother wore, and the only heirloom of hers I can give you.”

“If you are in fact successful, dear Joseph, in winning your father’s affection—and I don’t doubt it—and to reach an independent, respectable position, than keep in mind the words of one who watched over you with the greatest care in early childhood. —Flee the temptation that will confront you daily in smiling garments. Since you are inexperienced and unacquainted with the dark side of civilized life, the danger is greater for you than for anyone who has already learned to avoid the same dangers in his youth. Only give your trust after having made certain that is earned. Distrust anyone who tells you flattery, and doubly if luck is on your side and you are blessed richly with earthly goods. Never forget your Indian heritage, or be ashamed of it; become acquainted with the prejudices that are unfortunately commonly held against any type of darker colored skin, and measure the flattery that you will hear as a rich man against them. If you step into flashy civilization in the Indian hunting shirt and adorned with the ornaments of a wild warrior, denying your upbringing and education, then you will be able to see through fellow human beings’ attitudes and be able to learn from them. The ruthlessness with which you will be met will mortify you, your pride will be bent, and you will acquire a knowledge of

humans that will place you in a position to avoid the threatening cliffs in the currents of the world more easily.” —

“I repeat once again what I tried to imprint on your mind as a child, and what I believe, rightfully so, to be at your core: never judge a human being according to his position, according to his riches or his skin color. The prayer of the beggar, who is not allowed to kneel by the side of ostentatious conceit; the prayer of the colored man, who earnestly calls upon his creator from a hidden corner, they reach the throne of the almighty no less than the pompous effusions of lustrous worship. There however the truth will be separated from falsehood, and the same love awaits the poor man as the rich man, the colored man as the white man. All races, all nations were placed on earth with the same rights and the same recognition for eternal blessedness, without regard for their interaction with God. —I repeat: don’t be ashamed of your heritage, but whatever you may face, don’t let your passions get the upper hand, and let yourself be swayed by fleeting thoughts of revenge to commit imprudent acts. Love your next of kin and yourself, and God above all.”

Here the old man fell silent. The formidable effort had been too much for him, and he closed his eyes in exhaustion.

Deeply moved the *Halfbreed* looked at his faithful benefactor’s pale features; he cried with the emotion of an ingenuous child and could not give words to his pain. Nekoma though began her mourning song again.

After half an hour had passed, the old man opened his eyes again. The light of the moon had slid from his bed and formed gleaming diamonds on the floor strewn with sand.

“Let me see the moon,” he whispered to the *Halfbreed*.

As soon as the latter had heard the request, he and Nekoma positioned the bed so that the full light of the moon fell onto the missionary's face, and he could at the same time overlook the moonlit landscape that stretched peacefully into the distance.

“I thank you, I thank you,” the old man said, while he extended his hand to both of them. “Time flies,” he continued with a barely audible voice. “Joseph, I leave you my small savings, Nekoma will give them to you; it’s not much, there were always some more needy than you. It will however, together with what you have earned yourself, make your entry into the world easier. Go to New Orleans — your father — good God — — — farewell my child, farewell Nekoma, Joseph will protect you. — Almighty God, bless my son — lead him — Joseph think of me — think of the poor persecuted race — Dear God — — —

The clock was ticking, the *Halfbreed* listened with bated breath, the Indian woman cried silently, but the good, faithful missionary slept, he slept his last sleep, the eternal sleep of a just man. His hands were cooling and rested on his heart, which had stopped beating.

The glimmering light in his eyes had sparkled up once more when he saw his foster son, only to fade quickly. A heart attack had shortened the missionary’s life by one or two days.

In the hall, they had been able to hear the bedstead being moved. Suspecting something extraordinary, Harrison had jumped up, and with the words: “the missionary is dying,” escaped his guard and rushed up the stairs. He arrived early enough, and eavesdropping at the door, he made out the last words of the dying man, but then Lefèvre and the Omaha stood next to him once again.

“He is dead,” he said, turning to the arriving men, “may God be merciful with his soul!”

“Save your pious thoughts for your own death certificate,” mumbled Lefèvre, who even in such a serious moment couldn’t hide his hatred. The missionary doesn’t need it, but you may one day require it,” and silently he walked away again. –

Painted warriors, wailing squaws, and white hunters stood around the grave, when the widely beloved Mac Neal was lowered into the cool earth of the lonely burial mound into the midst of several of his students who had preceded him. Harrison eulogized the blessed work of the departed in an impressive manner, and when one after the other stepped forward and threw a hand full of dust onto the simple casket, one or the other tear fell in as well. Even Lefèvre seemed to have forgotten his dislike for Harrison for now, since, pulling his grey felt hat into his face so that no one might see his red eyes, he said to the *Halfbreed* who was standing next to him: “Is it possible that such beautiful words can come from a corrupt heart?”

Harrison heard the question, but he ignored it and walked toward the mission with an aggrieved countenance and solemn comportment. There, he immediately

went into the missionary's chamber, locked the door, and seating himself at the table with a mocking smile, he wrote the following words:

“The missionary is dead. The first attempt failed. The one in question knows the secret; he is going to New Orleans equipped with money and proof, in order to settle in with his father²². Wounded pride can lead him to punishable criminal acts. Quick action will guarantee success and send the one in question back into the wilderness.

H.”

After having carefully sealed the letter, he wrote on the other side: “Mr. Browns in New Orleans, Post restante,” slid it into his chest pocket and went outside, where he awaited Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* to invite them to visit with the Pawnee medicine man. Only Lefèvre complied with the request. The *Halfbreed* was too deeply saddened to think about anything else but his fatherly friend who had passed on. He sought out old, faithful Nekoma and found some comfort in listening to the loud wails and praises of her master.

Once before, on the day of his arrival, Lefèvre had accompanied Harrison to the wounded Pawnee. He had convinced himself that the Indian truly had wounds on both sides, which were apparently caused by a bullet that had penetrated his body. To Lefèvre's question of whether the wound had really been torn by a bullet, Harrison only responded by inserting a probe deeply on each side. Lefèvre had only shaken his head and said that he had seen injuries of all kinds and that it resembled more the cuts

²² *sich einnisten.*

of a knife than anything else. The grave condition, as Harrison called it, prompted the trapper to not immediately commence with the interview he had at the tip of his tongue. He postponed it until the Indian was well, or dead, in which case, he clearly emphasized, he would no longer be interested in the whole matter. He did notice, however, that the remaining Pawnee families had suddenly left the vicinity of the mission hill.

As he was slowly descending the slope of the hill in Harrison's company, he loudly voiced his distrust. "I have seen it," he said, "that an Indian, in order to accomplish his aims, has wounded himself, and indeed so gravely that one was to believe in his certain death; two days later he went out again to steal cattle." *)

I can't concur entirely," Harrison replied, "the injuries appear to deep to be ascribed to self-mutilation."

"I care little, godly Sir," Lefèvre replied with a sarcastic tone, "I care little what your opinion is. I have shared mine; is it inconvenient to agree with me, then believe what is fitting for you. I can assure you of this much, the Pawnee wretch shall speak, and if I have to cut every words from his tongue."

"He ambushed us at the Eau Qui Cours, and I want to know who asked him to do so. In the name of the entire holy people! Whoever is behind it, I will settle my score with him with my own fists, since such a cowardly wretch is not worth a bullet."

*) *Ein solcher Fall ist von dem Verfasser selbst beobachtet worden.* (A case like this has been witnessed by the author himself.) Footnote in the original.

“Your feeling are natural, and your words indicate noble emotions,” replied Harrison, who felt uncomfortable in the company of the angry trapper. “You will allow me, a peaceful servant of the church, to give you the well-meant advice to not judge according to appearances. I have interrogated the wounded man sharply to determine whether your suspicions are warranted, but each time the injured replies with moaning and complaints, with curses about his Sioux enemies, one of which shot a bullet through him., He appears to know nothing about you or your journey, but I am far from considering his claims as incontrovertible, dear friend.”

“Which is wise of you,” replied Lefèvre, “because let me be hanged if that is not the Pawnee *Zauberer* who is creeping from the bushes to the tent down there, but hasten your steps and we shall see.”

Harrison, even though he was convinced of the Pawnee’s cleverness, was overcome by a pressing feeling when he also saw the Indian, who apparently used each bush, each unevenness of the ground to hide the view of his person from the two men.

Suddenly, he seemed to disappear into the high grass. Lefèvre hurried toward the medicine man's tent at full speed, but he had to cover three times the distance than the mysterious figure, who was in fact nobody but the medicine man himself. As he entered the tent out of breath, he immediately saw the Pawnee, who was lying fully undressed on a bison skin. His face was terribly distorted, and he wrought and bent his limbs as if he had been struck by fatal spasms.

“You seem very ill, my friend, “Lefèvre called out to him, while kicking him hard with his foot. “Just stand up and save your tricks for some other time, get up, I tell you, or will pour the coal from the fire pit on your bed!”

But the Pawnee didn't seem to notice him and didn't feel the painful touch. Ever more forcefully he tossed himself around and pleaded with the priest who had stepped in with a truly harrowing voice.

When he noticed the Indians condition, he immediately pulled a small bottle of brown liquid from his pocket, and kneeling next to him, commenced to moisten the wounds, which had begun to bleed again, with the tincture. The Indian calmed down; Harrison took his pulse, and turning to Lefèvre, he exclaimed: “The poor, pitiable man! He lies with the highest fever; he wounds appear to be worse. We must return to the mission immediately and send him cooling medicine. Come, let's not lose any time.”

Lefèvre had watched the events attentively; an unbelieving smile appeared on his bearded lips, but he knew that all attempts to make the medicine man talk would fail, and thus he devised a plan: he was going to ambush the con artist outside of his tent and outwit him.

After Harrison had once more examined the wounds carefully with the probe and cooled them with the tincture, the two men left the tent. They hadn't walked twenty steps before Harrison remembered that he had left the medication by the sick man's bed. He hurried back quickly, and found himself by Lefèvre's side again soon; yet, he had found time to slip the Pawnee the letter and instruct him to leave the

vicinity of the mission as fast as possible, and to hurry the five days' journey to the southern town St. Joseph, where the closest post office was.

The outwitted man was this time Lefèvre, since when he just an hour later crept toward the medicine man's tent, where he expected to appear unexpectedly, he found nothing but pressed down grass and hard-trodden earth where previously the cunning Indian's wigwam had stood.

It was thus natural that his distrust for Harrison increased after this incident; yet he was so ashamed that he, an old hunter and trapper, had been duped that he didn't say a word to neither Harrison, nor to the *Halfbreed*. The pernicious letter however was on its way to New Orleans.

Fourteen days later, the Halfbreed stood in the shipyard of the young, booming city of St. Joseph. He was in the process of embarking on a Missouri steamer for his journey to New Orleans. Lefèvre had accompanied him this far, but intended to return to Council Bluffs.

The bell had rung twice and there were only a few minutes until the two friends had to part ways.

"I wholeheartedly wish you luck with your undertaking, my dear Joe," the old hunter said to the Halfbreed. "May you find your father, just as you wish, and may you never be in the position again to have to return to the hard life of a fur trader. But I will be delighted if you made a small excursion to the prairies every now and then, to help me eat a fat buffalo hump. Oh, dear Joe, life in the wilderness is great!"

“Whatever my fate may be,” the *Halfbreed* answered, “believe me, it happens with a heavy heart that I temporarily depart from my old way of life, from my old friends, and first and foremost from you, my old teacher. I don’t think a complete separation is possible as long as I have the means to come up to the upper Missouri at least once a year. But where will I see you again next time?”

“Then you want to see me again?” Lefèvre answered, while he looked at Joseph kindly and squeezed his hand with all his might. “Really see me again, me, the old, cranky hunter? How delighted I am! Well then, I am returning to Council Bluffs now to wait for the success of the fall hunt. In November however, I will go to St. Louis to remain there for the winter, to take a new position with the fur company and to move out to the Yellow Stone River the first chance I have. If it's not too far to St. Louis for you, then” –

“It’s not too far for me,” Joseph interrupted quickly, “believe me, I will come to St. Louis, as soon as I hear of your arrival.— Harrison will stay at the mission until Mac Neal’s successor has arrived. I am happy that the mission is not entirely without supervision, even though I don’t have faith that Harrison has the circumspection and trust-winning nature that is absolutely required for such a position. I can’t deny that I am worried about Nekoma. The poor creature; I am afraid she will follow her memorable master soon. But I must ask one thing from you, Lefèvre: Don’t let the old Indian woman out of your sight and take care that she doesn’t want for anything on the eve of her life, or, what would be even more painful, becomes subject to cruel

treatment. I hope soon, very soon, to be able to take over the care of the one who took care so diligently of me during my childhood.”

“Nekoma shall not want for anything, as long as I can still move a limb. I will account for the money you have given me exactly, as if it were for my own mother. Trust me, Joe, I’ll watch over everything, to the best of my ability, and in Mac Neal’s good name. — But Joe,” the old trapper continued with a melancholic tone, “ don’t forget how I taught you to trap the beaver, and let me hear from you. Write to me; send your letters to the St. Louis Fur Company; but make fairly big letters, you know I am no scholar.”

The bell sounded for the third time. “Farewell!” the *Halfbreed* called and jumped on board. “Farewell!” the trapper called. The gangplank was drawn up, the wheels started moving, and the waves foamed behind the stern of the steamship as it made a wide circle and hurried toward the middle of the river.

6. On the Plantation

Despite its low-lying banks, the Mississippi river has an exceedingly pleasing character the entire length of where it flows through Louisiana. The mighty, mostly still impenetrable forests, the expansive cotton and sugar plantations, in short everything seems to be in harmony with the waters of the river, which the wind drives southward majestically. Everything is luscious and potent; the forest, where the richly-leafed crowns of the trees hang down to touch the hurrying floods; the meadows where the flowers most beautiful bloom spring from the lap of the dark

earth; and the cultivated fields, which offer the human beings a never ending fountain of wealth. Even the plantations themselves indicate affluence and abundance, since everything that may increase comfort, pleasantries, and delight to the eye seems to have been squandered on them.

Approximately six English miles above New Orleans, a small distance from the Mississippi, stands such a plantation. Endless sugarcane fields on all sides meet the park-like garden surrounding it, and long rows of dainty negro houses lie behind the picturesque rows of trees, just hidden enough, almost imperceptibly peeping through, to contrast gracefully with the green masses of foliage.

Naturally, the planter's house catches the eye the most, and even it is not very tall, it still has a considerable circumference.

With a superficial glance one might mistake the villa for a slight, wooden structure rather than a strong, massive building, since dainty, white-painted verandas and balconies hide the main part to such an extent that one can hardly see the strong stonework made of shiny red bricks. Fragrant honeysuckle and splendid vines in their opulent fullness have penetrated everything and nestle as close to the stonework as to the many-edged pillars and tasteful architectures, while the crowns of some well manicured trees and fruit laden banana trees overlook everything and stand in strange contrast to a row of slender Italian poplars.²³

²³ *Die Pappel*, pl. *Pappeln*. Möllhausen was a knowledgeable botanist. Although *Pappel* is often translated as cottonwood, the fact that he refers to the poplar trees as Italian specimens makes a difference in his assertion that they form a contrast to the other trees. The Italian poplar (*Populus nigra 'Italica'*) is shaped like a pillar, while the cottonwood—the most likely subspecies of the cottonwood growing in

If the outward appearance of the plantation indicates wealth, taste, and inviting comfort, this becomes even more markedly clear in the interior, where every little corner seems to be dedicated to evoking a pleasant impression. The verandas are light, but in the shade, and cleanly woven hammocks, light cane chairs, and marble tables are their furniture. Overstuffed chairs and couches, velveteen carpets, and expensive wallpapers on the other hand ornament the interior chambers. Green velvet curtains in the open windows make for a mysterious semi-darkness, and at the same time allow the gently, almost imperceptible breeze to blow as a cooling draft through all the rooms.

It was in the afternoon hours of a hot day. Since the loud, jolly Negro folk were working far away in the fields, calmness rested on house, courtyard, and garden. Even the splendidly plumed Cardinal and the melodious mocking bird had fallen silent, and only from the Negro quarters the barking of a dog sounded, the shrill cackle of the guinea fowl, or the even shriller wanton screaming of black children sounded once in a while.

In the spacious hall, from where French doors opened to the south-lying²⁴ veranda, was Mr. Newfort, the owner of the plantation, one of the richest plantation owners of the state. He had outstretched himself on a reed-woven daybed and looked gloomily into the open, where numerous hummingbirds, which rivaled the

Mississippi—would have to be the *Populus deltoids*, a tree that is not slender in form, but rather broad and expansive. Möllhausen also refers to the Cottonwood as *Cottonwood Baum* throughout his travel narratives, using the anglicism rather than the German term *Pappel*.

²⁴ *gegen Mittag liegend*

magnificent butterflies in their shine and resplendence, surrounded the tastefully arranged flowers and green plants.

He was ill and ailing, and without a feeling of joy, he let his dull eyes wander from one thing that man's aesthetic sense had brought into beautiful harmony with nature to another.

His even, regular features might have been called charismatic, if the sunken, blue eyes had not looked around expressionless as a result of inner discontent, and the light that came through the green curtains hadn't made his complexion look even sicklier. His build was tall, and through the light summer suit one could recognize that in better days he must have had an imposing figure which now, in his gaunt condition, looked angular and clumsy.

Next to his bed, on a richly ornamented cane chair, sat his wife.

This woman, whose Spanish heritage showed, immediately, could barely have reached the thirty-third year, but the days of her bloom were far behind her, as it is the case with so many Southern women of her age. The large brown eyes and the black, very thick hair were allowedly just as beautiful as in former days, the vigor however had disappeared from her eyes, and even though she had a tendency toward corpulence, the voluptuous fullness that makes youth so attractive was missing in her. The expression of her entire physiognomy was astute, but cold, in fact calculating, and could be considered nothing less [sic.]²⁵ than inspiring confidence. Despite all

²⁵ *nichts weniger*. The original reads: *Der Ausdruck ihrer ganzen Physiognomie war klug, ja berechnend, aber kalt, und konnte nichts weniger als vertrauenserweckend genannt werden*. This is perhaps an editing mistake in the original. Cold and

this, she could still lay claim to the denotation of a beautiful woman, and seemed to have undertaken not little effort to help the vanishing charms nature had given her with some artificial methods.

A grey-haired Negro stood behind the daybed and moved a number of square frames that dangled loosely from the ceiling with a thick cord. The frames were also covered fan-like in green silk and spread a cooling draft to all sides.

The lady had apparently been reading since the hands with the open book were folded in her lap, and, just like her husband, she looked through the open door listlessly. They may have been sitting in such a manner for a while; then they suddenly heard the steps of a man, who had apparently made his way from the garden house with great haste. A white straw hat soon became visible behind the round flowerbed in front of the house, and in the next minute, a man dressed with the utmost care climbed the broad steps leading to the veranda.

“Welcome, Mr. Browns!” called the planter when he saw the stranger.

“Welcome a thousand times! Are you really seeking me out in my solitude in order to chat a little²⁶ while with me?”

“Welcome,” Mrs. Newfort said, while she was politely shaking the strangers hand. “ I am overjoyed that you have come to help me pass my poor husbands time. But you will need refreshments after the hot ride or drive. Stay here,” she called out

calculating are not traits inspire confidence. It seems, that the *nichts weniger* (nothing less) is what in German is sometimes called a *Doppelmoppel*, an accidental, incorrect doubling. The sentence would make sense if one or the other were taken out, making the translation either ‘not trustworthy’ or ‘less than trustworthy’.

²⁶ *Ein Stündchen*

to the Negro, when the latter was about to follow the indirect order of his mistress.

“Stay here and keep your arms busy with the fans, I will take care to get the necessary things.”

She rose, and stroking her husband's cheek in a friendly manner, but nodding to Browns in a meaningful way, she hurried across the veranda into the garden, where she took the same path Browns had come up several minutes prior.

Quickly, she walked past the fragrant flowerbed, and then, turning into the shadowy path and hurrying a short distance, she reached an open lawn that was bordered by graceful ornamental shrubs and tall roses. In a corner of the smooth lawn, in the shadow of a great oak tree, from whose gnarled branches the grey moss that is so characteristic to Louisiana hung in long braids and garlands, stood a marble cupid on a granite foundation, who seemed to almost threaten onlookers with an arrow on his bowstring. Mrs. Newfort stopped across from the ornate statue. Turning around, she listened intently for several seconds, and when she had convinced herself that there was no unwanted witness on any side, she turned from the lawn, took steps toward the cupid, and sliding her hand under its half-lifted foot, she pulled out a small, folded piece of paper.

With a quick motion she hid it on her breast and then immediately hurried back to the path, where she was no longer able to tame her curiosity. After having checked her surroundings once more, she opened the letter, and not without terror read the words written in apparently great haste. “The *Halfbreed* has landed in New Orleans and is on his way here. Under any circumstances, attempt to hurt his pride

and honor before he comes near your husband, or our plan will collapse and will doom us.”

“To hurt his pride,” murmured the Cuban woman, after she had recovered from the first shock. “To hurt his pride; it is quite easily, but how is it to be done? Had he give me an indication! This Indian bastard! Why was I denied children? You wretched offspring of an even more wretched, despicable race shall never have the riches, even if I have to thrust a knife into your brown chest myself.”

In deep contemplation, she walked to the next building, her mind was in upheaval, an uncanny glimmer was shining from her eyes, and her firmly pressed-together lips were marked by an unmistakable determination and cruelty.

Suddenly, as if she had discovered the right manner, she threw back her head and hastened her steps. A triumphant expression came over her face, and soon there after she disappeared through the door of the neighboring building, where a number of black servants leapt to their feet in order to heed the commands of their mistress.

At the same time, a dust-covered wanderer approached the plantation’s yard gate. His attire made of wool and leather was inappropriate for the climate, and made him recognizable as the native hunter of the steppe; yet, skin color and deportment seemed to indicate otherwise.

It was the *Halfbreed*. He, had made the journey almost at the same time as Harrison’s damaging letter, and now was in the process to come and meet his father. He saw all the wealth surrounding what he believed to be his future home not without a feeling of joy, but also not without anxious apprehension.

He stood still in front of the door, placed his rifle on the ground in front of him, and wondered what manner of greeting he was going to receive. He had always known how to make his foster father content with him; he couldn't summon any accusations of having secretly committed any injustice; why should he then hesitate to step in front of the one who was his closest kin in the entire world, and who, as he knew, had no one else on earth who could have made a more just claim to his heart. Under these circumstances, what could possibly prevent a reunion? Should the childless man not praise fate that now bestowed a son upon him? A son, who was dignified enough to have been truly loved by such a pious, graceful man as the missionary? Should he not praise fate for providing him with the opportunity to right the wrong that he once committed against an innocent Indian girl? Yes, he could expect a good reception, especially since he hadn't come to enrich himself, or to enjoy and exploit the advantages the rich man's affluence offered him.

“Yes, I will be granted a reception in the manner the old missionary wished, and he certainly had enough knowledge of human nature to predict such things.”

He slung his rifle over his shoulder and stepped into the garden. A Negro came toward him, and without hesitation whether he can reach the mansion and the owner of the plantation.

“Sure, you can do that, *Big Inshun*,”* the Negro, who was taking his orders from Mr. and Mrs. Newfort, replied with contempt because he was annoyed that the

* *Big Inshun nennt der Amerikaner gewöhnlich spottweise den ihm begegnenden Eingeboren.* (Big Inshun is what the American usually calls the Native American he encounters.) Footnote in the original.

Halfbreed had a lighter skin color than himself. “You speak English damn well, for an *Inshun* chief,” he continued with mocking laughter. “Watch out, *Inshun*, that Massa’s dogs don’t bite you, dogs love *Inshun* meat!”

Without paying heed to the mockery of the Negro any further, Joseph followed a winding path that seemed to lead to the mansion. His mind was working too hard for the brutal fellow’s behavior to cause any chagrin, and the closer he came to his father’s home, the more he could feel his own heartbeat. At last, only the round flowerbed separated him from the veranda, behind which the planter sat with his wife and the lurking Browns.

About to step around it, he once again saw his path blocked by a herculean slave. Unobtrusively, he wanted to move past him, but the Negro stopped him by asking him: who had given the damn Indian permission to enter his Master’s garden with his rifle over his shoulder.

The *Halfbreed* paused, and looking calm, he answered:

“My friend, step aside, I am not requesting to see you, but your Master, Mr. Newfort.” As soon as he had spoken these words and turned to the veranda, the Negro swung a whip, which he had carried in his pocket, through the air and let it fall on the *Halfbreed*’s back with all his might.

This was too much for Joseph’s patience, it was the first blow he had ever received in his life, and like a wounded tiger he jumped on the Negro. Gone were the words of advice the pious missionary had given him, forgotten the prudence, urging him to consider his situation. His Indian impulse for revenge had suddenly been

brought to life, and following it, he took his rifle and inflicted such a terrible blow with its butt on the thick-woolen head of the slave, that the same sank to the ground as if hit by lightning.

Quietly Joseph then stepped up to the veranda, where Mrs. Newfort and Mr. Browns, who had heard the noise, rushed at him in a frightened manner.

Not conscious of any wrongdoing, the *Halfbreed* recounted the whole course of events with few words, and ended with his question for the host, to whom he had to deliver important news.

“The planter is ill and available to no one,” Browns replied with a measure of contempt in his look and his speech. “The planter is available to no one, the least of all for a roaming Indian, who breaks into his property and kills his Negroes.”

“I want to and must speak with Mr. Newfort,” Joseph exclaimed, while he attempted to push past Mrs. Newfort.

“And I repeat once more that Mr. Newfort would be busy if he were to deal with every Indian vagabond.”

The *Halfbreed's* hand went to the shaft of the knife in his belt upon hearing the new insult; but he lowered it just as quickly. For a moment, he stood there, uncertain of what to do. Should he force his way to this father? Or should he call through the open doors: “It is your flesh and blood that is being abused and disgraced at your door! It is your son who is about to return to the wilderness without having seen his father!”

Oh, had he only spoken up, so many a cheerless hour, so much sadness could have been prevented!

Cold sweat formed on the brow of the lurking Browns when he perceived the Indian's struggle; Mrs. Newfort, on the other hand, had meanwhile considered the beautiful, strong figure of the Indian with a certain libidinous curiosity. When the latter open his mouth, probably in order to signal his presence to his father through loud calling, every last drop of blood drained from the passionate woman's face. She recognized the danger that a reunion of the son with the father meant for herself and her accomplice; yet, it was neither within her power, not in Browns' to keep the *Halfbreed* from speaking.

Fate took a different course. The two people in question, who couldn't see each other, yet were so close that could have almost touched, they parted without having been enriched by a friendly memory.

Joseph had apparently come to a decision, but when he opened his mouth, he suddenly heard a weak, sickly male voice from the hall, which called angrily: "Send the Indian to the Negro quarters, give him a meal and then send him away, but before you do so, ask him what he has to tell me."

"Let's make sure he doesn't take anything along," the Lady of the house added with calculating impishness. "You know, Mr. Browns, the redskins consider stealing no crime."

The last words wounded the *Halfbreed* to the core of his soul, and if he had initially deliberated rushing to the planter and making himself known, the idea

vanished. He stood speechless; his eyes rested on the cruel woman, then on her abject accomplice, and then on the hall in which the planter was. —At his father's door, he had received the abuse reserved for slaves; in front of his father's door had he been called a thief and sent away with contempt, even his father himself had shown him unconquerable prejudice by throwing him together with the black race, which in the eyes of the rich planter only had the status of useful animals. He had expected no such thing. His skin was darker, how could he thus hope for mildness and charity from the white race? Bitter, very bitter experiences had enriched him; experiences that made life in the wilderness appear doubly nice and tempting. He convulsively crumpled up the letter from the missionary to the planter, which he had held in his hand until now. Yet, he pushed it back into this breast pocket, so as to have a memento of the humiliation he had experienced on the threshold he had once intended to cross like a joyfully received guest. "Good, godly man, how little you knew man's bad side when you advised me to trade the peaceful mission with the luster of the civilized world!" the *Halfbreed* muttered to himself, while he was resurrecting himself from the blows of fate he had received, and, turning his back to the anxiously watching people, he stepped into the garden.

A heavy burden was lifted of the accomplices' breasts when they saw their victim walk away with his head lowered. They didn't feel safe quite yet; the *Halfbreed* could seek advice from amiable people and return at any moment to ruin their plans and prospects.

A new blow had to be executed; a blow that would drive him away as quickly as possible, never to return. After such deliberations, Mrs. Newfort attended to her husband, while Browns hurried after the *Halfbreed*.

Before Joseph had reached the garden gate, he heard steps behind him quickly came closer. He looked back and recognized Browns, who motioned to him to wait.

“I pity you, my friend,” the traitor began as he stepped in front of him, “I pity you wholeheartedly, and come to give you advice. Flee, as fast as you can, to your tribe and don’t linger on the way, if you love your freedom. The Negro has died from the force of your blow, and even if the life of a Negro doesn’t matter much, you may be brought to court over the thousand dollars he was worth. I feel pity for you, you poor lad; thus listen to my advice and embark on the first steam boat that goes upriver, since, judging by your clothing, I suppose the upper Missouri or Mississippi is your home.”

Quietly, Joseph let Browns finish, then however he fiercely proclaimed to him with the entire untamed wildness of a fractious native: “The life of a Negro or Indian is then not worth anything? Well then, I will not longer keep you. Believe me though, it is no the fear of the consequences of my action that makes me leave here, even though I know that there is no justice from your execrable laws for someone with a darker skin. Yes, I am an Indian and I am proud of it; however, the man who allowed that I was abused at his door and turned away as a thief, may wait for consolation in his last hour in vain. When it comes to you, you low-life wretch, because that is what you are, or you would not have been the passive witness of such an unconscionable

treatment, distance yourself immediately if you don't wish to share the slain Negro's fate!"

Browns trembled looking at the young man, who was ready to carry out his threat. He shrunk back from the wild look of the Indian race and felt touched by the words, which, even though distorted by rage, revealed a higher degree of education.

"So take at least the gold here, as a sign of my good will," he said timidly and with politeness while handing him a filled pouch. "It may make your escape easier."

But even here Browns had miscalculated. With a smile that reflected the deepest contempt, Joseph regarded his tormentor. "I don't need your gold," he said, turning his back to him; "I didn't come here to beg!" —

"Chased away like a thief from my father's doorstep," the *Halfbreed* sighed, as he slowly made his way to New Orleans. "This is the Christian love of which the missionary spoke so often. Not a drink of water was the thirsty Indian given, but instead he was threatened with a whip and dogs. Certainly, the planter didn't know that I was his son, but he knew that I was a thirsty human being, in fact a human being with a darker skin than his, and that is why he denied me the favor one even owes one's enemy."

"Did I act justly," the *Halfbreed* asked now. "Did I have the right to take the Negro's life? Had I the right to threaten the man who maybe had honest intentions? The old missionary would rebuke me because the Indian blood once again won the upper hand over the peaceful impulses. But where is the limit to which one shall take indignity without punishment?"

“Those are the blessings of civilization! They no longer entice me. But twice as appealing does the life in the wilderness appear, where once in a while open hostility threatens me, but never abasement.”

“And *Nekoma*, and Lefèvre, how happy will they be to have me with them again; and all the faithful companions, white ones and red ones. He quickened his steps as if these ideas had calmed his excitement and he wished to reach the upper Missouri sooner.

Meanwhile, on the plantation the Cuban woman and Browns sat by the ailing planter’s bedside and attempted to calm the agitation the *Halfbreed’s* appearance had caused.

“You have found out what tribe the importunate Indian belongs to?” Newfort asked.

“He was a full-blooded Seminole,” Browns in turn answered; “one of the roaming robbers, who, under the guise of begging, find excuse to make strange goods their own, and to drink up their booty in firewater.”

“The Seminole were once a beautiful tribe,” the planter remarked, “but it is wise of the government to have largely removed them from Florida. Florida is too beautiful a land to be populated by redskins, and the Indian population cannot be tolerated next to the white race if civilization is to return.” *

* *Wörtlich den Reden und Schriften hochgestellter Amerikaner entnommen. Sogar einzelne Deutsche, die in den Diensten der Vereinigten-Staaten-Regierung standen, entblöden sich nicht, in der Öffentlichkeit als Advokaten solcher unnatürlichen, unmenschlichen Ansichten und Grundsätze aufzutreten.* (Taken verbatim from the speeches and writings of high-ranking Americans. Even individual Germans, who

“Like so many other Indian tribes, the Seminole were put to good use as well,” Browns replied. “They were sent to the limits of civilization, where they had to fight for new hunting grounds, and there is really no more sound policy than the one that keeps the tribes in constant strife among themselves, and the pressing civilization that follows must do nothing but to establish itself on the disputed territories.”²⁷

The old Negro, who had previously kept the fans in motion, now re-entered with a silver tray and offered cooling lemonade and fruit.

“Who was it, Washington,” the planter asked him, “that was beaten down by the red-skinned beggar?”

“Jackson, Master,” replied Jackson with a deferential expression.

“Is he badly injured?” Newfort kept asking.

“Not badly, Master,” was the answer. “Jackson has a thick a skull and nappy wool and an *Inshun* can't hurt him much with one blow.”

“I am pleased to hear that,” the Master said; “Jackson is a strong fellow and worth at least his twelve hundred dollars.”

“If he wasn't so young,” replied Washington, who perceived it as a veiled comment on his own high age, and thus became jealous of the price he deemed too high.

were in the service of the United States government, were not shy to appear in public as advocates of such an unnatural, inhumane views and principles.) Footnote in the original.

²⁷ The text references Indian Removal policy. The Seminoles, of course, contrary to what Browns claims, were the only of the five civilized tribes—the Cherokee, the Crow, the Choctaw, the Creek, and the Seminoles—that did not resettle willingly, leading to the Seminole wars.

“In any case, the wretched Indian would have had a difficult time reimbursing you,” Browns turned to the planter, while looking at the lady of the house meaningfully. “By the way, I have advised the Seminole to depart from here as quickly as possible if he doesn't want to be punished for the Negro's death.”

“He will care little about whether the Negro is dead or alive,” remarked Newfort. “These Seminoles scalp with the same calmness we use to peel an orange, and have almost less feeling than the most common Negro slave. —It is terrible,” he continued after a while, “that I am perpetually tied to the house. I feel that a change of scenery might be good for me, and the air I breathed years ago on the prairie appears heavenly in my memory. Yes, yes, I will undertake a journey to there, never mind all the doctors in New Orleans.”

“But not any sooner,” his wife interrupted by bending over him amiably, “no sooner than I have nursed you far enough, so that you may make the journey without feeling any discomfort. And then, then I am your attendant, to keep you and nurse you there as well.”

“The good woman,” the planter said, turning to Browns, “she understood how to make me entirely her slave. But, I am content in such ties. It is just agonizing that I have been waiting for an improvement in my condition for years, and I would like to entirely be master of my actions again.”

Comforting words came from the lips of the still beautiful Cuban woman; comforting words spoke the deceptive Browns, too.

When toward evening the latter took his leave, and the lady of the house accompanied him through the garden, they stood for quite a while at a distance from the door, where a Negro had stopped with a light buggy to bring the guest back to town.

“Do you really believe,” Mrs. Newfort asked, “that the *Halfbreed* will return to his wilderness?”

“I hope,” Browns replied, “that the fear of the consequences of the supposed murder hastens his steps, since the real reason for his departure lies more in his wounded pride. And in any case, I began to fear the young *Halbindianer*. He showed such dangerous fierceness with me, and yet had such educated ideas, which one might barely suppose in a young man of his origin, so that I was very glad to be able to remove myself from him. I had credited Harrison with more discretion, since, instead of eliminating our worries entirely, he sent the bastard here unharmed. Your brother will be wondering when I report to him, and now there is certainly more required than average ingenuity to dispose of the civilized wild man, after he has become suspicious.”

“You may be right,” Mrs. Newfort said, “but after having met my husband’s son, I am reluctant about wishing that anything happen to him.”

“Do you want then that your husband in your childlessness adopts the Indian offspring, and that he takes half, if not all the fortune, as soon as your husband closes his eyes? Beware of the *Halfbreed*, he entirely seems to be the man to cross your plans.”

“I fear the young man, I can’t deny it, but if he lives far from us, the worries disappear, and I will make sure that Newfort doesn’t embark on his journey up the Missouri.”

“But you will not prevent that the *Halfbreed* from returning here once more,” Browns replied. “Do not care about the young man now and leave him to me entirely. Rather, assume the task of pacifying your brother, who must be in California by now, and explain to him the state of affairs. Don’t forget that you may not make the church your enemy, if your husband is not to have the scales removed from his eyes. Don’t forget what protection and support the church grants you, and how indulgent it is with those who show themselves thankful. Consider, if our plans work out, the golden Havana is beckoning, and everything that you can create around you with your riches. Riches are smiling at you, influence, and all the sweet pleasures which true love may provide for you.”

“I forget nothing,” the woman replied, while she considered the object of her criminal passion with fervent looks. “I forget nothing, not even revenge, in case you want to deceive me. But now farewell!”

“Fare well,” said Browns, while he kissed her hand, took his seat in the little buggy, and drove away.

Mrs. Newfort returned to her husband’s bed. Her bosom was moved by restive feelings; the *Halfbreed’s* image appeared in her mind time and time again, and it made her contemplative and brooding for the rest of the night.

Browns on the other hand was on his way, whistling joyfully. “Poor betrayed woman!” he thought. “Your devotedness almost entices me to take your side, and to deceive your prim, Jesuit brother, if the clever priest wasn’t pulling the strings of the entire web and threatening me with judicial penalties. —Awful thought, — better to share the prize than to perish together.

After his arrival in New Orleans, Browns immediately hurried to the shipyard, where the steamships bound for St. Louis lay. He was satisfied when his investigation showed that the *Halfbreed* had his name entered as a passenger on the first one departing, and thus he sat down with a certain humor to direct a long, cordial letter to the notary and lawyer *Mr. Buschmark* in St. Louis.

The letter concerned itself mainly with the young *Halfbreed*, who would have to arrive at the same time as the writ, and made it clear in underlined words, that the writer deemed it important to see the traveler thoroughly monitored, and to receive news every now and then about his doings. In the same manner, several suggestions and pieces of advices were included, but they left Mr. Buschmark sufficiently free reign, which was proof to what high degree this man had earned and kept Mr. Browns full trust.

7. The St. Louis Fur Company

The events of the last days, the false hopes, but first and foremost the painful humiliation had made the *Halfbreed* gloomy and made him more taciturn. He sat on

the spacious gallery of the steamer that was to bring him to St. Louis for hours, without paying the least bit attention his surroundings, or to the vessel itself.

He had become suspicious, and saw animosity in every face, mockery and contempt in every smile. It brought him a certain amount of solace when he discovered a number of German emigrants in the steerage, and realized that they, too, apparently were held in higher regard than Negroes and Indians by the present population.

The poor people had only landed in New Orleans very recently, and were on their way to their northern destination and a more fitting climate for them. Necessary thrift, perhaps lack of sufficient funds, had made them choose the cheapest place on the ship, where bales of goods and crates served as bivouac and seats at the same time. Having mastered the English language either little or not at all, they didn't understand what was talked about around them, and thus made patient, friendly faces when the boatmen and the slaves who were hired out to work made raw jokes about them, or capriciously, under any arbitrary pretense, sent them from one place to the next.

“Whites, too, can be mistreated by the fellow human beings,” the *Halfbreed* thought, as he considered the poor emigrants. “What have these people, who only set foot on solid land barely a week ago, done? Perhaps they would be treated differently if they looked more polished²⁸ and were in the first cabin instead of the steerage. I

²⁸ *vielleicht würde man ihnen anders begegnen wenn sie mehr glänzten*

just want to know what the genteel world looks like that the missionary told me many a things about; Do these imagined differences exist there as well?

He was interrupted in his musings by a sharp voice. He turned around and saw an elegantly dressed gentleman, who, leading an elegant lady on each arm, stepped toward him and said with a harsh voice: “Out of the way, big chief, so my ladies can enjoy the view better!”

Joseph took measure of the man with a glance, but before he had time to step aside, he heard the words of the younger lady, who, leaning carelessly leaning on the arm of her companion, said: “What an impertinent redskin! You must communicate with signs.” At the same time, she lifted her hand with a commanding gesture, and signaled the *Halfbreed* the way to the stairs.

Such behavior no longer offended him and he stepped aside.

“Look at these ugly people, these immigrants,” the older lady remarked to the man leading her.

“They are only white Negroes,” he replied. “What a shame that such wretched people are being transported on our beautiful steamships. Later, when they have enriched themselves from the wealth of our country, they will no longer look so modest. Yes, they even presume to have the same rights as the native born citizen of the Republic and to help elect the President. If they just listened to real Americans when casting their ballot!” *

“Ungrateful rabble!” the older lady said.

* *Dem echten Leben entnommen* (Overheard in real life). Footnote in the original.

“Certainly, most ungrateful,” her companion agreed; “and yet, one sees fairly pretty faces among the women, for example the young, blossoming girl down there!”

“The pale, starving creature with the eyes the size of a plate, you call that beautiful?” replied the lady who was apparently the wife of the proud American man; “what a stupid look she has; certainly, the astonishment over our big, blessed continent must have robbed her of the last bit of reason. And how immodestly friendly she is with the old man who looks as if he is suffering from homesickness for his small country. But let us go back to the cabin,” she continued as she perceived that her husband observed the young immigrant women with special interest.

Then the trio rustled away, and the *Halfbreed* took up his old position again.

“They came here to enjoy the beautiful view, but cold and impassively their eyes meandered across the beauty of nature, in order to rest on those poor people down there with contempt. And these immigrants are supposed to bring so many beneficial workers into the country. I suppose that one doesn’t grant them the hard-earned wealth. Yes, jealousy is an evil thing. Nobody is jealous of me, I am a *Halfbreed*; but there are people who love me, love me very much, Nekoma and Lefèvre. If only I was there already!”

In this manner the *Halfbreed’s* ideas and thoughts followed one another. They had a childish character to them, since being alien to the confusing events that surrounded him, he yearned to apply the teachings of the old missionary that were rooted in his breast. It dizzied him to find himself in the maelstrom of the world

where no faithful friend like his foster father stood by his side advising and teaching him.

He had undertaken the journey to New Orleans with bold hopes and, according to his own standards, far-reaching plans. Disheartened and diffidently he now returned, after the castles in the air had collapsed into nothing, and doubt about mankind had entered his heart.

Indifferently, yes, with a certain aversion, he looked at the booming, fast-growing towns past which the steamship carried him as quickly as in flight; on the contrary he regarded simple log cabins that appeared once in a while at the riverbank with interest. The mysterious virgin forest lined the majestic stream on both sides; picturesque islands and islets broke up the still, but fast flowing water surface; here the lovely blue sky, there hurrying clouds were reflected in it; flocks of water fowl brought life to it, and if here the proud stag, and there the shaggy black bear stepped out of the forest, then he felt as if the air from home surrounded him, and longingly he thought of his beautiful, not yet profaned wilderness on the upper Missouri, as well as all the love and friendship that waited there for him.

Day after day slowly went by, and almost shocked by his own senses, Joseph was startled one day when he saw the cosmopolitan city St. Louis, the queen of the West, lying in front of him one afternoon.

St. Louis was preliminarily his destination. Like all western hunters, he was also acquainted with the heads of the fur company, which in this city owns the most important storage area for the valuable fur shipments coming down the river. Whether

trapper or Indian, anyone who considered the 'Far West' his home and visits St. Louis, or comes here in passing by, knows the big building on Washington Street, over whose door the mammoth head of a wapiti' with gilded antlers announces that here is the registered office of the world famous St. Louis Fur Company. It is the oldest business of this great wealthy city, or more precisely the establishment that initially gave the impetus for its founding.

Fur that is many, many millions of dollars worth has entered and exited the building. Famous travelers, tourists, and natural scientist began their journeys to the 'Far West' from there, and there once was a time when a letter of recommendation from the director of the institution counted as much with the native chiefs as a courier pass did in the civilized world.

So the *Halfbreed* sought out the establishment .he had no trouble finding his way, since everyone he met knew the gilded antlers, and an hour later he sat in the spacious hall, whose walls were richly decorated with beautiful bison skins, Indian articles of clothing, weapons, and other western emblems.

In a small adjacent chamber, apparently busy with the review of invoices, stood an older gentleman whose head was crowned by remarkably white hair. His eyes rested presently on the papers in front of him, shortly there after they hurried scrutinizing over a group of young French men, who had, just now arrived from Europe, offered themselves for 'service in the West'. Not everyone has the traits that make him suitable for dealings with the wild natives. In any case, it requires a good physical condition that is able to defy climate conditions; then a certain amount of

carelessness, lack of concern for comfort, yes, even for life itself, and then the gift to gain the trust of the natives, and thus sustain and expand trade in a manner that brings advantage and lacks danger.

The French nation delivers the greatest numbers and the most suitable people to the Fur Company, but yet it is not enough to be a French man in order to be accepted; even among them there is always a selection process.

Hence, so as to decide about one or the other in leisure, Mr. Sarpy inspected the physiognomies of the jolly circle unnoticed; the men in turn, apparently completely without worry about the future, and due to lack of native wine, sustained themselves from a bottle of whiskey. A small disagreement must have given rise to a fight between two wild fellows, since Mr. Sarpy realized that one of them suddenly jumped up, unfolded his long pocket knife, and yelled: “Sacré tonnerre, mes amis! I will cut the first one who dares to contradict me in this matter! Across the face crosswise, true as my name is Antoine, and even they hang me tomorrow.”

“Keep cool!” another man, named François, called, “I will contradict you as long as you are angrily swinging your toothpick. If you remove the instrument and toast with me, then I will declare war on everyone who is not of the same opinion as you.”

“Bravo!” Antoine exclaimed, while he let the knife slide into the pocket and took the offered glass. “Kids, you all are right, to your health!” and the peace was restored.

Mr. Sarpy had followed the exchange of words closely; at the end of it he took up the ink pen and wrote the name François and Antoine in the list of those determined for the upper Missouri.

“They are wild, but good-natured, agreeable lads,” he murmured, as he flit his pen; they will be easy to guide and keep friendship with the Indians.”

Then he saw Joseph, who had entered timidly and taken a seat by the window, so that he could easily look out to the street.

“Welcome to St. Louis, Joseph!” he exclaimed, while he quickly left his office, and stepping in front of the *Halfbreed*, extended his hand for a greeting. “I have heard of your foster father’s death with sorrow, and I am happy to meet you just now because I have the opportunity to offer you a position that promises a worry-free life until the end of your days.”

Joseph returned the greeting with the manner of an open, well-educated human being, since Mr. Sarpy was no stranger to him, and he remembered to have seen him at the mission in his earliest childhood.

“I’ve come here in order to go up the Missouri at the next opportunity I have. I am also inclined to take over assignments for you, but I must confess that I feel little desire to establish permanent ties.”

“Not even if I employ you as secretary at one of our forts with free station for twelve hundred dollars?”

“Your offer is truly very tempting, but money can’t sway me to limit my freedom and independence; maybe at a later time. But have you heard from Lefèvre? He told me about his intention to get in contact with you.”

“Lefèvre will be here within the next two months at the latest,” replied Sarpy. “I plan to send him up before the beginning of spring. He is one of the best trappers on this side of the Rocky Mountains. But since I know your friendship with the old hunter, I leave it up to you to keep him with you and take him along as your adjunct to your post. He will be of great advantage to you, and I can say that if he was better at writing and arithmetic, I would without reservation hire him as a commander of a fort as well.”

“Nobody knows Lefèvre’s value better than I do,” replied Joseph, “and I believe, I can’t prove this more clearly than to reserve my decision until I can confer with him personally.

“Then I must fear that he will try to persuade you to take up the business of an independent trapper because not only does he have a strong preference for the hunting life in the wilderness, but he also always had much luck with catching beavers. However, in light of the education, which you can thank the venerable Mac Neal for, it would be a pity if you were to spend your life as an independent trapper, while you could gain independence fairly soon as an employee in our business. That is, if you prefer to stay in the civilized world in the first place.”

“I almost doubt the latter,” the *Halfbreed* replied with a melancholic smile. “I have been in the middle of civilization long enough to feel not entirely happy there.

Regarding the rest of the matter, I repeat that I can give no particular answer before speaking with Lefèvre.”

“Well then, Joseph, I will not push you for a decision, even though I tell you honestly that your services are of great importance for us. I further don’t doubt, that the government will designate you as translator for various tribes; and if this happens, it can’t be difficult for you to represent the rights of the native people in many cases, and to alleviate some palpable shortcomings in their treatment, not even considering the nice, round sums which will come your way. By the way, as long as you are in St. Louis, make yourself at home here. You shall have a good bed, and during the day, the city has enough to offer to capture your attention. But heed my advice and take off your Indian attire. If you lack the funds to purchase appropriate clothes, I am more than happy to advance you the necessary sums, and we can settle the account later.”

“I thank you for your kind offer,” Joseph replied, “ but I am completely able to cover my small expenses; and concerning the Indian attire, I don’t see why I shall remove a garb in which I spent the happiest time of my life. The worst than can happen is that one considers me a full-blooded Indian. Whether this is actually a misfortune is debatable. But I am keeping you from your business, Mr. Sarpy, I thank you once again for your great friendship and promise to gladly appear here daily to make use of the permission to spend the night.”

Mr. Sarpy dismissed the *Halfbreed* with the cordial words, and when the same stepped out the door, supposedly to take walk, he looked after him shaking his head. “A thoroughly honest, good fellow, “ he murmured; “however, almost too educated

for a fur-trader; is conscientious and can bring in a lot of money if I manage to win him for the company. I have become truly fond²⁹ of him, even though he is only a *Halfbreed*.”

Such were the director's words and thoughts. The affection for the *Halfbreed* originated mainly from the awareness that the latter could bring in quite a lot of money. The money-man did not feel that, but ascribed his fondness more motives, not failing to consider the darker skin, and, by listing the good qualities of the young man, to excuse himself for himself for the benevolence shown to a *Halbindianer*.³⁰

Since he was more than satisfied with the courtesy, Joseph, too, had no reason to suspect anything but that the trust-evoking words addressed to him had flown from an affectionate, charitable heart. He had not experienced gentle treatment for a while, and here he was suddenly overwhelmed with friendliness.

Several days passed; the *Halfbreed* had effectively become acclimated to the house of the fur company, and when he didn't wander the city aimlessly, he found himself in one the adjacent buildings³¹, where he attentively observed the workers busy with their various occupations, and was explained by the foremen everything that seemed unclear to him in any way.

It was during the afternoon hours on the fourth day after his arrival when Joseph walked to the spacious hall where a number of half-naked Negroes pressed buffalo skins into bales with the help of a machine. He watched the machine with

²⁹ *Ich habe eine wahre Zuneigung gefaßt*

³⁰ The text refers to the protagonist by its proper German term here instead of using the Anglicism *Halfbreed*. *Halbindianer* literally means half Indian.

³¹ *Hintergebäude*

great interest; its single parts matched up so precisely, and he marveled at how a few people can exert such pressure with the help of a machine. The Negroes joked and cheered in their usual loud manner, while bale after bale formed under their skilled hands and was rolled out the door. Joseph was in such deep observation, that he didn't realize how a man joined him and apparently waited for the opportune moment to begin a conversation with him.

The stranger, a short, little man with a cowering walk, might have reached the age of forty five, but he could have also been ten years older, since he walked hunched over, and a number of wrinkles ran from the corner of his eyes to the temples. The crown of his head was skillfully covered with the hair from the back of his head; he had combed it forward in its entire length and plastered it to the smooth skin of his skull. His grey eyes were in perpetual motion; they either looked down with a meek expression, or blinked furtively around, but no matter what expression they took, they expressed no friendliness, and who saw them for the first time could not help but feel hesitation, perhaps more for the friendship than the animosity of their owner. Weak, dark whiskers adorned his haggard, paltry face, and his mouth was less than fine. His entire physiognomy had something repulsive, which was increased when he cleared his throat, a noticeable characteristic that repeated itself after every third or fourth word.

After this man had thus looked at the *Halfbreed* with a scrutinizing mien, he made his presence known by the usual clearing of his throat, very politely lifted his hat in front of the surprised Joseph, and bowing deeply, he began: "Hem, hem, do I

perhaps have the honor, hem, hem, to talk with a, hem, certain Joseph, hem, hem, the boarding pupil of the well-known, godly missionary Mac Neal?"

Joseph looked at the inquirer with astonishment, the exceeding politeness of the stranger made him pause just as the recent heedless encounter aboard the steamship; but composing himself quickly, he didn't miss to answer in a composed manner that the named missionary had been his benefactor, that he was called Joseph and only goes by the name *Halfbreed*.

"Hem, hem," the stranger continued then, "my name is Buschmark, public notary and attorney, and I am infinitely delighted that I have managed to find you after a three day search. I must convey to you Important, very important news from New Orleans, where you have a very honest friend without being aware of it. A friend, who cherishes your foster father in death, and who in the name of your father, seeks to be useful to you.

"Is this friend perhaps called Browns?" the *Halfbreed* asked quickly, while looking at the notary sharply.

"Browns?" the notary asked in return with feigned surprise. "Browns? In whose company you have suffered the most unspeakable humiliation? No, my esteemed friend, such a man is just as incapable of sympathy for a darker colored skin as the cold-hearted Newfort, who abhors Negroes and Indians. The doctor who was in the planter's room when you spoke with Browns is your unknown friend whose name I can't reveal. He has written to me about you and your presence in New Orleans in detail, and wishes to serve you and help you with all available means. He wishes to

avert the threat of imprisonment that you face for the bludgeoning of the Negro if you don't escape the arm of the law through a speedy flight."

"Who has initiated this pursuit?" asked the *Halfbreed*. His heart sank when he considered the sheer thought of having his freedom curtailed.

"Who else but Mr. Newfort, the Indian-fiend; but calm yourself, your foster father's friend is watching over you. I am even instructed to supply you with sufficient means to return to your tribe for some time, if you are inclined to do so, at least until this matter has bled³² itself out."

"Thus my—Mr. Newfort initiated the pursuit against me, even though I only followed the instinct of self-preservation?" Joseph replied meditatively.

"The same, and in my hands I even have an accursed writ from him that shall erase your last doubt over it."

"It is difficult, very difficult; but I am unable to make a decision at this moment; I believe that even in light of running the risk of being arrested, I will remain here for a short while."

"I advise you wholeheartedly³³ to do the opposite; but I do admit that it has to be hard for you to make a decision immediately. Be reasonable, trust me and visit me in my office, here is my address; but choose a time between seven and nine at night when the business of the day has come to an end and I use the remaining leisure time to attend to private matters. I located you to do my friend in New Orleans a favor;

³² *verblutet*

³³ *von ganzer Seele*

what ever I do from now on, and everything that is in my power shall happen, I do to prove to you the respect that your honorable character has given me.”

Joseph regarded the small man who exhibited an almost creepy deference. He didn't know what to think of him. The humiliation he had experienced had wounded him deeply, but such flattery filled him with an indeterminate fear, and yet he had heard so much that drew him to the notary and compelled him to visit him.

“I will come to you,” the *Halfbreed* finally said; “I can't promise if it is today or tomorrow; I must have time to consider the situation in which my own petulance and intensity has brought me. You said that Mr. Newfort possibly considers an indictment against me?”

“Not only considers, my poor friend, but already brought forth; I will show you proof at my office. I expect you there at the agreed upon hour, and repeat once more: Consider earnestly. But my time is short, and besides, we may not discuss such an important matter here; a single word spoken too loudly might place you in danger. Goodbye then and a speedy reunion!”

With these words he deferentially gave Joseph his hand, who in turn politely accompanied him to the door, where they parted from one another.

As Buschmark was turning the next corner, he cheerfully rubbed his hands. “This half-wild rascal,” he smirked. “His naive honesty is almost foolery; I hope I don't have much trouble sending the ninny back to his forests. Has incidentally the behavior of a white man, and if I am not mistaken even believes himself to be worth as much as a white man. Just wait! You will get to the place where you belong, you

are much too conceited for a redskin to be allowed to live among white people, and Harrison will take care of everything further.”

Even though the *Halfbreed* felt repulsed by Buschmark’s choice politeness, the lawyer had not missed his purpose entirely. He was correct in assuming that Joseph had enough Indian blood that the privation of freedom was the equivalent of death in his eyes. His allusion to the supposed murder meant that he had significant influence on the *Halfbreed’s* future course of action. It thus only required clever conduct on his side to make the latter fully subservient to his will, and to soon remove him from civilization and at the same time into realm of the doom-brooding Harrison.

On the other hand again, he could be assured that, in case Joseph stayed in St. Louis for a longer period of time, he would not mention one word about his travel to New Orleans, thus not receiving advice from anyone. Dread that his father’s base disposition might become known tied his tongue as much as the fear of prosecution. Adding to the hurt pride and honor, the loveless behavior Newfort’s, described in its garish colors, could only hasten the young man’s departure to the prairies; since the last hope for a reunion with his father, if even a glimmer of hope had remained, must have been completely shattered by the advocate’s words.

The conversation with Buschmark had awoken thoughts of the gloomiest manner in the *Halfbreed*. More tight-lipped than ever, he tried to keep away from all human beings. His curiosity had suddenly died; he regarded everything around him apathetically, and he expected his friend Lefèvre with longing.

When Sarpy asked him then if he was overcome by homesickness, he agreed in a friendly manner. On the inside however it called loudly: “O, had I never come to know the secret of my birth!

8. The Young Emigrant

A week had passed since the Halfbreed’s meeting with Buschmark, and he had still hesitated to seek out the latter.

Dusk had come, and Joseph wandered around the illuminated city aimlessly to distract himself. “Chestnut Street,”³⁴ he read on the corner of a house as he was turning toward the direction of the Mississippi. He pulled a small piece of paper from his pocket, stepped to the closest streetlight, and read “Chestnut Street No.21 two stairs, third door on the left.”

“Well then, I can’t experience anything worse,” he spoke to himself, “coincidence has led me here, the difficult task³⁵ must be done. I want to have proof that my father despises me with along with the entire *Race*,³⁶ and then I will try to tear the sad memory from my breast.”

He read each house number attentively, until he found himself in front of a gloomy looking building, in which only once in a while a light shone through faintly through several open doors. “It must be here,” he said as he approached the door and caught a glimpse of at least eighteen black metal signs next to it, on which the gilded

³⁴ Möllhausen follows the midcentury geography of St. Louis, a city he was familiar with. Chestnut Street is in fact situated in close proximity of the Mississippi river.

³⁵ *der schwere Gang*

³⁶ Möllhausen employs the term in the original.

names of just as many notaries and lawyers were printed. “David Buschmark,” he read aloud, looked once more at the paper in his hand, and then entered the unclean³⁷ hallway, which was sparsely lit by a gaslight. The narrow stairway was only several steps away from the entrance door, a mistake was not possible, and without hesitation he climbed up the worn-out stairs.

Like the hallway, the stairs were also in an obscure semi-darkness. Dead silence reigned in the building, and one might have taken it for deserted, if single, murmuring voices, joined by the humming noises from the street, had not come from some of the locked rooms. Walking almost inaudibly in his light moccasins, Joseph pursued his way, and reached the end of the first stairs without having met anyone. A hallway similar to the one he had just crossed on the first floor, lay before him; several doors were on each side, heightening the incredible bleakness of the surroundings with their heavy, metal coverings and iron bolts.

The *Halfbreed* sighed; at the sight of so many security measures, he thought of the mission where a weak, wooden latch had been considered sufficient to keep the unwanted guests out— rain, snow, and wind. He also considered the possibility of longing for freedom behind such locks. He shuddered, and hurried up the second staircase with the quick steps of a fleeting shadow.

Once more he saw heavy, iron-studded doors, of which each one had the black sign with the gilded letters. Slowly he moved from one to the other, deciphered the various names with some effort, and finally approached an open security door. He

³⁷ *unsauber*.

couldn't look into the room behind it because of the light, wooden door, which apparently served to keep people out during business hours.

“David Buschmark,” the *Halfbreed* read. Stepping around the wide open door, he was about to take the handle, when he heard several French words uttered with urgency and hard sobbing from behind the thin wood paneling.

He quickly moved back, and since he was little inclined to eavesdrop, he would have probably left the building, if he had not heard a soft woman's voice, which seemed to be pleading with someone with an expression of bitter pain.

Like most western hunters, he was entirely proficient in French, and he did not miss a single word of the conversation taking place inside of the room, and after a few minutes it began to kindle such compassion in him, that he carefully crept closer and silently laid his ear against the door.

“Oh, most esteemed Mr. Buschmark,” the gentle voice lamented, “I plead not for myself, but for my poor, ill father, for the love of God, have patience for a short while longer. My father will recover and pay off the debt. Don't take our shelter. Be merciful and consider what suffering has befallen us in our short stay in America, and that you are the only trusted friend we can turn to!”

“My beautiful child,” replied the man's voice, which Joseph immediately identified as Buschmark's; “My beautiful child, your pleas truly put me in a quandary. The tears in your eyes touch me, yet I am not in the position to give your father the desired extension. I am also poor, very poor, and must have the two hundred dollars—the property of a poor widow—within eight days and under any

circumstances, if I do not want to find myself in the biggest trouble, yes, lose the good reputation I enjoy with the public. It hurts me, but I have to deny any request for a longer extension.

“Oh, Mr. Buschmark!” sobbed the girl; “be noble, be generous! Look at me, I am not used to misery by birth, but believe me, I often suffer bitter hunger, and only to assure necessities for my poor father.

“It is sad,” replied Buschmark with apparent sympathy, “but I don’t know any alternative. But do tell me, have you recently received news from your brother?”

“No, not lately; he is likely still in Kansas City, where he is working for meager wages and from where he intends to go to California as the farm hand of a caravan in the spring. I have not written anything about our difficult situation, equally little about father’s illness. It would burden his heart since he can’t help in any case, and he wouldn’t have the funds to undertake the journey here.”

“Very wisely done, my beautiful child! But since I realize now that with the absence of your brother you are missing a natural protector, it might prompt me to economize in some other regards in order to have your father benefit from my savings.”

“You most noble of all human beings!” the girls called out with a voice that was almost entirely muffled by her crying, and which caused the listening *Halfbreed’s* heart to fill with mild woefulness. “I knew it—your heart isn’t made of stone. May God bless you for this comfort you give me, I can’t thank you enough!” And once more the *Halfbreed* heard sobbing.

“Calm down, my dear child,” Buschmark said after a short while, “dry the tears in your beautiful eyes; come, sit by my side and let us discuss whether the future cannot arranged to be brighter for you and your good father.”

“To gain your full trust, my beautiful child, I first must talk of myself to you:”

“I am an old, unmarried man; older people like their comfort and have their whims. I want to allow your poor, suffering father a comfortable, worry-free life, liked the father of such a delightful daughter deserves. If you agree to take a simple, but charming apartment with me in the city, and to take over my insignificant domestic matters, I would take care that one not only gives your father an extension, but also that he too is in a pleasant, secure position, is able to pay off his debt, and is able to put something aside for unexpected events.”

“Good, noble man!” the girl exclaimed with a voice that trembled with gratitude and emotion. “You will really allow my father to live in your vicinity and to useful to you? Oh, I will work for you with joy and divide my attention between the both of you and —”

“Just look at the foolish little woman,” Buschmark’s voice interrupted the grateful girl’s flow of words. “Let me speak and explain to you that you shall be much, much happier. First and foremost, your father must be provided for, and specifically he shall remain in his current quarters, where he won’t be in want of anything. You, my beautiful child, can visit him weekly and assure yourself of his wellbeing.”

“What?” the girl exclaimed with unconcealed terror, “I am supposed to leave my father?”

“Of course, my little fool. If you are to be helped, you have to submit to my whims. You shall have no reason, my dear, sweet child, to complain about boredom. You have the entire day for your household chores, and when I return after having conducted my business, I want to be received amiably and affectionately, and want to read from your beautiful eyes that you thought of me during the day, and want to kiss your hand and your red lips, and in your arms the burden of the day —”

A loud, painful outcry from the young girl followed. “All, all is lost!” she called out. “Oh, my God, what have I done to deserve this! Have mercy! Look, on my knees I beg you! Tell me you were joking, and let us not ruin it!”³⁸

“Stand up, my child,” said Buschmark urgently, “and be reasonable, consider that I cannot change my conditions, and consider that I am wealthy. I have never told anyone, but I am telling you, you alone, because you are so beautiful, so —”

A brief movement, as if between two people wrestling, followed in the room. The *Halfbreed*, who couldn’t believe what he had heard at the end of the conversation, had already lifted his hand to open the door. But someone took hold of the door knob on the inside faster, then violently tore open the door, and in the same instant when Joseph hid behind the security door, a female figure rushed past him toward the stairs.

³⁸ *laßt uns nicht verderben*

“Oh, my God! My God!” she exclaimed in agony, fleeing down the stairs. In the open door though, the loathsome, passionately excited face of the notary appeared. He gnashed his teeth as he watched his prey flee; “and yet, you shall be mine,” he said in a low voice. “I was too hasty, much too hasty. How beautiful she is!”

He stepped back into the room and silently shut the door behind himself.

The *Halfbreed* though had suddenly abandoned all intentions of a meeting with Buschmark. It was enough for him to realize that he had found one of the most despicable, worst human beings, and never, even at the risk of imprisonment, would he begin an association with him. Only for a moment he considered entering the room and castigating the criminal intentions of the wretched notary, but in the next instant he found himself on the stairs, and with the agility of a wild cat he hurried down the creaking stairs after the fleeing girl.

When he reached the street, one look sufficed to know what direction the unknown girl had taken; he hastened his steps, and after several minutes he was so close to her that he could have easily accosted her. His peculiar position, his awareness of his own inexperience in the civilized world had made him shy, and he thus followed the strange girl undecidedly at a certain distance.

To his amazement, she did not leave Chestnut Street, but seemed to want to reach the open fields by following it. Not once did she look back. A light *shawl* covered most of her face, and as she walked in the light of the lanterns, he saw clearly

that a nameless³⁹ pain tore her breast apart and that convulsive sobbing shook her entire person.

Lighter became the rows of houses, more sparse the lanterns, and more seldom did they encounter pedestrians. The young girl increasingly hastened her pace from the center of the city to the last lantern.

Here she stopped for a moment, as if to take a breath, or to gain courage for the walk through the darkness in front of her. The *Halfbreed* had remained t behind; not a single human being was in either direction.

“Oh, merciful God!” the distressed girl exclaimed, while stretching her arms toward the night sky. “What shall I say to my poor father? The truth will worsen his condition, but I can no longer keep it from him. Oh, how merciless human beings are!” and as if pain had overpowered her, she covered on a curbstone to cry.

At no time had Joseph lost sight of the unknown girl. He heard her exclamations, but didn’t understand them, since it was a language foreign to him. Her sorrow penetrated his heart so forcefully, that he overcame his typical shyness in order to offer his assistance, as far as he was able to help.

Steadfastly he approached the girl who rose upon seeing him and made motions to continue her walk.

“Don’t be alarmed,” he said with a mild, amiable voice, using the French language. “Don’t be alarmed that a stranger takes the liberty to address you.

³⁹ *namenlos*

Unbeknownst to you, I witnessed your meeting with Buschmark, I heard everything, and you can confidently assume that I only followed you to offer you my advice.”

If the frightened girl had turned to flee at the initial address, she now stood still upon hearing confidence inspiring words, which were uttered to openly and honestly to be treasonous.

“You heard everything,” she asked astonished, “and have come to advise me? Me, the unfortunate daughter of an unfortunate father? Or did you perhaps come to mock a desperate woman? But, no, your words sound sincere; I thank you for that; but let my be on my way now, since you cant help me. You have seen yourself that Buschmark has the heart of a tiger in his chest. Once again, thank you for your kind words. God bless you. Farewell!”

“Don’t reject my help,” the Halfbreed replied urgently as he caught up to the unknown girl's side and kept an even pace with her. “If not for yourself, then for your unfortunate father. I also had a dear, unforgettable foster father, and believe me, I would have happily made every conceivable sacrifice if it had meant helping him, or simply doing him a favor. Or do you reject my advice because I am an Indian, a member of the race that is destined to be trodden down ignobly by the whites?”

I have not noticed what you are, I also don’t ask about it,” the girl answered hesitantly; may your skin be black, red, or white, you have spoken benevolent, comforting words to me and have revealed yourself to be noble being. In what high regard I hold your clearly expressed nobleness, you may conclude from my sincere plea to accompany me through the corner of the forest to the vicinity of my father's

cabin, if your time permits. I am otherwise not afraid, only Buschmark has caused me the most nameless terrors tonight, that I still can't overcome."

"Most certainly, I would love to escort you to your father's place," the *Halfbreed* replied; and the two young people walked silently next to each other.

The sorrow was gripping her heart so tightly that the girl soon seemed to have forgotten the presence of her escort. She cried silently, but once in a while hard sobbing betrayed that she could hardly contain the outbursts of her agony.

The *Halfbreed* didn't dare speaking, and yet he would have loved to offer his help, a help that, as he well knew, lay in the realm of his power. Several time he came close to giving in to the impulses of his deep sympathy, but just as often he faltered⁴⁰ and thought that his offer might be misunderstood and rejected as importunate; under no circumstances did he want to offend his companion. —

"Is there no possibility to alleviate your father's despondent state and to relieve your sorrow?" he finally began timidly.

"Who should want to lend us a helping hand?" the girl asked meekly, "us, the ones who have no friends, no well-meaning acquaintance in this great, strange part of the world?"

"And yet, even here there are people who are willing to dry tears. You really then don't know anyone to whom you can turn to, nobody to whom your situation is not alien, and whom you may ask for a loan, a loan that is too small to easily fear a refusal?"

⁴⁰ *oft stockte ihm das Wort auf der Zunge.*

“Nobody, nobody,” the girl replied.

“In this case, would you not misunderstand it if I introduced you to somebody you can explain your situation to with complete trust, and who, as I know, would loan your father the sum of several hundred dollars for a longer period of time.”

“You know then?” the girl asked terrified. “O, yes,” she continued, interrupting herself,

“I forgot that you were witness to my useless pleading. But tell me, do you really think that such a noble-hearted human being exists who would do my father this great service, even though we have only insufficient guarantees?”

“Certainly, I know such a man,” Joseph replied quickly, “namely a man who not only would love to oblige, but will do so quickly; because I feel just like you, that with the wretched notary help must come right away.”

“I can’t bring myself to solicit a stranger for such a good deed,” replied the apprehensive girl with a deep sigh. “O, if you just had the smallest collateral!”

“It was perhaps more than sheer coincidence that brought us together,” the *Halfbreed* began after a brief pause. “Perhaps you and your father were meant to be helped; consider that and allow me to introduce the man to you. Promise me though not to reject his offer, I know it would displease him greatly.”

“Stranger, I don’t know you; after showing such sympathy and speaking such comforting words to me, I don’t refuse to accept your proposition. I will do it for my father. May you be able to win the heart of a kind man.”

“Listen then. I come from far, far away; I come from the wilderness where I have managed to earn and save a small sum of money. It is almost six hundred dollars, thus too much to have it on my person at all times. Since I have no friend in St. Louis who could keep the money safely for me, I wanted to ask your father to take half of the sum from me in the form of a loan for a longer period of time, I mean five or six years.”

“You want to lend my father money?” the young girl called in a voice in which fear, hope, and suspicion were discernible in a peculiar fashion. “Lend money, you say? Stranger, I don’t know you, even the expression on your countenance I am unable to read. Likewise, you don’t know my father who only half a year ago came across the ocean with me and my brother; and yet, you want to lend him money? Without knowing if you will ever get it back? Due to his illness, my father is in the poorest condition and he can – yes, his ailment can take a bad turn, and long might it then take before my brother I have acquired so much to give you back what is yours!” A soft sobbing betrayed that the thought of being separated from her father touched his companion. —

“Calm down,” the *Halfbreed* began after a short while. “With God’s help, your father will be healthy soon enough and will pay back the loan little by little. Allow me thus the comfort of a helping hand, and trust that it makes me happy already to have done someone a small favor. You are lucky, you have a father, you have a brother, who love you and whom you love. But I am alone; only an old Indian woman, the caretaker of my youth, and a greying hunter would grieve if I died. Both

are much older than I am, and the time will come when I will be entirely alone.

Perhaps you and your father will then remember me.”

“Remember you?” the young girl asked while she stopped and squeezed the *Halfbreed's* right hand with both her hands. “And you can doubt that? When you have returned entirely to your forests, and we have achieved a measure of wealth—since your altruistic help can only bring blessings—then remember that our house offers you a home.⁴¹ Come, as fast possible, to spend the eve of your days in the company of my father, to accept the care that only a grateful daughter may offer. — God in heaven, how happy you have made me! My father has been saved now!” exclaimed the young girl, and in the next moment a hot kiss from her soft lips burned on the *Halfbreed's* brown hand.

Joseph shivered when he felt the touch. He realized that his companion mistook him for a man advanced in years. He felt a certain hesitation to correct the mistake of the harmless creature, and yet, he could do nothing but to go to her father with her and give him the money personally. How much would he have loved the awareness that the blessed child remembered him with the pure, untainted love of a child, but what must she have thought of him, when she realized him to be a young half Indian after he had taken the demonstrations of her childish gratitude in stride.

“I am only an Indian,” he said deeply moved, taking his hand gently from the girl and prompting her to continue walking. “I am only an Indian, *Halfbreed*, how the people call me. For a long time no human being has spoken to me so friendly and

⁴¹ *Heimath*

affectionately. Believe me then, if I really deserve a reward for this small favor, it has been given to me abundantly through the open demonstration of your grateful feelings, through the glance into your soul that you allowed me. But tell me, would it not be appropriate to keep quiet to your father about the meeting with the notary and to simply tell him that according to Buschmark's wishes I have decided to advance you the money?"

"Only I alone may know your noble sentiments?" the girl asked with a hint of displeasure. "Unfortunately, I have to partially comply with your request, since my hair stands on end when I think about telling my father the whole story. O, it is terrible; you were witness to my humiliation. It would break my poor father's heart if he found out what treatment I was subjected to today. Let us be silent about the incident, yet our gratitude will not be diminished if you live in my heart alone as our savior for now."

"Don't speak about what I have done in this manner, but ask yourself what you would have done differently if you had been in my place. I repeat, if anyone is obligated to thank someone, then it is me, for the kind words you spoke to me. Your words touch my heart," he continued, automatically falling into the flowery⁴² Indian manner of speech, which he liked to use when pleasant feelings filled his breast.

"Your words touch my heart like the rustling of the wind in the moving leaves of the poplar tree, or the sweet song of the warbler⁴³ when he looks down from his shady seat onto the prairie rich with flowers. Your words have done me well, and at the

⁴² *bilderreich*

⁴³ *Spottvogel*

moment I could forget many bad things that have happened to me, if I could only forget the one deed that I have committed myself.”

“Forget both,” the girl replied warmly, “and think less about the sorrows that seem to weigh heavily on you. The days of sorrow are followed by days of joy, and in moments of joy we should not be weighed down by vivid memories of past misery. The pain that threatened to overwhelm me just minutes ago was obvious to you, but now you see me calm, collected, and happy. I don’t think about anything but that doom has been turned way from my father. And yet, what have we suffered since we have left our home country!”

“One must have given the wrong impression of our continent,” the Halfbreed said musingly, “or you would have hardly traded it for your home, which is supposed to be beautiful. Since it is impossible that a general desire for riches have caused you and your father to come here.”

9.The Fate of an Emigrant Family

“What drove us away from there,” the girl confidently began, almost unconsciously, the story of her life. “What drove us away from there, it has never been clear to me; I think a regrettable change in our financial situation. However, the lovely banks of the Rhine River, where I spent my childhood and my happy, early youth, will remain vivid and fresh in my memories until the end of my days.”

“My father was a veterinarian and a well respected citizen of the city of Mannheim. Our family consisted of four members, my parents, my brother, and me,

and there is no happier circle imaginable than when we gathered by the peaceful hearth. We didn't lack abundant health, just as we didn't lack the amenities that what serve to increase the pleasantries of life. I believe, we were too certain of our good fortune, more than reason would have allowed us."

"The year 1848, which shook all of Europe violently, came and with it the end of our peaceful family life. I know that my father always stayed far away from the political events⁴⁴, even though I remember during that time to have noticed people with him who later fled the country.⁴⁵ This would not have influenced his position, if his philanthropy had not given the primary cause for suspicion."

"A student who hadn't yet grown beyond his boyhood years, but had already recklessly partaken in dangerous liaisons, had come through my hometown on his flight from the authorities. His arrival had already become public knowledge via the telegraph, and the security police was soon on his trail."

"Coincidence had it that when he was wandering the street in order to continue his flight, he caught sight of his pursuers. Without further deliberation, he stepped into our house like an old acquaintance. Turning to my father, he revealed himself to be a fugitive and pled with him not to betray him. My father was touched by the sight of the tender youth whom awaited such a sad fate. He hid him and even

⁴⁴ *Treiben* here: literally physical activity.

⁴⁵ *landesflüchtig*. The notion of *Landesflucht* (not to be confused with *Landflucht*, a term that refers to the migration of peasants away from agricultural areas during the 18th century), lit. fleeing from the country, is an old legal concept in this case and refers to a violation of the emigration laws. Considered an act of treason at times, it originates with the Lombards (or Langobards) and was punishable by confiscation of all property and even death.

dared to deny knowing him to the people who came to inquire. That same night, the student left town in my brother's clothes. My father accompanied him to the gates, and he is supposed to have reached America safely.”

“Unfortunately, my father had been observed walking through the city gate with his alleged son and then returning without him. The inquiry found that during that time my brother had not left the parental house. They tried to convict my father; it didn't work, but he was declared suspicious, which meant that everyone was hesitant to be in close contact with him. To what extent this had a detrimental influence on our good fortune, I can't explain, but I know well that from that day on one loss after another happened to us. My father, who was otherwise the most friendly and loving of all human beings, became serious and gloomy and his worries weighed heavily on his mind. He realized that he would never again be able to get ahead where he resided, and thus he decided after a tough inner struggle to give up his home and establish a new, more secure one in America. My dear, gentle mother always wanted the same as my father, and when it came to my brother, who is four years older and had chosen to study forestry, he was overjoyed to trade boring Germany,⁴⁶ how he called it, for the arcane forests on the other side of the ocean. I was content with everything as long as I saw my family happy, and I even longed to leave surroundings in which every person, yes, every thing, reminded us of bad times, and thus made the sad, hopeless present weigh on us even heavier.”

⁴⁶ There was no unified Germany in 1848.

“Not two years had passed since the incident with the young fugitive, when we found ourselves on a sailing ship in Havre one day with the rest of our small fortune, a ship that was to bring us to New York.”

“If you were to leave your shady forests forever, those silent witnesses to your childhood, then deep wistfulness would certainly enter your heart. But we were about to leave the continent in whose nicest corner our sweet home lay hidden; we were to sever the sacred bond that tied us to land and people so dearly; We were about to bring the infinite ocean between us and the soil where our cradle had stood. Oh, it was a sad day! All of us cried with sorrow when the blue coastlines disappeared from our view. I didn’t care for the majestic ocean with the expansive horizon, and frequently and for long periods of time I gazed in the direction of home.”

“To increase the extent of our sadness, my mother fell dangerously ill. I didn’t leave her side, and neither did my brother and my father. But what use was it? If heartfelt love were able to keep the soul of a human being in its shell, then my poor mother should have remained with us. She was laid to rest deep down on the cool bottom of the ocean. —The poor patient woman! ‘If I could only rest in native soil, but I will be far, far away from my loved ones,’ were her last words.”

Suppressed sobbing muffled the voice of the narrator at this point. The *Halfbreed* walked by her side silently. He wanted to cry with her, that’s how much her sorrow touched him, and yet, a certain joy filled his breast when he considered that someone completely strange poured out her worries so frankly, yes, trustingly. He didn’t dare interrupting the silence, out of fear to disturb his companion’s flow of

ideas. Both of them hardly noticed that they had stepped into the shadow of the forest and that the mighty crowns of gigantic trees arched into a roof above them. The crickets sang their endless trill, the hidden house crickets chirped gaily, and the wind whispered quietly in the dense foliage. The two people, whom fate had brought together and who a certain similarity in their way of thinking tied to one another, walked on a forest path covered with soft grass as if they were mute.

“Yes, stranger,” the girl began again after a while, “I witness how my mother was sown into large tarpaulin; witnessed how she was placed on a plank, pushed toward the railing of the ship, and how the foaming waves closed over her. What I have suffered is indescribable. I wanted to plunge in after my mother and lay myself to rest next to her, but on the other hand my father demanded all my attention and care. The poor man was in utter despair, and time and time again he accused himself of having murdered his wife. This way, I had little time to indulge⁴⁷ in my own pain, and with my brother’s devoted help, I managed to help my father overcome his despondence somewhat.”

“Soon after, we landed in New York, and with disembarking the struggle with the most disagreeable conditions that await every emigrant to a degree began. I won't recount the shameless acts of deceit we were constantly subjected to. Our own countrymen mostly committed them, and due to our ignorance of the customs of the country and our inability to speak English we were little able to avoid them. I will also not speak of the brutal treatment that everyone felt entitled to subject us to

⁴⁷ *nachzuhängen*

because we traveled in the most humble class for immigrants. I am also silent about the anguish of my soul when I watched my father, who continuously blamed himself bitterly about the things strange people caused us.” —

“Yes, yes, stranger, you are happy in your forests; you don’t have to blush over the unconscionable treatment your fellow men have chosen⁴⁸ for the poor immigrant since you don’t see it.”

“After an arduous journey and many harsh losses, we finally reached St. Louis. But even here one disappointment followed the other; after all, what should a veterinarian do in a province where every fellow-countryman is a veterinarian himself and would rather suffer the loss of an animal than pay the price of a costly cure? Even my brother was hit hard, since all too soon he realized that for the studies he had chosen at home, there was no use to be expected here.”

“After many attempts to find one or the other way of making a living, and after we had used up our last bit in a boarding house of the lowest class, my father and brother decided to earn a living by farming. Fortune seemed to be on our side in this undertaking because on the very same day they decided, another German referred them to Buschmark, who not only had land to sell, but was also supposed to have small, equipped farms for lease.”

“In Buschmark we found an exceedingly accommodating man, who pretended to be poor, but in his position as notary believed himself to be in the position to have the opportunity to help my father gain a small lease. Everything was lies and

⁴⁸ *eingeschlagen*

deception, and when he asked us with duplicitous friendliness to provide him openly and confidentially with a description of our situation, he only did so in order to catch us in his inescapable web.”

“Soon, we found a small farm that was entirely suitable to our purposes. According to our understanding at the time, the conditions were very good, and two days later we moved into the log cabin, in which my father is now waiting for me.”

“Since my father was without resources, he received a couple heads of cattle included in the lease, under the condition to give half the earnings of the small plot of land as interest. We were astounded by how cheap the contract was, and driven by new hope, we began our new way of life.”

“A few weeks sufficed to make us realize that we had overestimated our physical strength as well as that what the garden and the field offered for sustenance. My father turned to Buschmark to seek advice. The latter stated his opinion, apparently in the most well-meaning manner, saying that once planting time was over, my father and I would be adequate enough to preside over the fieldwork, and that the duty of a child demanded from my brother to leave us and to earn enough with his own two hands to be a support for my father in his old days.”

He didn't seem to suspect that this lot was twice as difficult for us, because we had never in our lives done such work; at least he didn't mention it with a single word.”

“My brother, who had always shown a tendency to be adventurous, decided on his departure quicker than I had imagined, but in this case he was guided

by the intention to do everything that was in his power to ease our condition. He heeded Buschmark's advice and went up the Missouri to the Town of Kansas, where, as he was duped to believe, workers of all kinds were lacking. He is still there and has enough trouble to make his own living, much less is he able to support his ailing father."

"Now, I guess quite correctly why Buschmark insisted on my brother leaving. But back then, we were blind to it."

"Without having even the most humble means, we had moved to the farm. Buschmark calmed the fears about our livelihood by providing us with credit from a merchant by whom he vouched for us. 'You can simply pay the entire sum to me after the harvest and the earnings of the farm,' he answered, when my father expressed his dislike of going into debt. But the earnings of the harvest were so paltry, that they were hardly enough to support our lives until the next summer, let alone pay the debts in arrears."

"An expert look would have realized immediately that the land was too small to suffice for such purposes anyway; but it was Buschmark's scheme to make us his slaves."

"To make our sad situation complete, my father fell ill three weeks ago. He may certainly leave his bed and move around in the yard, but he is unable to work. I am happy to complete as a much as possible with my meek powers, I am also glad to take care of my father and try to avert his thoughts from the gloomy conditions, but

you know how long it would have been until Buschmark had thrown us out the door, if you hadn't appeared as our savior."

"Since the beginning of my father's illness, Buschmark seriously urged the fulfillment of the responsibilities. You have heard what his purpose was to ask for the money at the particular moment we were least not only unable to come up with it, but even fought the most bitter need. You have heard what I would not have dared to tell any human being; God himself sent you."

Now the young girl was silent. The *Halfbreed* was silent, too; his heart was too full for him to find words. The story of suffering and adversity had made him reconcile with his own fate, but the earnest nature of his companion pulled him back toward a humanity he had shied away from a short time ago.

"If my father were poor and suffering," he thought, "then he might perhaps allow me to approach him with filial sentiments. Or if I were rich and well regarded? But no, I'd prefer if he needed my support."

"And yet, I envy you!" he finally spoke out, when they came in view of the small log cabin from which a weak light shone toward them; "and yet, I envy you! There, in that small house over there, someone is waiting for you with love and longing, and longing quickens your steps."

"Poor stranger," the girl replied with a tone of deep sympathy. "Are you that alone in the world? And don't you have anyone who loves you? You spoke of an old white hunter and an even older Indian woman. How good these people must be. But they will remain the only ones who think kindly of you; because even here in this

cabin, we will always await you with kind feelings; not only because of the help you have provided us, but for the manner in which you offered it. But here we are, so let me enter first that my father doesn't find the late visit unexpected." The worried daughter rushed past the *Halfbreed* into the small chamber, which was lit up by a fire. Her father sat at a table and, as if in deep thought, supported his head with both hands.

"Here I am," she called out, while she kissed the prematurely aged man tenderly on the brow, "here I am, and I am even bringing you joyful news!"

"I don't like it, my dear Franziska, that you take walks⁴⁹ in the evening hours," answered Andree, her father, reciprocating the greeting likewise tenderly. "I worried greatly about you, dear child. I know well that you hesitate to use the daytime hours for anything but work, but you should consider that harm can come to you, and how can you be helped then since I am tied to the house by fever? O, my child, we are undergoing difficult trials!"

"Calm yourself, dearest father," Franziska pleaded in a coaxing manner. "You told me yourself that God is everywhere. Anyway, I did not return as unprotected as you think. I had a well-meaning gentleman as a companion, whose acquaintance I made I owe to my visit at Buschmark's, and who specifically came to take over all obligations that you have to the notary. He is inclined to entrust you a sum of money for a longer period of time, and since he considers going on a long journey, he would consider it a special favor if you negotiated with him."

⁴⁹ *deine Gänge*. Used in the sense of running errands.

“I believe your words, my dear child, but you may be wrong, and it worries me that someone wants to advance me a not insignificant sum of money, since I am not able to give even the least bit of collateral to vouch for the repayment of the sum. Who knows if not a new calamity is seeking us out?”

Franziska, who believed to have given her father an exact account of the whole matter in the few words, including the stranger’s character, was perplexed when she heard her father’s concerns.⁵⁰ She forgot, that unlike her, he didn’t know the *Halfbreed’s* disposition, and at the same moment sensed the bitterness that the latter must feel in such doubts.

“Here is our benefactor himself,” she called, while she stepped aside and pointed with her hand to the young man, who had entered behind her, but remained at the door. “Even though I don’t know by what name I shall introduce him, but it makes me infinitely happy to introduce a well-meaning friend in him, a friend in whom alone our hope now lies.”

During that short conversation between father and daughter Joseph had had sufficient time to consider both of them more closely. The father’s appearance was entirely in accordance with the way picture he had formed after the young girl’s description of him. He saw a man in him, who had aged early from grief and sorrow, and had been weakened by the influence of the climate. Almost entirely greyed hair and benevolent eyes gave him a noble dignified appearance, and despite the

⁵⁰ *Bedenklichkeiten*

gauntness and the resulting sharpness of features, there was an eminent goodness⁵¹ in him that couldn't be overlooked.

The daughter on the other hand presented to him the flawless picture of innocent youthful beauty, just as he had imagined angels, of which the dear, old missionary had told him so many charming stories during his childhood.

They were the same big, blue eyes the father had, only milder and friendlier, so shining with brightness that it indicated recently developed maidenhood. Her blond, unusually thick hair was nestled around her white forehead and temples in thick braids, and stood in peculiar contrast to her dark eyebrows, which curved in beautiful arches and made the tender skin appear even more transparent. Her cheeks were deeply flushed— perhaps more from inner excitement than abundant health— and their color was almost that of the lips, between which teeth in perfect white shone. Her nose was curved gently and bestowed a noble expression on her profile, while the ample physique exhibited the most beautiful harmony and perfected an appearance had something infinitely charming and brought back the *Halfbreed's* timidity.

He was in such deep contemplation that he didn't pay attention to the father's words, which otherwise, considering his excitable temper, would have struck him as rude. But when he heard how the young girl introduced him to the father and didn't know his name⁵², he hesitatingly stepped forward. "My name is Joseph," he said in his usual modest manner, and turning to Andree he continued: "This young lady, your

⁵¹ *hervorragende Herzengüte*

⁵² *in Verlegenheit um einen Namen war*

daughter, has reported correctly by telling you that I am disposed to advance you the needed sum. I can thus only repeat that you are doing me a favor if you accept my offer, since I consider traveling to where the money would be of no advantage to me; it would on the contrary only be an impediment. Having said that, I want to be able call on someone as a friend and to be received as a friend should I return here after several years.”

Andree had been watching the *Halfbreed* keenly. With every word the Indian spoke, his features softened, and as he had ended, he gave him his hand, and inviting him to sit, he replied:

“I understand your duty then, Mr. Joseph, even though you expressed it in different words. You have come to help people who came into a bad situation through no fault of their own. Altruistic motives guide you, I can see it in your open, honest look, and just as frankly as you offer your help, I accept it. I will be your debtor without feeling slighted; you however will be lenient with me, and never, never doubt my desire to pay down my debt to the last penny, even if my children are forced to take over my obligation. You see well that I am ill, but I soon hope to be in possession of my strength again.”

“Don't worry about your condition,” said Joseph, who felt attracted by Andree's sincerity and became more talkative, “because if I am not mistaken, you only suffer from the fever which we have to fight on the prairie in particular.”⁵³ You

⁵³ Möllhausen probably describes what was commonly referred to as prairie fever or prairie madness. Although not a clinical condition, it has become a pervasive subject in literature. O.E. Roelvaag's 1927 work *Giants in the Earth*, Willa Cather's 1913

will overcome it soon, and after you have become used to the climate, you will soon feel strong again. We don't want to lose time; here is the money, may it bring you blessings; and let's take a closer look at your condition. You must know that at the edges of civilization we understand how to heal the common illnesses just as much as a learned doctor, and that is because except for the missionaries nobody accidentally strays out here.

"Not so fast, Mr. Joseph," said Andree while he was looking for writing materials I the desk, "not so fast, I am not sure to what extent I am able to fulfill my commitments, but I would have to decline your generous offer if it wasn't happening in a legal way."

"Well then," replied Joseph, "if its adds to your peace of mind, I am willing, but I have to say⁵⁴ that your word is worth more than any writs and records of the entire city of St. Louis combined. Compose the document then according to your own liking, but especially add that the sum may not be demanded without a half-year's notice."

"But it may be given back?" Andree asked.

"However you wish," replied Joseph, whose eyes were secretly looking toward the young girl.

It would be a difficult task to describe what Franziska felt when Joseph stepped from the shadow into the light of the fire. She had expected to see an aging

novel *O Pioneers!*, and Dorothy Scarborough's 1925 *The Wind* all depict characters who suffer from the affliction. The symptoms were those of depression.

⁵⁴ *kann ich nicht umhin zu bemerken*

Indian whose ideas and character and outward behavior had been shaped through sustained contact with the members of the civilized class. Instead there stood a very young man in front of her, whose Indian heritage was immediately readily apparent, but whose countenance and demeanor on the other hand indicated a proper education. She could not grasp the deep seriousness that had been in each of his words throughout the conversation. It appeared even more fantastic to her that she had spoken with him so confidently, recounted her whole situation, yes, even declare her childish love and gratitude, him who was only few years older than she was Her thoughts chased through her head; the blood ran faster in her veins; she felt confused and embarrassed, but she was not angry with him or herself. He had spoken such well-meaning words to her, he had only accompanied her to help and advise her poor father, why did it matter if he was a white man or an Indian, a man at the evening of his life or a youth? And why should she, who had offered the devotedness of a daughter, not also be able to give⁵⁵ him the love of sister?

Using the men's conversation as an excuse, she had withdrawn to the far corner of the room, and from there, where she believed herself to be unobserved, she looked contemplatively at the *Halfbreed*.

The young man was an enigma to her; so calm and collected he behaved, he acted with such tenderness and tried not to hurt her father's feelings. And yet, he was an Indian, his attire and his skin color revealed that. . He was one of those human

⁵⁵ *bewahren*

beings she had always heard described in the most terrible fashion⁵⁶. “How this poor, persecuted race has been wronged! Oh, I feel it, I could love you like a brother, simply because of your noble character,” Franziska thought. Then a glance from the serious, dark eyes met her; she withstood⁵⁷ it, but she felt how the blood burned in her cheeks, since she suspected what must be taking place in the *Halfbreed’s* soul at this moment; she sensed that he must be bringing everything she had spoken to him, her entire behavior to his mind.

“Read, Joseph, what I have composed,” Andree interrupted the quiet that had prevailed in the room for several minutes. “Read it, and if you have no objections, allow me to sign.”

Joseph glanced briefly at the paper, returned it, and answered: “This is wholly sufficient for me, just write your name under it, and let us mention it no further. May the money bring blessings to the same degree to which I feel at peace to have secured it in this manner.”

Joseph sat with Andree for a quite some time still. Franziska soon overcame her first bashfulness; she freely entered the conversation, which concerned itself particularly with the western regions, and listened attentively when the *Halfbreed* described his native forests and prairies and with child-like reverence spoke of the missionary and his blessed deeds. But even Joseph spent a pleasurable evening. It was as if a new world had open up to him, since everything he heard were outpourings

⁵⁶ *schrecklichsten Farben*

⁵⁷ *aushalten*

from sincere, loving⁵⁸ hearts, behind which no duplicity, no deception could be hidden.

How rich and beautiful the humble cabin appeared to him. He sighed deeply as he considered his father's grand house. He didn't envy these people's good fortune, since they were still fortunate in his eyes despite the heavy blows of fate, but he wished himself to be in a similar position, far from the noise of the world, in deep, peaceful calmness.

When Joseph was about to return to the city at the midnight hour, father and daughter squeezed his hand with heartiness. Almost embarrassed he listened to the warm words of gratitude; when he was asked to repeat his visit as long as he was still in St. Louis, yes, every day, his breast trembled⁵⁹ with sincere joy, and he praised fate that brought him together with such people after many a false hope.

Andree and his daughter had the most grateful feelings for the *Halfbreed*; but they could not be more thankful than their benefactor for the affectionate encounter, and the sincere invitation to always consider the log cabin his home.

With a light heart Joseph made his way to the city. Even though the thought of the Negro, whom he believed to be dead, weighed on him heavily, his conscience absolved him of an absolutely evil deed, since he had only taken up his weapon in self-defense, and nothing was ever further from his mind than the thought of murder. The legal prosecution Buschmark threatened him with had likewise lost its fright for him, because if his own, biological father wanted to hold him responsible for the

⁵⁸ *liebeswarm*

⁵⁹ *aufrichtige Freude durchzuckte seine Brust*

unintentionally committed crime, did he not then have the means to soften the heart of the rich planter? Could he not call out to him at the last minute: "I'm your son. Why do you prosecute me?"

And Buschmark, this duplicitous crook, with whose black soul he had become acquainted with this evening, could hardly be sincere with him, since he intended to lure Andree and his daughter to perdition? Could not similarly treacherous reasons be hidden behind his hypocritical words? But why these doubts and questions, since it was entirely up to him to avoid any interaction with such a human being. And he did in fact avoid him, since from that day on he only spent the night in the house of the fur company.

Along with the kinder feelings for mankind surrounding him, his innate passion and quickness had come back to life, and when the sun cast its first rays onto the mighty cosmopolitan city in the early morning, he was already far away sidling through the dewy fields and the shady forests to indulge in the beloved thrill of the hunt. But he also had other purposes in mind, purposes whose fulfillment became his pleasant duty.

He had of course not missed that Andree often had to fight the most bitter privation, and even if the father had not yet realized the pain of a true shortage of provisions, he knew, yes, he had even heard it at Buschmark's door, that the daughter often sacrificed in order to provide her ailing father with some comforts.

In order to alleviate this need in a gentle manner, he now took double the pleasure in hunting; and when he stopped at the quiet log cabin, he often placed some

wild turkeys, sometimes squirrels, sometimes a raccoon, or even a load of fresh venison in front of the overjoyed Franziska.

That was not all, and he sought to support his new friends in other ways as well. He provided the ailing Andree with potent medicine that soon helped him recover, and often a book for the sweet-natured Franziska. He taught her the English language, instructed her in the smoking of wild game for their winter needs, showed her another hundred little handy tricks, which helped her make her domestic duties considerably more easy.

Happiness and contentment appeared to have moved into Andree's log cabin, and quite often, when he sat under the hickory tree with his daughter and enjoyed the beautiful fall evenings and expected his young friend, he said that the *Halfbreed* was like an angel that had moved into his house. Since Franziska had given the astonished Buschmark the entire amount owed including the rent, Andree's condition had improved considerably, and they even had the hope to live through the winter without worries, yes, to a degree even leisurely, and there was nothing except nostalgic memories that might have darkened their life. Except perhaps the thought of a separation from their new friend; but he had even promised not to return to the upper Missouri until the son of the house returned, and, equipped with new experiences, took over the caring for his kin.

Buschmark hadn't shown himself again on the farm. Franziska had rejected his offer to extend the credit for a longer period with contempt, and upon his question

‘from where you had accepted the help,’ she had walked away hastily, but not quickly enough to not hear a terrible threat, which the angry notary uttered at her.

Buschmark had been to the fur company a number of times to speak with the *Halfbreed*, but it had been in vain; even Mr. Sarpy hardly saw the busy⁶⁰ hunter anymore. It was evident that he avoided everyone; in fact, he had little inclination to give up his freedom for an arrangement with the fur company or to come in contact again with the deceptive Buschmark.

He could not come to a conclusion about his own future. He hesitated to think of breaking the bond that tied him to the log cabin and its inhabitants with magical force, and yet he had to admit to himself that at most he might be able to live through the winter in such circumstances without coming into a precarious situation. He thus looked forward to Lefèvre’s arrival, whose dignified, albeit sometimes one-sided, opinions he wanted to subordinate the decision over his doings.⁶¹ Whatever the old hunter’s advice was,⁶² Joseph was certain that the trusted friend would only advise him to do what he concluded to be the best after heartfelt deliberation.

The month of October was coming to its end, the fall foliage shone in a thousand shades, the plumed migrants moved to the warmer south with loud cries of joy⁶³, and the open fires burned brighter in the city and the country side.

A sincere feeling of friendship was present in the circle because, one person had become necessary to the other’s life; when they sat together in intimate

⁶⁰ *eifrig*

⁶¹ *sein Tun und Lassen.*

⁶² *Mochten des alten Jägers Rathschläge sein, wie sie wollten*

⁶³ *Jubelrufen*

conversation, exchanged their thoughts and ideas, and taught each other this or that, then it was as if peace had moved⁶⁴ in among them; time passed imperceptibly, and no one had any inclination that storms might gather around them yet.

10. The Lonely Tavern

The northern part of St. Louis, known by the name of New-Bremen, had two decades ago been mostly open field, on which small farms, but also isolated factories indicated the proximity of a heavily populated city.⁶⁵ Now, immigrants settled there and moved closer to one another, catalyzing a rapid rise of the property values and prompting the construction of long rows of houses in the suburbs, which in turn formed regular streets; the gardens were tended to with greater care, and in the same charming villas and residences of the wealthy merchants sprung up, to which, if time permitted, they could retreat from the bustling business life.

As with all newly created cities, one can still see the remains of the first settlements, namely in the form of collapsing stables, or crooked and sunken houses and cabins, which once used to be the center of prosperous farms, but now will soon give way to large buildings.

⁶⁴ *seine Wohnung aufgeschlagen hätte*

⁶⁵ New Bremen was in fact a suburb of mid-nineteenth century St. Louis. It is approximately situated where today is Hyde Park. Founded upon the heavy influx of Germans in the 1840's, New Bremen was incorporated on July 16th, 1850. The citizens of New Bremen voted in favor of annexation, and became part of St. Louis in 1856, thus ending the towns official existence. The early industry in New Bremen—one that Möllhausen was likely familiar with—was a thriving lumber industry, which received timber from Wisconsin and Minnesota in large floats on the Mississippi river for its saw mills.

Almost all of the structures still have a purpose. In some the owners live and wait for a buyer who may offer them one hundred times the price they had initially paid for their small plot; in other ones tenants live, who are engaged in some business that keeps them away from home during the day; and others yet, but only a few, seem to have no owner, since interchangeably first one, then another work-shy adventurer operates a sort of tavern business in it, until the actual landlord appears one day and chases him with his entire property, which in only a few cases consists of more than empty and full bottles, out the door.

The latter ones usually reveal themselves by a certain uncleanliness and great state of decay, since it seems that it occurs to none of the vagabonds dwelling there to even lift a finger concerning the exterior of the house.

Now, if one finds oneself in New-Bremen on the street in front of the shot tower⁶⁶—a prominent landmark in the sea of buildings—and directs one's steps down the first cross street from the Mississippi toward the hills, after a quarter of an hour hike, one reaches a point that offers a magnificent view over the city and the richly populated, majestic river. The rows of houses have reached their end there; instead one is surrounded by cultivated fields and gardens, above which once in a while structures as described above appear.

⁶⁶ A tower used to produce shot (*Schrot*). Molten lead was poured from the top of the tower through a sieve, and formed shotgun pellets in the fall. The shot tower in St. Louis was listed in a state of decay in the early 20th century and today no longer exists. When Möllhausen wrote *Der Halbindianer*, the shot tower likely produced munitions for the Civil War.

The period that we are considering here, namely the year 1851, there was a house in this spot (now it has probably long disappeared) that caught the eye in particular, since due to its uncleanliness and the for its inhabitants dangerous state of disrepair it stood in such stark contrast to the entire surrounding area, but even more so to its own graceful location.

A wide driveway lead in a distance of approximately one hundred steps past it. There must have been an enclosed garden, but now it just exhibited abundantly proliferating weeds, several neglected peach and apple trees, as well as a number of half-decayed fence posts covered with grey moss. To give the type of construction of the one story house a name would not be an easy feat, since one could consider it a log cabin, a hut made from planks, or a stable made from adobe bricks. There were samples of all these building techniques, yet not enough to keep rain, snow, and wind out of the only two rooms that took up the entire interior space of the cabin. Only the garret, which one could reach from the outside via a fragile ladder, contained a kind of shed that provided a tolerable shelter, even if the warped⁶⁷ door seemed to no longer stay in its place, and the small window, as well as the two that faced the level ground, seemed to no longer have a single undamaged window pane. A narrow, se used path wound itself from the road through the high weeds toward the uncanny house, because uncanny it was, and not less uncanny was the company that gathered there at times, and had give this gathering spot by the telling name Hungry Belly.

⁶⁷ *windschief*

It is possible that the empty rooms themselves were the impetus for this name, more likely however, that it was taken from the current innkeeper, who, too lazy to provide provisions, could spend a considerable time with an empty stomach, that is to say if he was not lacking the obligatory whiskey to keep his head heavier than necessary. In any case, Kendrick, how this member of human society was called, only opened his tavern after nightfall because it was only then that he could count on guests. He spent the greater part of the day in the garret, where he tried to sleep off the consequences of the ever-recurring nightly excesses.

The usual company in the Hungry Belly could be considered a closed one in many regards, since nobody was granted access who had not previously passed through stages of fallenness,⁶⁸ and had to fear at every public place to be recognized by someone cheated at gambling, by a robbery victim, or even by the police, and to be taken into custody.

In the Hungry Belly however, this choice society was relatively safe, a contributing factor to this was that in the not inconsiderable surrounding distance, no crimes that could arouse the attention of the police were ever committed, and that at any hour of the night, the rich as well as the poor traveler passed by Kendrick's dwelling as if he was on one of the busiest streets of the city.

On a dark night in the month of October, a light vehicle drawn by a single horse moved from the center of the city in the direction of the notorious house. Judging by its silhouette it must have been a quite elegant carriage, namely of such a

⁶⁸ *Gesunkenheit*

high-wheeled type as it is commonly used in races. A short man and a fairly voluptuous woman sat on the bench, while a young Negro boy appeared to be almost suspended in mid-air over the narrow seat behind the carriage. The woman had taken over the guidance of the horse, and by the manner in which she held the whip and the reins, one could easily tell that she was acquainted with the task, and predicted the horses attitude toward things it might take advantage of. She had elevated her seat with an padded cushion, which made her appear twice as large, while the man by her side seemed to disappear almost entirely in comparison.

After the small carriage had passed the last street light, the lady tightened the reins a bit more and placed the whip in her lap. The well-schooled horse understood the hint, slowed its extended trot into careful walk, and soon the voice of the woman could be heard, who, turning to her companion, said: "It's dark as hell out here , but a beautiful night for your plan."

"You forget, Miss Sally, that you are as interested in it as I am," the addressed man replied with some harrumphing.

"More on that later," murmured Miss Sally harshly, and silently they continued.

Ten minutes later, the carriage stopped in front of the yard of the Hungry Belly. The man and the woman⁶⁹ stepped down, the latter gave the Negro boy the reins and the whip, directed him to drive a hundred steps and wait there for their return, but added a threat accompanied by bawdy curses, if only it came to his mind

⁶⁹ *Dame*

to talk to someone or answer any questions [...].⁷⁰ Sliding her arm through her companion's, she took the familiar path to the house.

“Kendrick seems to have company,” she said, when the sound of noisy, carousing men reached her ears. “The old night owl, I hope he let the twins know of our arrival. But wait here, I want to take a look through the window and give Kendrick a sign to come outside. There seem to be more ears there than we need. But he has a kind of swallow's nest in his loft that is more suited to our purpose.”

The lady crept up to the window, placed her eye on a small tear on one of the window panes covered in paper, and watched, apparently with the greatest interest, everything that was happening in the room.

Her eyes first caught sight of Kendrick himself, who, standing behind a broken table, handled the unclean bottles and the even more unclean glasses with certain dexterity. Even though still fairly sober, the constant urge to drink⁷¹ had left its mark on his bloated features and informed his movements that one might just as well consider him inebriated. In fact, only his intimate friends were able to guess how far into his daily allotment he was, since his red-rimmed eyes did not even change their expression anymore. He was dressed in a pair of black trousers, which were tied tightly around the hips, and a white, well-worn shirt, whose rolled-up sleeves made a second, by now fairly bleached out, woolen scarlet shirt visible. On his wild, dark-brown hair rested a black felt hat that had lost its shape in the course of time and thus

⁷⁰ A frequently used ellipsis in German when one utters a threat, leaving the consequences up to the imagination of the person addressed.

⁷¹ *die Trunksucht*

contributed even more to enhancing the repulsive element in the appearance of the Hungry Belly's keeper.

The five or six guests in the room, some seated on stools and wooden blocks while others stood, were in harmony with their environment, which was dimly lit by a lamp. They all seemed to have grown up surrounded by vice and demonstrated through their manner of speech and behavior that they belonged not only to the lowest, but also the most dangerous class of human beings.

Miss Sally examined each one with attentive looks, and after she had convinced herself that the twins had not arrived yet, she quietly tapped on one the broken windowpanes with a twig.

Kendrick had heard the signal, but appeared not to notice, but joined the conversation with the man standing next to him instead, and only when he believed himself to be able to slip away unnoticed, he stepped outside through the door that had been ajar.

“What the hell,⁷² Kendrick,” the lady addressed him immediately, “do you believe I came here on a pleasure trip that you can make me wait that long?”

“That you don’t leave your palace and its gay existence for pleasure knows nobody better than I do; I also know, Miss Sally, that four years ago I, the rich merchant’s son, was the most welcome guest in your house, and you would not have dared to speak to me in such a tone, from fear of chasing me or my money away. But enough of it, I hesitated this long to not draw uninvited listeners.”

⁷² *zum Teufel*

“You mean the half dozen fellows in your taproom? As is I care about any one of them. No, Kendrick, I know them just as well as I know you; they were fine gentlemen once, as fine as can be when they smoked their cigars in front of the planter’s house, and there is no one among them who would dare to step into their beloved friend Miss Sally way in an impeding manner. But let us not waste time with such follies. Buschmark is here to speak with the twins, have you summoned them?”

“I have summoned them and they will come, but will hardly arrive here before nine o’clock.”

“Cursed be their eyes,”⁷³ the woman thundered, “and now it’s not yet eight. We must wait for them,” she continued after a brief pause, “we must wait at all costs. Am I not correct, Buschmark, our matter can’t be delayed?”

“No delay,” replied the notary, who, so beckoned, had stepped out from the shadow of the nearby bushes. “Not a minute delay, Lefèvre has arrived today, and this hunter with his brutish roughness is entirely able to cross our plans.”

“Ha, ha, ha,” Miss Sally laughed with suppressed *Schadenfreude*.⁷⁴ “It apparently frightened you when he drove his foot under your nose instead of answering your polite question?”

“And it would have frightened other people as well, notwithstanding hat and veil, if they hadn’t preferred to leave in time.”

⁷³ *verwünscht seien ihre Augen*

⁷⁴ gloating, malicious joy

“But we can’t just stand here, children,” Miss Sally said now with a hint of impatience. “Kendrick, help⁷⁵ us,” she continued turning toward him. “I suppose you place your swallow's nest⁷⁶ at our disposal.”

“You are referring to my parlor in the garret? Very well, it's at your service. Aside from my bed, there is an old bench up there, so that you don't have to stand; you shall have light as well. Yes, yes, Miss Sally, I find myself in different circumstances now than back then, when I entertained you and your ladies with champagne, which I had to pay twice and three times as much for!”

“Why were you such a fool?” replied Miss Sally in an unconcerned manner. “But onward now, or do you think that this fall air has rejuvenating properties?”

Following this demand the trio moved to the gable end of the house, where Kendrick found the ladder after a short moment of feeling around for it and leaned it onto the open door of the garret.

Miss Sally climbed up first, following her with less certain steps was Buschmark; Kendrick on the other hand hurried back into the house to fetch a light. Soon, he reappeared where the two waited in the dark, lit a tallow candle that was burned down halfway, which, due to lack of a candleholder, he stuck in an old whiskey bottle, and then, turning toward the ladder again, he remarked: “This is all I can help you with aside from Whiskey; should you desire the latter, or something stronger, just pound the floor with your feet a couple of times; since you are so

⁷⁵ *Ihr müßt Rath schaffen*

⁷⁶ *Schwalbennest* Architectural term that refers to a convexity in a wall.

intimately acquainted with my guests, it is really no great harm if they know of your presence.”

“Drink your whiskey yourself,” Miss Sally called after him, “I ask nothing of you except that you send the twins up as soon as they arrive.”

Kendrick disappeared. Miss Sally walked to the door, took hold of the ladder, and pulled it up with Buschmark’s help. “It is better this way,” she said laughing; “one of the fellows down there, even Kendrick, could get the idea to eavesdrop. A secret meeting is no longer possible now. But make yourself comfortable, honorable friend, and tell me how you found the *Halfbreed* out. What a red-skinned miscreant! My hair stands on end when I imagine him approaching a white girl. It is admittedly only a German girl;” and shrugging her shoulders with contempt, she lowered herself onto Kendrick’s simple bed, which snapped loudly and threatened to collapse under the unusual weight.

The glow of the faint flame that fought for existence with the draft now fell fully onto the countenance of the depraved person, who was known all over St. Louis by the name of Miss Sally, and whom the perfidious Buschmark complemented well.

Miss Sally was an actress through and through; if it suited her purpose, she was able to arm herself with a sanctimonious expression and to surround herself with decent beings, so that one could be inclined to consider her the respectable head of a happy family, rather than anything else. The sole exception that might have roused suspicion about her character were the valuable fabrics, the heavy golden chains, bracelets, and other jewelry items that enveloped her body to the greatest excess and

weighed it down, as well as the coquettish cut of her clothes, which stood in strange contradiction to her fifty years.

As she sat, or more precisely laid, across from her friend Buschmark in the garret, her countenance, since pretense was not necessary, had taken on its usual expression in which hard-heartedness, meanness, and vice fought for dominance. The fat, drooping jowls, the double chin, and the due to its spuriousness beautiful teeth had certainly nothing very remarkable, but if one took a closer look at the black, piercing eyes, the highly reddened nose, and the downward-running corners of the mouth, then one must have felt automatically repulsed.

The two human beings thus formed a truly unsightly group in the dusty, cave-like room. Meanwhile they must have felt at home there, because after Buschmark had cleared his throat in the usual manner several times, he participated in the conversation with ease by answering Miss Sally's questions in an extensive fashion.

“Well, Miss Sally, it is clear to me how I got on the *Halfbreed* tracks, but how the *Halfbreed* found out the addled old immigrant's daughter, that I can't guess. But coincidence sometimes plays a wonderful role in the world. That is to say, you must know, my lovely Miss Sally, that a very good friend advised⁷⁷ the *Halfbreed's* surveillance. For what purpose should not concern you.”

“Don't want to know anyway, old hack, [you] would tell me three lies with each word anyway,” his noble friend interrupted.

⁷⁷ daß der *Halfbreed* mir von einem sehr guten Freunde zur Überwachung empfohlen ist.

Buschmark pulled his face into an ugly grin, nodded as a sign of understanding, and then continued: “With some effort, I had tracked the fellow to the house of the fur company and invited him to visit me at my place of business. The *Halfbreed* didn’t come though; and when I returned to the mentioned house, to not lose sight of him entirely, I found out that he only spend the nights in the latter and vanished⁷⁸ during the day. My next business in order was then to tell my secretary, a very experienced human being” – “In other words just as much a rascal as his boss,” interrupted the malicious Miss Sally.

“No flattery, dear lady,” replied Buschmark in an engaging tone. “No flattery, but hear how the story ends. I thus ordered my secretary to find out under any circumstances where the *Halfbreed* hangs about⁷⁹ and what he does to pass his time. Quite a while later, my spy found him out, since the *Halfbreed* was hunting in the forest during the day, he couldn’t just follow his every step without attracting his attention.”

“Who can thus describe my surprise upon hearing one morning that the red-skinned fellow had found a willing listener in the girl, whom I had determined for you and who would have been an ornament for your house in any case.”

“In order to win the girl for our purposes more easily, I had let her father become indebted to me, as I had said earlier. I also recounted to you, if I am not mistaken, that she was once dismayed with my tender affection and erased her father’s debt to the last penny the following day. No one but the Indian could have

⁷⁸ *sich niemals blicken lasse*

⁷⁹ *sich herumtreiben* (infin.)

given her the money and thus taken my opportunity to come into more intimate contact with her, even though the farm is my property. You will understand easily that I don't nurture particularly friendly feelings for the *Halfbreed* as a consequence of this incident. In order to not lose the girl, and with her a lucrative business, our next concern must be to separate the two cooing dove with force, since I don't see any other way."

"My plan is to have the girl kidnapped by the twins, and deliver her into your custody. Has the girl disappeared, it will be easy for me to make the *Halfbreed* disappear quietly as well."

"The *Halfbreed* is supposed to disappear as well?" asked Miss Sally, while she looked at the notary sharply.

"Well, throw him off the trail," Buschmark corrected himself.

"You are then willing to leave the girl as my property?" Miss Sally asked after giving it some thought.

"Of course," replied Buschmark, "but there are some conditions."

"Which are?"

"Well then, I am certainly not as young anymore as I was when the beautiful Miss Sally blessed me with her affection —"

"Paha, nonsense!" the woman exclaimed when she was reminded about her youth.

"But not yet too old," Buschmark continued, "to not still have a warm heart and warm blood. The German immigrant girl has kindled my tender feelings to life;

yes, I admit, more than I would like and appreciate, but I won't hesitate to make big sacrifices to win in the end and make this seductive beauty inclined to fulfill my wishes. My condition would thus be that even in your house the abductee belongs exclusively to me up to a certain point in time. To be accommodating in return, I would desist from our usual purchase price."

"How kind of you, Mr. David Buschmark! But do you really believe, you old sinner, that you could impress a toad with a crotchety mug like yours, let alone a young, blossoming girl? And are you sure that your beloved⁸⁰ will submit herself to such a lifestyle? And the father, who has lost his only daughter, will leave any measure untried to retrieve her, and will bring us troublesomeness? And are you not afraid that the *Halfbreed*, who surely has inherited some of his ancestors astuteness, will give up his prey that easily?"⁸¹

"Don't worry about the accursed half-Indian, even though he hasn't interfered, I have cogent reasons to remove him from here. We don't have to fear the father either since he is very ill and doesn't understand the native tongue and will never learn it, and with the easily-hurt pride that he has despite being destitute, he will get in such trouble that he will soon run out of desire and strength to wear⁸² himself out. For safety's sake though, the kidnapping must look as if the daughter had separated voluntarily from the father, and the twins are entirely the right men to deal with such a matter. I consider the concerns you have voiced regarding the girl minor, since I

⁸⁰ *die Angebetete*

⁸¹ *Und fürchtet ihr nicht, daß der Halfbreed, der gewiß etwas von der Schlaueit seiner Vorfahren geerbt hat, seine Beute so [sic] leicht aufgibt?*

⁸² *aufzureiben* (infin. *aufreiben*), also appears as *ausreiben*. Syn. *scheuern*. to scour.

know, Miss Sally, that you are an experienced, sensible woman who knows how to deal with heady crying. Precedence has taught us that often the chastest maidens feel the most at home under your protective wings when they become fully conscious of their situation; and then even feel ashamed to appear in public during the day out of fear to be recognized by someone.”

“You are not entirely wrong, my dear friend, but I feel certain distrust in this matter since I fear that your tender feelings may misguide you to commit great foolishness.”

“Pure jealousy, lovely Miss Sally, pure jealousy! Believe me, my adored Sally, at the bottom of my heart is your picture indelibly etched⁸³ in stone.”

“Ugh, a thousand times ugh , you old rack!⁸⁴ First, go and trade your fifty years in for half , and procure a human face instead of your grotesque vellum face, and then return and ask if I am inclined to hear your sweet words. We now only address business matters with each other, and it seems to me you are not faring to poorly this way. But tell me, how did you learn about the wild hunters arrival?”

“You are referring to Lefèvre? This morning I received a letter from Harrison, who is still in Council Bluffs, in which he identified the name of the steamship that Lefèvre boarded.”

“Harrison you said? Harrison? Am I supposed to know him?” asked Miss Sally.

⁸³ *tief eingegraben.* .

⁸⁴ *Schreibpultt.* There seems to be hidden humor in that passage. *Pult* is a desk in German. Etymologically from Latin *pulpitum*, a wooden rack or frame of boards.

“Well, it’s possible,” replied Buschmark, “it’s the man who was supposed to be hanged for murder, but fled on the day of the execution. Back then though he had a different name. But listen further. After having received the letter I went to the telegraph office and found out that the respective steamer would debark before evening. Nothing could thus be easier than greeting Lefèvre personally. You saw yourself how violently he turned me away, even though I only wanted to start a conversation with him; these backwoodsmen have rough manners in general, but are not necessarily serious.”

“I can assure you of the opposite, Mr. David, and I am convinced that the rough fellow would not have left a bone in your body intact if you had replied with just one more word, which wouldn't have grieved me all that much.”

“Spare me your witty jokes, Miss Sally. We have become acquainted well enough with Lefèvre to guess what will happen if he meets with the *Halfbreed* before the deed is executed. He will likewise settle in with Andre, and distrustful as the old bear is, he will make up for what the *Halfbreed* lacks with twice the crudeness. He will sense every calamity that threatens his red-skinned bosom buddy long before, and not only open the latter’s eyes, but also shoot at everyone he considers an enemy, as if he were in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.”

“You fear that he suspects you and will pay you a visit in your office?”

“Not that, but I fear that he and his clever friend capture the twins and elicit a confession. We would be beyond help then.”

“If the twins didn’t have more courage than you, you might in fact be correct. They, however, do not only have more courage, but also revolvers and bowie knives, and the devil may come if they don't know how to get rid of the *Halfbreed*.”

Buschmark listened attentively to the words that appeared to be spoken so randomly. He sensed that his confidante attempted to elicit a confession from him, and feigning a sort of commiseration, he replied: “No, Miss Sally, my hatred for the *Halfbreed* doesn’t go that far, he shall not be harmed, just made to disappear from these regions, and thus I repeat once more: Before twenty four hours have passed, the girl must be in your house, or you shall never receive her.”

“Fine then, the kidnapping is all, I agree, but I want to clarify beforehand what you plan to do about the new wardrobe, since I don’t want you to complain later about the much too high expenses.”

When Buschmark heard this, he started up. “What?” he exclaimed indignantly, “I am supposed to cover the wardrobe expenses? You just want to reap the benefits of the girl? I spoke of terms that I would still have to set, listen hence, that I —“

A pebble hitting the door from the outside interrupted Buschmark, who had been hit in his weak spot.

“It must be the twins,” said Miss Sally calmly, without changing her comfortable position in the least.

A second pebble rattled against the fragile door.

“The heck,⁸⁵ just go and see who it is. Or am I supposed to help you?” the impatient woman admonished the hesitating Buschmark.

He rose, opened the door halfway, and sticking his head out, he called with a muted voice: “Is it you, Kendrick?”

“No, but Kendrick’s two delegates,” it echoed back. “Lower the ladder, or do you think you are magnetic and can make us fly up?”

“Wait a second,” called Buschmark, when he recognized the twins' voices. Holding the ladder by its upper end, he pushed it out the door far enough that its own weight pulled it down, making it hit the ground with a bang. The waiting twins then stood it upright, the rungs creaked under the weight of two men, and several seconds later the two, whom the other two had awaited impatiently, stepped into the garret.

11. The Twins

They are hardly two human beings who could have been more different from one another in their outward appearance than the two men who were known to their close acquaintances and friends as the twins.

Born in countries that the ocean separated from one another, (one was an Irish man, the other a New Yorker) and with an age difference of at least twenty years, they exhibited in fact nothing that might have justified such an appellation. In a manner of speaking, it was justifiable when one considered the same degree of

⁸⁵ *Zum Henker*

profligacy both had sunk to, and which let them shy away⁸⁶ from no crime, which they had proven time and time again. The joint name, however, was less due to this similarity than the fact that one was never seen without the other, one held the light, while the other picked a lock, one put in the sack what the other had taken from the burglarized locker, and finally one vouched for the other's alibi, if the latter, perhaps due to probable cause, was taken in by the police.

The New Yorker, who had recently assumed the name Mr. Toby Ring, was a slender, delicately built man of roughly twenty-two years. His pinning dark-blue eyes, his meticulously parted, light-brown hair, and the dainty, died-black mustache⁸⁷ perfectly matched the pale, hectic complexion, and one could hardly find a more perfect gentleman than Mr. Ring, when he strutted through the streets of St. Louis in a blue tailcoat with blue buttons, light-colored trousers with wide stripes, and patent leather boots, betimes gracefully swinging the exquisite little cane with his white gloved hands, then holding a lorgnette in front of his eye, and all the while balancing the white castor hat so boldly on one side of his head, that it seemed to fall off at any moment.

He proved to use just as much accuracy in business matters as for his appearance, and this alone had gained him the friendship of the Irish man Finney, whom he not only cherished with similar affection, but whom he also admired for his superhuman strength and genuine daredevilry.

⁸⁶ *zurückbeben*

⁸⁷ *Schnurrbärtchen*, a diminutive.

Finney, who had previously been a professional boxer in his native county, had long found his trade insufficiently lucrative and much too tedious, at times even painful, to grow old in it. Thus, he had tried his luck as a burglar, and had gained some true skill, but then he was caught red-handed and locked in the penitentiary for ten years.

After having served his time, he was too proud to stay in the country where he was known to be a penalized criminal. He thus supplied himself from the till of a very pious and very thrifty chaplain with the necessary travel funds and boarded a ship to America, where he found a handsome and vast field for his occupation. For several years, he had pursued his newly learned trade on his own with great luck, when coincidence had him cross paths with Mr. Toby Ring, who, barely eighteen years of age, had absconded with his bread giver's till, and in whom Finney saw a talented young man at first sight. Since then, the two comrades had not parted ways. Toby brought his new master great honor; yes, he gained his respect to such a high degree that Finney often subordinated himself to his will, and finally ceased to act unless Mr. Toby Ring had previously sanctioned it.

Finney's appearance could not compare to that of his young comrade; he had long passed the age where the thought of his orange-yellow hair, the round, light-grey eyes with the white lashes and brows, the crushed nose, the wide mouth and the fox-red beard could have piqued his vanity. He knew very well that he possessed the peculiarities just described in that order, perhaps less from looking in the mirror and more from certain posted wanted notices he had seen in his green home country, and

on which under 'distinguishing marks' stood that he was missing his entire row of left molars, which he had lost in a fair fist fight.

Such people were the twins. Toby Ring entered first. He surveyed the room with a glance to convince himself that nobody except Miss Sally and Buschmark were present.. Then, after having bowed slightly, he approached the turned over crate serving as a table, and which was standing between the two persons just mentioned.

"Good evening, Miss Sally! Good evening, Mr. Buschmark!" he exclaimed, while looking at both through the lorgnette with a comic gesture to make a joke. "I feel delighted to see you are well. We are a bit late; we had to run some necessary errands, which were unfortunately without result. But that is much better for you, ladies and gentlemen; you will find us willing to undertake a bit of business for you, that is for the correct amount, since we need money, a lot of money in fact. Isn't that right, Finney?"

"We always need money, Toby; in my opinion we bargain poorly with a parched throat. I suggest thus, that we start council after the beautiful Miss Sally or my friend Buschmark fetches a small bottle of Kendrick's best. With Whiskey, opinions change and one sometimes becomes a little more conciliatory."

"I concur with my noble friend," added Toby. "I usually don't like strong drink, but after this nighttime walk, a glass doesn't seem inappropriate. With your permission, Madame," he said then bowing toward Miss Sally, while pulling out his tobacco pouch and offering it to Buschmark and Finney.

“I never smoke,” Buschmark said dismissively, “but I will provide the drink;” he said and stomped on the floor several times with his foot.

Ring and Finney had not taken their cigars into their hands when Kendrick’s head appeared in the door, and asked harshly: “What are you drinking tonight?”

“Moonshine,”⁸⁸ Finney answered in a bidding manner and without turning around. Kendrick’s head disappeared and one went to work to make room for the two men on the bed and on the bench by pushing and pulling.

Toby Ring pushed and squeezed, which elicited the first word from her that she had spoken since his arrival.

“Look, Mr. Toby,” she began, “your business must not be doing well lately, since you are here in such a timely manner and even remember your faithful old friend.”

“How could I forget the adored Miss Sally?” Toby replied while making gesticulations as if here wanted to kiss the fat hand covered in rings, an act that was immediately rewarded with a slap in the face by the fat hand.

“Little charmer,” the lady smirked in a benevolent manner; “but I already notice that you have fallen on hard times. But here is the whiskey, drink, and let us then talk about a little endeavor that will earn you a nice, round sum and our warmest gratitude.”

“Another kidnapping?” asked Toby, pouring himself and holding the dirty glass against the light carelessly.

⁸⁸ *Rohen Whiskey*, raw whiskey or white dog. Whiskey that has not been aged in a barrel.

“You have guessed it, my clever friend,” replied Buschmark, “it concerns a kidnapping of the most beautiful kind, and the best part is, it is an abduction that is without danger.”

“What danger?” asked Finney, shrugging his shoulders, “the greater the danger, the greater the appeal, and the higher the earnings. But Kendrick, I would advise to go back down to your guests. Your reputation as attentive host might suffer.”

Silently, Kendrick heeded the advice because he knew that Finney didn't like to repeat the same order twice without giving it some emphasis with his strong boxer's fist. Indeed, he had not reached solid ground when Finney suddenly pulled up the ladder so abruptly that he tumbled headfirst onto the soft grass.

“There,” the robber spoke, while he stepped toward the table and took hold of the whiskey bottle, “there, now let us begin, but I tell you beforehand, my friend Buschmark, and you, too, Miss Sally, be brief and name us a decent sum, if you don't want to have honored the Hungry Belly in vain with your visit.”

“Hallo! Finney, my darling!” Sally called with a hint of mockery, “You are in a terrible mood; must have made a mistake, or your Irish fists have deserted you in time of need? Don't forget that a lady is present, and learn some courtesy from your amiable twin brother, or from our honored friend Buschmark!”

“Well, you call yourself a lady, old witch?”⁸⁹ the robber replied in a sarcastic tone. “Maybe you have hit the bottle a bit too hard already? If I didn't consider that it

⁸⁹ *alte Here. ..*

would be waste of your nice talent and your nice skills, I would make you swallow your false teeth to make your tongue less hasty.”

Sally laughed, Buschmark grinned, but Toby Ring assumed a theatric stance, and holding his hand over the whiskey bottle, he called:

“Shame on you, great Finney, to treat the fair sex this way. And shame on you, noble-hearted lady, for provoking the archetype of strength with your spirited words and sharp wit! To all of you, I tell you from the bottom of my heart: Unity is strength! Hold hands, make peace, and allow our highly esteemed friend and patron, Mr. David Buschmark, to acquaint us with the purpose of our gathering in a well mannered address, to be followed by his proposition.”

Toby’s words created unity, the quarreling parties soon shook hands, Buschmark cleared his throat several times, and after having looked at everyone in sequence, he began:

“You already know, my friends, that we are talking about an easy piece of work, that is a kidnapping.”

“Whether difficult or easy,” Finney interrupted, “Time is money.”

“Quiet!” admonished Toby, and without paying attention to the interruption, Buschmark continued:

“Not to far from St. Louis, in an isolated farmhouse, there lives a man with his daughter. I will inform you of the pertinent circumstances when the time comes. It is understood that the daughter is very beautiful and promises a significant benefit for Miss Sally, I don’t need to emphasize that. Your task shall be to move the young girl

tomorrow evening, as quietly as possible, to Miss Sally's house. After successful completion you will receive your wages in pure gold."

"A good deal," said Finney in a contemplating manner, "but it is questionable how much of the pure gold will be paid out?"

"Since it is only a German girl, I assume you will be content if for my part I promise to give you one hundred dollars. Perhaps Buschmark will add something out of his pocket."

"Add something?" Buschmark exclaimed, jumping up, "I, who should be remunerated for my effort?"

"Quiet, quiet," admonished Toby. "You, my dear benefactress, must also have misspoken. Consider that on the market in New Orleans a mediocre negress can't be bought for less than seven hundred dollars, should a young German girl be thus not worth approximately the same?"

"As a worker, yes," Miss Sally said with determination. "But you forget how much such a silly thing costs before I even get the first benefit, and further, that there are enough men, even though not gentlemen like you, who will kidnap ten such girls for the offered price."

"Good," said Finney, rising, "find yourself other people. Come, Toby, our time is precious, we have nothing left to do here."

"Easy, easy, my darling," exclaimed Miss Sally, "let's consider the issue from all sides before we decide, and then I can rightfully say that I would rather give you

two hundred dollars that any other common man fifty. By the way, I am convinced, that if you complete the matter cleanly, Buschmark will add something.”

“I wont add one penny,” cried Buschmark grimly when he heard the new reference to his purse. “Quite the opposite, I will set the terms we agreed on earlier, or the negotiations will be abandoned!”

“Oh, Buschmark,” Sally replied laughing, “I wouldn’t know your warm blood and your warm heart if I had to fear it.”

“May I, ladies and gentlemen,” Toby Ring interjected. “Allow me to remark that we are not beggars. We sell our time and skills. If you are thus willing to pay us two hundred and fifty dollars upon the delivery of the beauty, she shall be under your roof tomorrow night at this time. This is my last offer.”

“And Buschmark must not contribute anything to that sum,” Finney added, “that is my condition! Buschmark's eloquence alone cleared me last year of the terrible crime of street robbery, after the testimony of Mr. Toby Ring, and I don't want to appear ungrateful.”

“Well said, old friend,” Buschmark said with a smirk, while he gave the Irish man his hand. “May the opportunity never arise again put my jurisprudence to use on your behalf. But now, since we are, as it appears, in agreement over the conditions, I would like to suggest to take a closer look at the matter itself.”

“I propose then, that Mr. Toby visits me tomorrow morning as part of a pleasure drive in a rented carriage, so that I can describe the house where the little dove in question is nesting a bit more precisely. An error is then not possible, and it is

entirely up to the two gentlemen to devise a plan of attack. It is not impossible that you will find aside from the girl's father, whom I count for nothing, the slender *Halfbreed* in the house. Such a fellow can't be an obstacle for a man like Finney, but I do advise you whole heartedly to operate carefully and to avoid making a row."

"Should the *Halfbreed*, if he is in our way, perhaps" — here Finney slid his hand across his throat, ending the question with an unambiguous sign.

Buschmark wanted to nod in agreement, but he felt Miss Sally's gaze burn on him, and under no circumstances did he want to reveal to her that he desired to earn the sum that had been contracted for *Halfbreed's* death himself.

"Incapacitate him, that means tie him up, but I don't want to dictate your actions because you may have to act in defense of your life. Those redskins are dangerous enemies when their passions are kindled to life, and I urge you again: be on guard. But if there is an old, grim trapper on the farm with the *Halfbreed*, then in God's name wait until both have left. Otherwise, they might be too much for you."

"Too much for us?" asked Finney, while he pulled his white eyebrows together so tightly above his coppery nose that they looked as if they were one. "Too much for us?" and his bony fist fell thundering onto the turned over crate. "I tell you, Buschmark," he said agitatedly, "there isn't a man who could be too much for Finney's fist and Toby's Kentucky toothpick, how they refer to the best of all knives in these regions.⁹⁰ In the name of the St. Patrick! Do you think we are children?"

⁹⁰ A Kentucky toothpick was a double-edged non-folding knife, probably similar to a bowie knife. Today's version, made by Case & Co., is in fact a folding knife with a

“Of course not, my honorable friend. But you must also not think that you are in green Ireland in a boxing ring. These smooth-skinned Indians are worse than irritated wasps; and the trappers, especially the old ones, behave as if they had been nursed by a female bear.”

“Whether nursed by a bear or an alligator, I promise you, the entire party shall not be too much for us!”

During the entire conversation, Toby Ring had regarded his herculean friend with a certain pride; Miss Sally, on the other hand, could no longer remain a silent witness. “Calm down, old horse!” she called to Buschmark, “I vouch for the seasoned prize boxer; if *you* don’t ruin the whole undertaking,⁹¹ he most certainly won’t do it. I do advise you as a good friend, but also as an involved party: try to keep the *Halfbreed* and the trapper out of the whole matter.”

“Tomorrow this will still be possible,” said Buschmark, “since the two friends haven’t met yet; and I have already taken arranged it so that they will not see each other before tomorrow evening. Lefèvre is staying in a lodge where I had an agent lure him to, and he will not head for the house of the fur company until after the *Halfbreed* leaves again, not to return before midnight. If he is at Andre’s house when you want to execute the operation, one of you only needs to enter and deliver to him the authentic message of Lefèvre’s arrival to send him running to town as fast as his legs can carry him. If we miss the opportunity tomorrow, then we will have to wait a

single blade. ‘Kentucky’ is in reference to the color of the knife’s handle, which is made of blue-grass-colored bone, like the Bluegrass of Kentucky.

⁹¹ *Wenn ihr selbst die Suppe nicht verderbt*

long time until a similar one will present itself. Since the kidnapping can't take place during the day, and the hunters will probably spend every night out there, tomorrow is indeed the last day during which the entire matter can be brought to its conclusion without much ado."

"You are a professional, my friend Buschmark," replied Toby. "Allow me to compliment you on your plan. If Finney is as willing as I am, then we will make the attempt tomorrow night. Miss Sally, at seven thirty we will pull up with the goods in a covered rental coach in front of your backdoor; be ready to let Finney, who will be carrying the gagged girl, in. I will drive and disappear with the carriage. I will return soon thereafter, to eat dinner with you, my beautiful benefactress, and to empty several bottles of your best champagne together with Finney to commemorate the happy ending of the affair."

"Agreed," said Finney with a hint of cheerfulness, as if tasting the expected champagne already, and as if the thought alone had increased his thirst, he grabbed the whiskey bottle, brought it to his lips, and drank it to the last drop.

The four sat together in cheerful conversation for a short while yet. Kendrick brought a new bottle, which was emptied quickly as well, and even the sober Buschmark and the fastidious Miss Sally took to the poisonous, counterfeit drink, supposedly so as to be able to bear the cold night air better on the drive home. Humor spread among them, banter and jokes shot back and forth, until Buschmark finally explained that to his great regret he had to leave such pleasant company, since he still

wanted to hear news about Lefèvre from his secretary. “Since,” he concluded, “the devil may have played his hand and connected the two hunters by some coincidence.”

Everyone praised Buschmark’s prudence, but nobody did so more than Miss Sally, since she also wished to trade the uncanny location in the musty house as soon as possible for her own splendidly appointed parlors. After Toby had extinguished the light, the ladder was pushed out immediately, and one after the other climbed down into the yard. They disbanded in front of the house with firm handshakes. Finney and Toby Ring went into the tavern to spend a cheerful night, as they called it; Buschmark and Miss Sally on the other hand walked toward the road arm in arm, where the well-trained Negro boy waited motionless with the buggy.

When they took the way back to town and drove past the house, they heard the great noise with which their devotees and admirers greeted the two bandits in the tavern Hungry Belly.

“What fine company,” Miss Sally said to her companion, but in such a fashion that the Negro boy couldn’t understand it.

“The are all overdue for the gallows,” replied Buschmark in the same manner.

“If they weren’t so useful, I would wish them the gallows. They can even be dangerous in the long run.”

“Entirely my opinion, my dear friend, but we can only dispose of them if we are certain that we won’t be dragged along into the abyss. They know our way of life to minutely.”

“I would give any prospective profit the farmer’s daughter promises to bring, if your Halfbreed and the trapper could eliminate the two miscreants.”

“No, no, Sally, I can’t lose the girl. To prevent bad fortune, the two hunters must be kept at a distance. But I promise you that the twins will not threaten us that much longer.”

“Too bad; it seems as if this would have been a good opportunity. But tell me, are you certain that the Halfbreed doesn’t know of your doting passion for the pretty immigrant girl and will suspect you after her disappearance? You, as well as I, could be in a bad predicament⁹² this way.”

“You are a woman, Miss Sally, and yet you don’t know your own sex better than this? It’s true, I revealed my affection to the silly creature almost too clearly, but I don’t fear that she will tell her father or the *Halfbreed* even a single word about it. A chaste maiden like Franziska Andree is ashamed to make such a thing known. Nobody will suspect me; even less if I am the one who makes the strongest inquiries about the escapee—yes, you hear correctly, escapee—and want to contribute the most to help the poor father to bring back his child.”

“You are a sly patron, but beware of ever using your slyness against me. You would only hurt yourself by doing so.”

“We are too tightly fraternized, dearest Sally, for me to ever consider it. Your interests are my interests, aside from the fact that since our first meeting I have preserved my invariable devotedness for you.”

⁹² *arge Klemme*

“Pah, your devotedness is less to me than what you call fraternization. But you won't have eaten supper yet, and I invite you hence to take a small meal with me and join a small, but select company in my apartment; this way we can discuss and agree on the preparations I still have to make to welcome your beauty.

Thus far had the criminal pair advanced in their conversation, when the glow of the first gaslight illuminated the road again. Miss Sally clicked her tongue, the whip touched the horse lightly, and it took off down the road⁹³ in an extended trot. The houses on both sides followed one another more and more quickly, until they formed tightly connected rows that were only interrupted by the streets leading down to the Mississippi. Turning toward the western end of the city, Miss Sally steered the light carriage to the right, then to the left, until they finally reached Eighteenth Street. There she let go of the reins entirely, the horse flew like a bird, and five minutes later it stopped in front of a large, four-storied building, the residence of the notorious Sally.

The tower clocks indicated the eleventh hour, and only now and then pedestrians hurried through the vacant streets; in contrast, one could still hear a muffled rattling of carriages from the center of the city.

Miss Sally's house laid so silently, as if it was uninhabited; the dark color of the bricks, which was at the same time the color of the entire building, and the long rows of closed shutters gave it a gloomy character. If the glow of the streetlights hadn't lit up the night so much, one would have perceived light shining through every

⁹³ *chaussirten Straße*

opening, and no listener could miss the cheerful sounds of pianos and guitars, which indicated a blithely life in the lit up rooms.

The main entrance remain closed, but cloaked male and female figures secretly approached through various in-between spaces a hardly noticeable side portal, which each time was opened silently on a signal they had given, and closed just as silently after them.

Miss Sally however, after having gained a foothold on the sidewalk, paid no attention to the secret entrance, but passed the reins to the Negro, ordered him to take good care of the horse, whereupon, pulling some keys out of her pocket, she prompted Buschmark to follow her. With a certainty that indicated that she felt at home here and as Mistress, she opened both gates to the small garden that separated the main façade of the house from the street, locked them again after she entered with her companion, and then climbed the six steps leading up to the front door, which was situated under a vine-covered balcony in deep shade.

One could hear the clinking sound of the key in the lock; a door was shut with fortitude, and then nightly silence again surrounded everything— the modest house of the weary working man, the palace of the rich merchant, the high-rising churches, and well as the opulent house of vice and crime.

End of Book One

12. Lefèvre

On the night of the meeting in the infamous tavern, the *Halfbreed* was on Andree's farm as usual. Throughout the entire day, since the early morning, he had indulged⁹⁴ in his favorite past time, and he was doubly delighted by the welcome rest under the beloved hickory tree in the company of immigrant, who had turned chatty, and his amiable daughter.

The sun had just disappeared behind the western forests; the light clouds, which covered the sky like flakes, shone in a glowing red, and the fall-colored foliage of the trees gleamed in a thousand different shades. It was already chilly, but not too cold to spend an hour outside before nightfall.

The three innocent people sat engaged in intimate conversation this. The *Halfbreed* had not taken the time to wipe the dust of his leather hunting shirt, the rifle rested between his knees, and dreamily he looked at his beautiful neighbor's delicate hands, which busily and adroitly handled the big knitting needles and the coarse wool. Andree teased thick clouds of smoke from his meerschaum bowl—an old heirloom—and contemplated in what manner he might be able to bring his daughter into a more secure station in life.

"I have considered your words, Mr. Joseph," Andree finally said, even after multiple requests by the *Halfbreed*, Andree could not break the habit of addressing Joseph as Mr.. "I have considered them carefully, and come to the conclusion that you have a point when you say that in the best case I am barely able to make ends meet on

⁹⁴ *obliegen* to fall victim to

this small lease,⁹⁵ only to exist with daughter in paltry circumstances; but indeed, I don't know what other business I should take up."

"In my opinion, you could remain a farmer for good," replied Joseph, "if you had land enough for your occupation. You must at least own enough land to keep your son and even one or two workers employed throughout the entire year, if you want to gradually achieve a certain wealth. And further, Buschmark is not the only one who leases out farms. You will see that there are people who will lease their land to you under much better terms. Listen to my advice and cede your claim on these couple of acres of land in the following spring."

"Yes, father, do this," pleaded the lovely girl by his side, who had her special reasons to wish all interaction with the double-faced notary broken off. "Let's move on, perhaps to where my brother already is. United with him, it will be much easier to take over another, bigger farm, and then he will also certainly give up the terribly idea to make the journey to California."

"You forget in any case, my dear child, that are significant means are required for our move."

"Less than you think," the *Halfbreed* interjected. "Travel is rather inexpensive in this country. Even an emigration to California, which seems to make your daughter wince, is by far not as terrifying as you might believe. Unfortunately, many people venture on the journey without having equipped themselves properly beforehand, and

⁹⁵ *daß ich auf dieser kleinen Pachtung, im glücklichsten Falle, nicht mehr zu erschwingen im Stande bin, als gerade erforderlich ist, [um] mein und meiner Tochter Leben nothdürftig zu fristen;*

then blame their misfortune on the climate, the conditions of the land, and particularly on the Indians, when they are at fault for the most part.”

“Does Andree the farmer live here?” it now echoed from the other side of the farm’s boundary.

From under the tree, where they were sitting, they saw a young man in the simple garb of a farm hand. He was leaning on the fence perfunctorily.

“I asked you if the farmer Andree lives here?” the young man repeated while he ran the back of his hand over his dusty face and black little mustache.

“Yes, he lives here!” the *Halfbreed* replied.

“Is the *Halfbreed* Joseph perhaps here with him?” he continued to ask.

“He is here as well!” the *Halfbreed* replied.

“Well then,” the young man continued, “I come from the city, directly from the house of the fur company, where I sold some buck skins. An old man had arrived there and inquired anxiously about the *Halfbreed* Joseph. Someone said that he was staying somewhere in this direction, on the farm of a certain Andree. Since it wasn’t far out of my way, I promised to approach, bring greeting from the old man to Joseph, and tell him that he is waiting for him in the home of the fur company.”

“The old man didn’t give you his name?” Joseph asked.

“Oh, yes, I believe he is called Lafaber or Fiber, God knows, I have long forgotten this uncivilized name. *Adieu!*” and the stranger ambled along.

“Lefèvre is here,” Joseph exclaimed, jumping up, “Lefèvre, my old, good friend; the one I have told you so much about. But you shall meet him and judge for

yourself. I must leave so that he doesn't look for me in vain and strays around in the city. How did he find out that I have returned from New Orleans? But I wonder why he hasn't immediately come out here himself."

He laid his rifle across his shoulder and gave Andree and his daughter his hand to say goodbye.

"Well, you want to leave again?" Andree asked while stepping next to the *Halfbreed* in order to accompany him to the boundary fence. "As much as I would have liked to see you stay around with us a bit longer, I can only condone your haste in this case. May God be with you, my dear Mr. Joseph, and don't make us wait for you tomorrow for too long. I hope your friend won't decline to call on us."

"Yes, Mr. Joseph," the young girl interrupted at this point, "say hello to the good Lefèvre and tell him how we have become fond of you; this is probably the best way of disposing him in a kind manner toward us!"

"Certainly, certainly, dear friend, I will deliver your greetings," Joseph replied while squeezing her hand amicably and looking into the sincere, innocent eyes. "But believe me, to make Lefèvre feel friendly, he only needs to see you. Even though he is a gruff hunter of the West, he has always been guided well by his senses, and as inconsiderately as he reveals his dislike for people whom he does not trust, just as openly does he reveal his fondness for those to whom he feels drawn to. You will meet him, but now farewell." He jumped across the fence and with quick steps hurried toward the forest, where the road was.

“A good young man,” Andree said to his daughter while looking after the *Halfbreed*. “And if nothing else interceded⁹⁶ on his behalf, the sincere friendship he shows for his old companion alone would win me over.”

“It is true, father,” Franziska replied in a contemplative manner. “Every day reveals new virtues in our benefactor. He is so open and sincere, shows such deep sentience, that I find nothing⁹⁷ pressures me to owe him gratitude. If my brother just knew him; I believe he would love him just as much as we do and affiliate himself closely with him. —It is strange, since Joseph has advised us to cede the piece of land where we have lived for so long, and which we regarded as our only salvation, I no longer feel apprehension when I think about a separation.”

“You are correct, my child; even though he is timid and quiet in his interaction with other human beings, he doesn’t seem to lack a certain experience in the farming life, as well as a thorough education. His noble character convinced me that he would rather not give us any advice at all than advice whose utility he doubts himself. — By the way, it is noticeable that he has never talked about his family circumstances.”

“A harsh sorrow seems to press his heart,” the lovely girl replied with a voice that trembled with sympathy. “Only once did I ask him about his parents. ‘My mother has been resting in the cool earth many, many years now,’ he answered me, in fact with such a touchingly sad expression that tears came to my eyes, and I regretted bitterly to have prompted this memory. Under no circumstances could I have asked

⁹⁶ *fürsprechen*

⁹⁷ *nichts Drückendes*

him about his father as well, and since then I have consciously avoided to refer to such things in our conversation.”

Father and daughter remembered their friend in this manner, and for a long time they still spoke of him after they had retired into the cabin, and together, sitting in front to the hearth, watched several slices of venison the *Halfbreed* had provided sizzle in the iron pan.

The way to the city appeared less far to the *Halfbreed* than usual. He considered what he would tell Lefèvre; he imagined his astonishment, caused by the report of his reception in New Orleans. He considered the bludgeoned Negro as well, and the fact that the threatened prosecution had not been put into effect. “Perhaps one doesn’t consider a poor Indian worthy of prosecution, since he can’t replace the sum for the slave,” he asked himself with a bitter laugh. “Or the Negro was only benumbed by the blow and has recovered; the poor man, I wish it for his sake and my sake.” When his mind lingered on the thought of how he would describe the log cabin to Lefèvre, and the old man Andree, and his lovely daughter, and his dealings with the them, it was as if a never before felt joy came to his breast. “Yes, Lefèvre must meet them today still,” he said to himself, “yes, today still I will discuss their future with him, and he shall help me to secure it for them, before we return to the upper Missouri.” — “Return?” he then asked himself with a hint of sadness. “Yes, yes, I will return to these parts here sometime, and how happy I will be then, if they are doing well! Will they be glad to see me as well? Surely, they will be, they are too good, too sincere. But they shall be happy about Lefèvre as well. Lefèvre, when he

becomes old and weak, would certainly find a comfortable home at old Andree's. But I can't tell him that." This is how the thoughts of the young man followed one another. He reasoned like the pious missionary, who had planted such thoughts in the receptive mind of the abandoned child and cultivated them for a number of years.

The wapiti's head with its gilded antlers was finally in front of him. He entered the illuminated hall, and the first thing that caught his eye was Lefèvre himself, who stood with his back toward the door, and spoke with some members of the house in front of him with apparent ease.

"For now I am going to believe you that Jo has returned from New Orleans because he wrote me that he had arrived, namely in a letter the president of the United States wouldn't be able to write more beautifully. But *sacrrr tonnerre!* Fellows, if you think that you can joke with me, you are mistaken! I will not leave this spot until tomorrow morning, and if Joe hasn't arrived by then, you all have lied, and you don't need to worry about fractured skulls!⁹⁸ That is my opinion!"

Joseph heard these words, and before any of the people, who regarded the old hunter with a certain admiration, had time to answer, he called: "Lefèvre, here is proof that you weren't deceived!"

As soon as Joseph had uttered the first word, the old hunter turned around with lightning speed, tore his grey felt hat from his head, scrunched it joyfully in his brown-haired fists, and then threw it clanging into the closest window pane.

⁹⁸ *Braucht nicht für zerbrochene Schädel zu sorgen*

“In the name of the St. Napoleon!” he exclaimed, “I’ll pay for all the damage. Bu Joe, my boy, wait a moment, I have insulted these gentlemen here.” Turning around, he continued in the same breath: “Sapristi, you have spoken the truth and you are gentlemen. I ask for forgiveness for having insulted you. Now, please be so kind and go to hell, because I have to talk to Joe here. But wait! I have to tell you that this half Indian is such a fine gentlemen as you have ever seen one.” Leaving the entire company to its own devices and ignoring the friendly responses of several people, he stepped toward the *Halfbreed*, placed his hands on his shoulders, and shaking him roughly, said with unconcealed joy:

“Joe, my boy, I’m indeed overjoyed to see you again, haven’t heard from you in a while, and was thunderstruck when I found out half an hour ago that you are in St. Louis and had set up quarters in this house.”

“What!” the *Halfbreed* exclaimed, while he greeted the faithful friend by shaking his hand; “you only heard of my presence half an hour ago, and I already talked to your messenger out on the farm an hour ago?”

“Farm? Messenger? On my life, I don’t want to see the Rocky Mountains again if I understand you.”

Joseph told the astonished trapper how he had received news of his arrival, and was not less astounded when he realized that the latter had neither sent the messenger, nor had had any inclination of his presence in St. Louis.

“That’s conspicuous,” said the *Halfbreed*. “It can only be someone who means us well and wanted to bring us the joy of the reunion sooner.”

“But who told him that I would be at the Fur Company?” Lefèvre asked, plagued by a certain suspicion. “It was sheer coincidence that I came here to inquire for letters from you.”

“It remains unexplainable,” replied Joseph, but if you are not tired, I suggest that we take a little walk. The night is nice, and I have to tell you so many a things, which I don’t want to make known to anyone else but you.

“Well then, perhaps out of the city, since I feel as if the buildings are about to collapse above me at any moment.”

“Yes, Lefèvre, we will leave the city, so far that you are not able to see anything of St. Louis, at most the illuminated sky. We will be there in one hour, and at midnight we will return home.”

The *Halfbreed* then passed his hunting gear to an employee of the house, and arm in arm the two friends walked off in the direction of the western end of the city.

Before they had even reached the open field, Lefèvre had heard the *Halfbreed’s* story, from the moment when they separated in the city of St. Joseph, and Lefèvre praised his prudent behavior endlessly. In every instance had he acted like a man of honor, and, as he, Lefèvre, proclaimed, how the old missionary himself would have acted. When Joseph interjected that the missionary would hardly have beaten a Negro, the old trapper paused, and tried to prove to the *Halfbreed* in his usual rough manner that a man has by no means acted in bad faith by committing a single precipitant deed, just as one can not claim his fellow human beings’ respect for having committed an accidental good deed. “By God, Joe,” he continued, “I have

known the missionary longer than you, and I know that if the old man had been in your stead, with your strength, and with a sound gun in his hand like you had, he would have tried the soundness of the Negro's skull as well, or I must be completely mistaken about his character; that is to say, not because the Negro perchance had a black face, but rather because he behaved like a killer. The missionary would have done more, and I shall be hanged if he hadn't split the smooth-tongued Brown's head, and only in order to reach Mr. Newfort, to wish him a nice evening before departing again."

The *Halfbreed* smiled when he heard that Lefèvre ascribed the old missionary so much ferocity, but in reality simply indicated what would have been his own course of action. To not excite him even more, he didn't disagree, but described his first meeting with Franziska Andree and her father. When he mentioned that he had offered the money as a loan, the trapper shook his head dubiously. "Joe," he said with emphasis, "I find the offer of the measly couple hundred dollars very noble, however it would have been even more noble if you hadn't given half of your money, but the entire sum, and thrown the scrap of paper in the old guys face. You could have done that even more so because you knew that I was going to arrive soon with the dulcet salary of three years in my pocket. But wait, my son, I will rectify your oversight, I will give the old man an equal sum. It's in better hands with him than it is with me; you know how fast the money always flows through my fingers." And Lefèvre laughed with a geniality that indicated how happy the disregard for money made him.

“In God’s name, Lefèvre, unless you want to hurt the sensitive man, refrain from such things. Keep your money, the time may come when you need it yourself, or I have the opportunity to invest it for you to Andree’s advantage. Believe, it had to use some tricks to convince the good people to accept the humble sum. They are too proud to allow anything that even remotely appears like charity. If I had thrown the receipt, or the scrap of paper, as you called it, at the dignified old man’s head, he probably would have shown me the door and thrown the money after me. No, Lefèvre, you have given me good advice so many times, this once take my advice. Leave all the money matters entirely to me, and don’t ruin the amicable relationship I have with these people with your storminess.”

“By God, Jo, I think you are not entirely incorrect. You have followed my advice so often; I might as well follow yours then. But sacré tonnerre, I see it now! Jo, my son, you are in love!” and old Lefèvre stood still, in astonishment over why he hadn’t realized it sooner. “Good, very good, my dear Joseph,” he continued; “I should be delighted to see you married to the most beautiful white lady in my last moments.”

The *Halfbreed* heard more than he dared to admit to himself, since the last thing on his mind was the thought that his attachment to the log cabin originated in other feeling than sincere friendship. Hence he laughed at Lefèvre’s comment. “Imagine,” he exclaimed, “the picture if I, a poor half Indian, wanted to offer the most beautiful and best white girl in the whole world my heart and my hand!”

“No, Lefèvre, once we have made provisions for those decent people’s future according to our best ability, then the far West is calling us. Stop your jokes, you

know I am not yet that much of a fool. Tell me rather about Council Bluffs and good, old Nekoma.”

“Fool enough to talk of a girl as the ‘most beautiful’ and ‘the best’,” Lefèvre replied laughing. “But I almost forgot the greeting from the good Nekoma.”

“Much has changed in the mission during your absence. The bilious⁹⁹ Harrison has been replaced by another missionary. He went down the Missouri but I don’t know, and I don’t care to where. The mission has gained something significant by this trade, and even though your foster father can’t be replaced ever again, it seems as if the new abbot loves his profession. What intercedes the most on his behalf is the fact that the children are not only not afraid of him, like they were of Harrison, on the contrary, they feel adore him. You can thus also feel at ease about Nekoma’s feelings.”

“She is certainly hard to approach and doesn’t talk to anyone, but she has finally decided to move back into her old little room and to participate in the day’s meals regularly. The poor creature, she still can’t overcome the grief caused by her old master passing; she visits his grave daily to cry and to wail there. You will hardly recognize her, she has aged so much and her hair has blanched. When I told her that I would possibly see you, she told me to inform you that she will follow her master, but also that she wants to see you once more. By the way, I have given the missionary¹⁰⁰ the money that is intended for her. He promised to take care of her and assured me several times that your money wasn’t required to do so; ‘because,’ he

⁹⁹ *gallsüchtig*

¹⁰⁰ *in des Missionars Hände niedergelegt*

said, 'Nekoma is a sacred legacy of my predecessor who passed away.' He also hopes to receive news from you soon and with certainty counts on your visit. He could guess your intention to make your home in the beautiful far West just as little as I could, and it is entirely unknown to him what made you embark on the journey to New Orleans."

"Nobody needs to know that anyway," replied Joseph. "The more people know about my unfortunate family circumstances, the more often there will be opportunity to be reminded of my cheated hopes. Yes, Lefèvre, I have made the sad experience that earthly treasures are not necessarily essential for true happiness."

"Certainly not," replied Lefèvre. "Nobody can know that better than I do, I, who spend so many a happy year in the mountains, without having seen as much as one copper penny."

"I am deeply happy about what you have recounted to me about Nekoma. There would be no justice, if she had to suffer want in her old age. Well, I will see her again, and on that occasion be able thank the missionary for his kindness as well."

"I can speak of your Pawnee medicine man as well; you remember that he was wounded and then mysteriously disappeared? Well then, I haven't met him anymore myself, but Wabash, our clever Omaha friend, made detailed inquiries about him. Just imagine, the fellow was neither shot by a Ponca, nor by anyone else, but delicately carved the injuries he had on both sides into his own belly. He intended to divert attention from the suspicion of the attack by the Eau Qui Cours. You see now how

justified my mistrust was; and that Harrison was behind the whole attack can no longer be in doubt.”

“But tell me, Lefèvre, what have I ever done to Harrison that he feels such deadly animosity toward s me?”

“Dear Jo, that is more than I can guess. I imagine that there are human beings who do evil because it is in their nature, just like some do good, even then if it doesn’t bring them any advantage. I have considered that the Indians maybe correct in their belief that an evil spirit enters a human and drives him to all kinds of bad deeds.”

“It is the inherent disposition to do evil that shows itself at times much stronger,” replied the *Halfbreed*. “All the medicine men of the Indian *Race* would not be able to cast it out with chanting, drumming, and smoking.¹⁰¹ Now, look straight ahead,” he interrupted himself when they stepped from the shade of the forest into a clearing. “Straightforward; there is our destination. But I don’t see light in the house. They are either sitting in the dark and are chatting in their usual manner, or the have retired already.”

“It would be remarkable,” he continued after a brief pause, “they usually sit until late with a lamp or by the hearth, and now it can’t be later than half past eight. Could someone be ill? No, the fire would be burning the even more so!”

In the meantime, the two hunters had approached the fence of the farm. The *Halfbreed* stood still and listened. Except for the easy moan of a cow, which rested leisurely in her corner on a bed of cornhusks, no sound could be heard in the vicinity.

¹⁰¹ *räuchern*

“They must be sleeping already, don’t disturb them,” Lefèvre said, as he jumped over the fence after the *Halfbreed*.

“Let’s just listen at the door for a moment, and then we will be on our way again,” Joseph replied.

They crossed the yard carefully, but when Joseph placed his ear against the door, he felt that it yielded to gentle pressure, thus had only been ajar. He quickly backed away so as to prevent the disturbing creaking of the hinges, but a slight groan that came from inside the room momentarily got his attention. He thought he had been mistaken, but when the groan repeated itself with an expression of utmost physical pain, he froze. He grabbed Lefèvre’s arm hard. “An accident has happened!” he called to him with a restrained voice. “Make light!” And in the same moment he slipped like an eel through the half-open door into the middle of the room.

“Andree! Franziska!” he called anxiously, but only the continued weak moan answered.

“Lefèvre! Quickly!” he then cried, but the trapper hadn’t been idle, and throwing the door back completely with one hard kick, he stepped inside and began swinging a bundle of corn husks and hay in which he had placed some kindling with unbelievable speed.

13. The Eagle Company

After the artificially created draft had ignited the easily flammable material, Lefèvre paused, and almost at the same moment the flames sprang up and illuminated

the darkness in the room, which the *Halfbreed* had tried to penetrate with his eyes until then. The hunters immediately saw old Andree, who sat on a high-back chair, his usual place, next to the empty hearth.

“Where is your daughter!” asked the *Halfbreed* with an unusual fierceness when he did not see the young girl in the room. But only the groan answered again, and due to the unsteady lighting Joseph now discovered that a gag closed the old man’s mouth and his arms were tied to the back of the chair. Mute with terror he cut the ties quickly and then removed the bunched, silken scarf, into which Andree had bitten in pain.

“God in heaven, speak,” he exclaimed then, “where is your child?!”¹⁰²

“Save, save my daughter!” Andree whispered almost imperceptibly. He closed his eyes and fell unconscious.

The autumn cold, the forced position, the pain of the ties, but most of all the agony of fearing for his child had become too much for the tortured man.

“He is only unconscious,” the *Halfbreed* said, while he carefully carried the old man to his bed. “The warmth and some vinegar will help him come to,” he continued and turned to Lefèvre, under whose hands a flickering fire had come into existence. “But say, where will we find the man’s daughter? It is terrible, terrible! Nobody but the cunning Buschmark had her kidnapped!”

“Joe, Joe, don’t waste your time with lamentation like an old squaw,” Lefèvre replied appeasingly, while he placed more and more new wood into the flames. “I’ve

¹⁰² The double punctuation appears in the original

never in my life seen you this upset. Calm down and better look for some vinegar and water for the ill man. We will find the girl,, even if I have to set St. Louis ablaze in ten different locations to make light for our task.”

In this manner the gruff hunter comforted his young friend. But where might a man begin to find a lost human being in a city with so many building that he wasn't acquainted with himself yet. Yes, if it had only meant to search forests, canyons, and mountains, he would not have doubted their success; but here, where the cobbled or macadamized road didn't even allow the imprint of a single shod hoof, much less that of a dainty girl's foot, and where every sampling of a randomly accrued imprint was entirely destroyed by hundreds of people that walked across it, here he wasn't entirely sure of how to find a way.

In order to gain time to think, he thus continuously consoled [his young friend] in his crude demeanor, while at the same time he had a heart as soft as a child's and had to use mean curses and several imprecations to prevent his young friend from noticing his own helplessness.

Due to the intense efforts of the two, Andree regained consciousness. But some time passed still until the latter felt strong enough to give a detailed account of the events.

According to which, approximately half an hour after the *Halfbreed* had left, after dusk had turned to darkness, and Andree himself had retired into the cabin with his daughter, a covered carriage, drawn by two horses, had rolled up to the fence. While he was about to investigate the strange noise from that corner, two men in the

doorway, who politely asked him not to be alarmed by their visit, already met Andree. The Halfbreed had prompted them, they explained, to ask the young girl to immediately return to the city with them, where her presence would be of great importance for herself as well as for her father. When Franziska replied that in such a case that *Halfbreed* would have appeared in person and would have addressed the request to her father, and ended with the assertion that she would never go as much as one step with strange intruders, the bigger one of the two had taken hold of Andree, the younger one on the other hand Franziska, and each one had forced a silken scarf into his victim's mouth.

After they had tied the father to the chair, and bound the hands of the girl who had fainted in mortal fear on her back, the shorter one of the two indicated to the father that he should not worry about his child. The Halfbreed had always meant well for him, and even in this instance he shouldn't be able to complain about his good intentions and care. The insolent robber had spoken more, but Andree had not been able to understand most of it. At the point in time when the other one then picked up the unconscious girl and walked to the door, he, too, lost consciousness, and had not woken up from this condition until he heard the rolling of the carriage that rushed away.

"If you are human, if you are Christians," the desperate father ended his report, "oh, then help me to save my innocent child! Look," he exclaimed while jumping up, "the strength of my youth has returned to my body. I will go to the end of the world to save my poor child, but help me, help me! I am a stranger in this

country;¹⁰³ who can barely communicate, so how am I supposed to convey my wishes, and my pleas to other people? Help me Joseph, help me Lefèvre, you, the friend of my benefactor! See, I am ready to follow you, but help me search for my child!” And wiping the tears off his furrowed cheeks, and forcefully keeping new outbursts of sorrow back, he took up his staff and motioned to go to the door.

“Calm yourself so that together we can deliberate on what to do,” the *Halfbreed* said finally, after he had recovered somewhat from the terror that initially had literally paralyzed his ability to think. “We must definitely act according to a precise plan if we don’t want to waste our energies, which we perhaps may require. I can’t subdue the suspicion that treacherous Buschmark planned and executed the entire coup, since he alone knew that the news of Lefèvre’s arrival would cause me to leave from here. He is a clever enemy, and to outwit him, or get a confession from him, no precaution can be disregarded. But calm yourself, Andree,” he continued, when he saw how the tortured man was wringing his hands in agony. “Look, providence is watching over us and it sent us Lefèvre, on whose advice we can and must safely and securely rely.”

Lefèvre, who had until now had his back turned to Andree, now stepped closer. One could see that he, whose hair had turned grey from deprivation and danger, who was no stranger to scenes of murder and fighting, could not bear the sight of the desperate father and the sorrow of his young friend. With the back of his hand he wiped his bushy mustache, on whose outer tip something like a drop of dew

¹⁰³ *Ich bin ja fremd*

quivered. "By God, old man," he exclaimed, "if your daughter was my own, I wouldn't search for her with more effort than with which I will help you look for her now. Be calm, old man, we will find her already, if she is not sitting a thousand miles deep inside the earth; and in the name of the St. Napoleon, with my own hands I will cut every man or woman's throat from ear to ear, who as much as touched the tip of her scarf. Joseph, my son, now is the time to bring your Indian blood to the surface; I will also give you advice, too. First, we must know if the carriage has taken the girl to the city or somewhere else. But hurry. Take some handfuls of straw along, so we can illuminate things, you too, old man; let's go!"

As soon as he had uttered these words, he hurried into the yard, took hold of a bundle of cornhusks, and with a agility of a man half his age, he jumped over the fence. Meanwhile Andree and the *Halfbreed* didn't linger behind him. One was driven by the bleeding heart of a father, and the other by his love for humanity and a sentiment he could not account for himself. Silent like shadows they followed the dark forest path; the trapper always ahead, right behind him Andree, who was all but lead by the *Halfbreed*, and no ten minutes had passed since their departure, when they reached the wide highway.

"Halt!" Lefèvre suddenly commanded, and pulling his lighter from his pocket, he immediately began to tease sparks from the flint, while Joseph spread the bundles of husks apart and twisted them into torches. The grief-stricken Andree watched the preparations full of interest, but he understood their intention only when one of the torches lit up brightly and the two hunters inspected the ground in the light carefully,

In a side by-path they easily discovered the tracks of a carriage, the only one that had been there in several days, and they followed them just as easily to the road. But there both of them stood up straight simultaneously and called out to each other in surprise: "Well, not to St. Louis!"

Not yet content with the result of their investigation, the hunters lit a second torch, whereupon they disjoined, and man one stepped to the outer border of the path. Here now, continuously illuminating the ground, they went into the direction that the carriage must have taken, judging by the turn in the by-path. They had renewed their torches twice already, but keeping their eyes steadily on the ground, they walked on. Suddenly the Halfbreed stood still and looked at the dusty path with doubled attention. At the same time, Lefèvre must have seen something suspicious, since he bent his head and his torch down more deeply: "They are cunning rascals, those kidnapers,"¹⁰⁴ he exclaimed, "they want to mislead potential pursuers. What do you see in front of you?" he asked the *Halfbreed* then.

"The tracks of a carriage that turned around to return to the city!"

"I agree. But is it the same carriage that came from Andree's farm?"

"The same, they are the same foursquare nails as they were in the forest path!"

"The fools," Lefèvre, to whom this discovery had restored his intrinsic good humor, exclaimed laughing. "The fools, they didn't expect that a couple of backwoodsmen would be tracking them." He followed the arch of the dust tracks, until he met the *Halfbreed* in the middle of the highway.

¹⁰⁴ *Mädchenräuber*

“So,” he said, while lighting a new husk torch, “now let us count exactly how many carriages have driven to the city, after ours.”

The investigation showed that six tracks ran across the ones that were cutting across the highway, and that five of them were from carriages that had left the city, while only one led into the direction of the city.

“If thus no carriages have turned from the side street, “ the *Halfbreed* remarked, “we can inquire about the second to last that drove down Chestnut Street into the city.”

“Correct, my son,” Lefèvre replied, “but we must be attentive not to miss any of the side streets. Let’s save the torches and stay on the sides of the road, while you, Mr. Andree, remain in the middle, where you find better ground underfoot.”

Andree silently followed the instructions he had received, since the confident behavior of the two men had inspired such trust in him, that he feared to mislead them with replies of any kind. He even restrained his outbursts of sorrow, and only at times when he sighed deeply the awful pain that tore at his heart became obvious. Half an hour passed until the first gas lantern cast its light in their direction, and they had only seen the tracks of one carriage that must have driven into the city only a short time ago.

Soon thereafter they found themselves among the first houses, which, separated by gardens and construction sites, formed the border of the wide street and marked the beginning of the city itself.

Before reaching the first cross street, they passed a light, horse-drawn carriage, which stopped close to the door of a large house. A Negro sat on the front seat, whip and reins rested carelessly in his hands, his entire posture showed that he intended to spend the entire time he had to wait, which he was presently forced to do, asleep.

“Hulloh, my friend!” called Lefèvre, while he caught hold of one of the Negro’s dangling feet and shook it. “How long have you been sleeping here?”

“I wasn’t sleeping, I’m as alert as a lizard; I was only pondering something.”

“Well then, Sambo,” Lefèvre continued, how long have you been pondering something here?”

“Since my Master, the doctor, went into the house to visit a severely ill woman.”

“Alright, Sambo, my friend,” Lefèvre continued, “but I want to know how many hours you have been waiting in this spot.”

“A fairly long time,” was the answer. “But tell what time it is now, and I will tell you how many hours I have been waiting here for my doctor.”

“It is ten thirty.”

“I have been stopped here since eight o’clock, without having even moved as far as a foot from this spot.”

“Now pay attention, Sambo, here is a shiny dollar which you can easily earn if you jog your memory a bit.”

“Alright, Massa.”

“Do you remember if approximately two hours ago a carriage drove on this street into the city? Think carefully and look at me; in one hand I have the dollar, in the other a stick, which I could possibly break on your skull.”

The Negro laughed cheerfully. “You like to joke,” he exclaimed, “but wait, let me see; first came some farm wagons from the city, then some returned. Then, nothing happened for a long time. Then a large, closed carriage came and it drove —”

“Well, to where did it drive?” the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre asked in unison.

“I wanted to say, it drove as if it was also bringing a doctor to someone who is dying. But let me think—yes, I got it; I saw it until the third corner from here, Eighteenth Street; there, it turned right into Eighteenth Street, and I haven’t seen it since. Then a one-horse carriage came”

“Enough, Sambo,” Lefèvre interrupted the flow of words of the loquacious Negro, “we know enough, here is your dollar, be well!” and in the next moment all three hurried in the indicated direction.

“Thus far we have been lucky,” Lefèvre said, when they reached the identified street and saw the long, glittering rows of lanterns in front of them. “I think we can walk far without finding a second person that might be able to provide such good information as the sleepy Negro,” he continued. “In this part of the city everything is asleep already, and here, again, another street is crossing our path. Sapristi! Who can tell us now where the carriage turned?”

“Shouldn’t we be able to track it?” Andree asked timidly.

“Give me the open prairie, or the dark forest, and I can track the bobcat to his den, but here, where hundreds of people and just as many carriages have walked and driven, it will even be difficult for my friend Joseph with his eagle eyes to follow tracks for a long time.”

“Lefèvre is correct, Andree,” confirmed the Halfbreed, looking down the street in desperation. “We must now try to find people who have seen the carriage and give us information about the direction it drove. But Lefèvre, look straight ahead, about four hundred cubits from here, isn’t that a fire engine house?”¹⁰⁵

“In the name of the entire holy heavenly population! Joseph, you are correct; and where there is an engine house, there must be guards, and if the carriage has passed the guards, then they must be able to give us information regarding its whereabouts!” and with twice the haste they moved on. They were already a considerable distance from the aforementioned house, when they heard loud noise, which apparently came from a cheerful party that had already taken to the bottle rather courageously, yet still passed the cup around busily. Upon coming closer they heard boisterous singing and single voices that argued, in between which the shrill sounds of an out-of-tune violin could be heard to whose music there was stomping of heavy boots in the fastest measure.

¹⁰⁵ St. Louis did not have a paid fire department until 1866—five years after a paid metropolitan police force was created. Möllhausen must have been familiar with the results of the devastating fire that hit St. Louis in the middle of a cholera epidemic in 1849. The fire began on a steam ship on the Mississippi. 430 buildings, 23 steamships, and 9 boats were lost. The fire department had only nine engines at its disposal, all operated by volunteers. It is perhaps why the fire fighters in his narrative are portrayed as particularly venturesome; after all, many contemporaries must have been familiar with the fire.

“Let’s stay away from those wild, blustering people,” Andree said, whose heart sank. “Let’s stay away, and spare me the mockery that will be heaped upon me because one can’t understand my words and comprehend my sorrow.”

“I would like to see who dares to receive you or us with mockery. Let Young America sing, dance, and for fun pick each other’s noses so hard that they split in two,¹⁰⁶ that's their business. But if you want to find honest, respectable hearts, then look for them among those wild lads in flannel shirts, not under fancy coats and embroidered vests. In the name of St. Napoleon! My father was as good a Frenchman as any who walked through Normandy, but I have to be fair with Young America. They are a bunch of rough fellows, but always ready to lay down their lives, if that means helping those in distress. Had to fight many a hot fights with Young America in my younger years; I dealt some blows, and took some, but love it no less for it.” Thus spoke Lefèvre in his usual manner; but Andree and the *Halfbreed* only appeared to be listening to his words; they were too deeply moved by sorrow and anxious hope to be receptive to anything else.

After a few minutes they stepped into the bright glow that had captured their attention from afar. It came from the foyer of a graceful house with a small bell tower. Houses such as this existed in almost all larger cities on the North American continent for storing the fire engines. In the middle of the foyer with a plank floor, lit up by four lanterns affixed to the nearest cast iron pillars, stood the main occupant of the building. It was a splendid work, and the arriving men felt almost blinded by the

¹⁰⁶ *sich gegenseitig die Nasen entzwei boren*

radiance that came from the rich, brightly-polished brass poles. The wheels, which were ornamented with gilding, shone in various bright colors, but where one could discern a space of one square foot on the boxes and water containers, there were meticulously executed paintings, sometimes depicting the inhabitants of Mount Olympus, or a famous American person at other times.

Comparatively, the ladder and the hose carts were not any less magnificent, and judging by the diverse rescue tools and buckets, which ornamented the red-painted walls, one could easily see the great diligence and the costs that were aimed at surrounding the property of the so-called Eagle Fire Company with a certain amount of luster to ready the company to compete with any other, in appearance as well as in achievement.

A company of approximately sixteen spry, young lads brought the remaining free space of the room to life. They looked picturesque, these strong figures with the black trousers, tied tightly around the waist, the wide, scarlet-colored flannel shirts, and lacquered leather helmets, and the impression of the entire *Scene* was enhanced by the fact that they had divided themselves into several groups and passed the time according to their dispositions.

Here, several sat and played a game with well-used cards, there, one could see others preparing a cold punch; farther back, leaning against the fire engine, stood a young man and let the bow dance on the screaming violin with unbelievable speed, while in front of him four friends performed the funny Yankee Doodle and tried in vain to keep the meter. But there was an atmosphere of everywhere, one could sense

joy and high spirits, and if once in a while differences of opinion seemed to lead to serious issues, the former were always resolved with good humor, even though threatening fists were raised at times..

At the moment when Lefèvre stepped into the door with his two companions, the men were about to form a circle in order to first let two hot-blooded fellows settle things with their fists, and to seal the newly established friendship after the fight with several bottles at the expense of the loser.

“Let us continue,” Andree said disheartened, when he saw the commotion, “because we can't hope to get help here.”

“Calm down,” the *Halfbreed* whispered to him, “we can't leave any measure or way untried if our effort is not to be entirely in vain. Let Lefèvre talk to these folks, he is entirely the man to be able to communicate with them.

Andree sighed deeply, he was so exhausted that he could barely stand up straight and only the worry for his daughter prevented him from collapsing entirely.

Lefèvre was calm and his serious face took on an almost blithe expression when he saw the boisterous company in front of him. Without hesitation he stepped into their midst.

“Good evening, gentlemen,” he exclaimed, “good evening, I am delighted to see all of you are well, but ask of you that you postpone your boxing match until I have asked you some questions!”

“We don't want to be bothered!” some answered. “Wait until we are finished!” others called. “Throw the old codger out the door!” it sounded from the

background. But Lefèvre didn't move a muscle in his face; but when one of the men nearest to him asked him with a certain sympathy to remove himself if he didn't want to be insulted in earnest by the excited men, he calmly took off his coat, rolled up the sleeves of his shirt up to his elbows, and contracting his muscular arms like a boxer, he turned to the boisterous company.

“Sacré mille tonnerre! It is not the first time, gentlemen, that I am among such fellows as you, and it won't be the first time that I throw a scarlet-shirt into the dust; who is the one who wants to throw me out the door? Step forward! Yes, at least look at me as if you wanted to hit me or laugh at me; I am as old as two of you together, but that shall not keep me from showing you what a Rocky Mountain man can do. Well then, come one, fellows!”

But as soon as the last word had crossed his lips, a short, stocky fireman jumped toward him and gave him his hand. “Look here, old codger!” the latter exclaimed, “I would be an opponent if I didn't feel ashamed to touch your grey head. But I will give you my hand, and I will throw everyone out the door who dares to look at you funny. Don't think though that I am afraid of you, no, certainly not! You are a man with whom I would rather drink a glass of brandy than trade punches!”

After the young American had finished speaking, Lefèvre took the offered hand with cordiality, and a certain joy spread over his weathered features.

“Didn't I tell you, Joe,” he turned to his companions, “that we would be among the sincere, honest Young America? Yes, I will drink with every single one of

you, my boys,” he continued; driven by his innate extravagance, he tossed a gold coin on the table, which had certainly cost him many days of hard work.

“Keep you money,” a half dozen youthful voices yelled, “keep it, old codger; we are man enough to drink with you and pay!”

“By God!” Lefèvre exclaimed. “Not for a million beaver pelts will I keep the money. Put it in the company’s till and let it be of use to some poor fire victim.” He took a glass, filled it half way with brandy, and raised it. “To young America!” he said, pouring down its contents, “but, quiet, fellows!” he cried with all his might when the applause of the firehouse made him tremble. “Quiet! Quiet! I have more to say!”

And “Quiet, quiet!” the wild chorus answered; the old gentleman wants to give a speech!” and soon thereafter it was so quiet that one could have heard a leaf drop.

In his simple, easy-to-grasp manner, Lefèvre now described the whole sequence of events, as far as he knew it. Many looks of sympathy fell first on old Andree, the picture of true sorrow, and then came to rest on the *Halfbreed*, who supported the desperate father and tried to console him. When Lefèvre then reported that he had tracked the carriage up until Eighteenth Street, and that it—unless it had turned into one of the cross streets—must have driven past the fire house about half an hour ago, the entire audience erupted with loud cries. Among strong execrations, the opinion of every single man was that it had been the infamous Miss Sally who had arranged the abduction.

“Wait a minute!” the captain now commanded the firemen. “First of all, give the old German a chair, you can see that he can barely stand up straight!”

The order was speedily carried out, and then everyone listened to the captain’s words again.

“Who has seen the carriage pass, and who can provide information about its whereabouts?”

“Yes, I,” two of the jolly fellows replied, and stepping forward they recounted that they had come down from their shift in the tower, and that approximately half an hour before shift change, from above, they had noticed a closed carriage that had driven in a fast trot to Miss Sally’s infamous house and stopped there.

“The girl is in Miss Sally’s house!” the entire company yelled in confusion. “It’s shameful! We must save the father’s child! Hoorah for the Eagle Company! Hoorah for the Stars and Stripes!”* The fellows clamored until the voice of their leader restored order again for several minutes.

“Does anyone else have suggestions regarding the matter?” he asked.

“Yes, I do,” was the answer of a haggard man, who was tall as a tree. “It’s Billy Tucker’s turn!” commanded the captain, and in the blink of an eye the man stood on the table, moved his leather cap to the side a bit, put his fists on his hips, and after removing the chewing tobacco from his mouth, he began with comical pathos:

“Gentlemen on both sides! A terrible crime has taken place in our fire district! A daughter was kidnapped and taken from her father! Look at the sorrow of the old

* *Das Banner der Vereinigten Staaten* (The flag of the United States). Footnote in the original.

man sitting by the door, look at the decent *Halfbreed*, and the honorable mountain man, who are both willing to give their life for the return of the girl, even though they are in no relation to the father or the daughter. I am telling you, gentlemen on both sides, take a look, and you will have to admit to yourself that we must do¹⁰⁷ no less than the *Halfbreed* or the mountain man!”

Loud exclaims approval, in which Lefèvre fell in with all the might of his lungs, interrupting the speaker. After a short break, he continued.

“If the great General Washington were still alive and among us, he would say: ‘Young America, go, preserve innocence!’¹⁰⁸ That is the first reason why we must return the daughter to the father! A house like Miss Sally’s has been disgracing our district for too long. This cave of misdeeds must disappear, as soon as possible! Second reason why the daughter must be returned to her father! Further, we haven’t had fun at night for a while. We have put out fires, we have hosed and extinguished, but real fun has almost become unknown to us. Third reason why the girl must be rescued from Miss Sally! Gentlemen of both sides! I thus take the liberty to suggest ringing the fire bell to gather all engines from all over St. Louis, to have a race to Miss Sally’s house, to surround it on all sides, so that not even a mouse can escape unnoticed, and to hose down the entire establishment from top to bottom. After returning the daughter to the father, we smash everything in the house to pieces, whip Miss Sally, and depart peacefully on our way, or hold a little match¹⁰⁹ against the

¹⁰⁷ *zurückbleiben*

¹⁰⁸ *die Unschuld*

¹⁰⁹ *Klopffechtere*

Jackson Company, which wants to be first in everything. I ask the president to call for a vote!” And Billy Tucker jumped off the table, accompanied by endless cheers from enthusiastic¹¹⁰ comrades.

“Vote! Vote!” it came from all sides now, and the captain, who had at the same time been recognized as president of the meeting, now spoke.

“I,”¹¹¹ he began, “completely agree with Billy Tucker’s views. But since every man has free will, and we live in a free country, I ask you, gentlemen, if you are satisfied with the suggestions that were made and will leave me in charge of their execution. The hat that remains on the head is ‘no’, the hat that is in the air is ‘yes’.

Immediately, all the heads were bare, and with wild cheers the leather hats flapped against the hall's ceiling.

“Well then, unanimously accepted!” the President said. “Pay attention now! Billy Tucker and Dan Hope, you climb into the tower and take a look in all directions to see if there is any sign of a fire. If it is clear, hang up the old signal lantern and ring the old bell as if we were to have a new one tomorrow and all of St. Louis lay in ashes. The guards shall remain up there, so that we can be recalled if a fire really breaks out. You others get ready to push the engine and hoses into the street with the first ring of the bell. Halt! Halt! No haste! The fire engine has to take a little detour to give the other companies time to approach, since we must surround the house on the first try, if we don’t want to find an empty nest. The old German will sit on top of the engine, since he is to show us his daughter! Two men have to hold him so he doesn’t

¹¹⁰ *enthusiasmieren*

¹¹¹ *Ich für meine Person*

fall off; he can't be allowed to walk, since he would be an impediment to us. The Frenchman and the *Halfbreed* will help with the draglines, they must have the honor to help with rushing.” —He wanted to continue speaking, but the screaming fire bell, to which Dan Hope and Billy Tucker had sneaked up, cut him off.

The young people tumbled over one another cheering and hollering; several seconds later the pump and hose carriage stood in the middle of the street, in front of them lay eighty feet of straightened rope, which they were going to use in place of a drawbar.

Slightly dazed from the events, Andree considered his noisy surroundings. He had only understood a few words, but he realized that it all pertained to the rescue of his daughter, and thus a weak hope to be reunited with her had been kindled in his breast. He noticed that the fire fighting instruments were brought out, but he had no idea in what capacity they might contribute to the rescue. But when the *Halfbreed* whispered to him to take courage¹¹² and not feel surprised by anything, that the goal was to rescue his daughter from the kidnappers, he acquiesced quietly; and when he was lifted onto the pump carriage, and he obeyed immediately when he was told to hang on to the poles and handles of the pump with all his might. He was not concerned about himself because the *Halfbreed* and Billy Tucker on either side, both ready to catch him in case he lost his balance during the wild ride; but he was concerned about the outcome of the endeavor, which, judging by the preparations seemed to hold little promise of success.

¹¹² *Mut fassen*

Meanwhile he had little time to reflect. “Everything is ready,” the captain called through his speaking tube. “Everything ready,” replied the excited fellows, of whom half a dozen jumped to the ropes of the hose carriage and the rest to the pump.

“Onward, Young America!” was the next command, and the spry men hurried along with the light carriage as fast as they could put one foot in front of the other.

Meanwhile, the fire bell brayed its uncanny melody in a furious beat into the dark night; just as uncanny answered the sister bells from all the firehouses around the city. The citizens belonging to the fire companies were startled from sleep and into their clothes. They rushed into the street without hesitation to join the next passing pump carriage, or to join the long line of those who pulled the rattling, but stable machines behind them with long ropes.

“Where is the fire?” was the question. “On Eighteenth Street!” the answer came. “Far away! Fellows, move out!” and sparks flew under the iron-studded wheels as they rolled along on the macadamized, yet bumpy roads.

When the Eagle Company reached the next corner in a sharp trot, the manpower¹¹³ in front of the hose carriage had already doubled because on both sides of the engine front doors kept opening and half-clothed figures jumped to the ropes. Now, it turned from Eighteenth Street to make the agreed upon detour around the next block. It had not yet covered half its distance, when the ropes were occupied so densely with men pulling that not a single person found room, and everyone who joined had to follow behind. Back down Nineteenth Street, down Chestnut Street, and

¹¹³ *die Bespannung*

when the first men once again turned into Eighteenth Street, they saw immediately in front of them the Jackson Fire Company, the Eagle Company's rival-

“Hurrah!” sounded a hundred voices, and taking a mighty start, the wild fellows rolled their beloved pump carriage, their pride and joy, past the Jackson Fire Company.

They finally stopped in front of the door to their hall and waited until the other pump carriage had caught up to them.

“Where is the fire?” the leader of the Jackson Company asked.

“No fire at all!” came the answer. “Miss Sally has kidnapped a girl again, so we want to spray her house a little bit: do you want to lend us a hand to get this old man his daughter back?!”

“Certainly! Certainly!” it echoed back; “but let's race from here to Miss Sally's house!”

“Agreed! Who arrives last pays for a keg of whiskey!”

“Agreed! And all boxing will be postponed until after the end of the fun affair!”

“Get ready!” called the leaders of the two companies at the same time. The pump carriages were pulled head to head, and the fists grabbed the draglines harder.

And even old Andree held on harder. “Just hang on a couple more minutes,” whispered the caring¹¹⁴ *Halfbreed*. “We will be where your presence is of the greatest importance.”

¹¹⁴ *sorglich*

“Don’t worry about me,” Andree answered; “I can endure much more, if only I get to see my daughter again.”

“Everything ready!” commanded the leaders, and then it was quiet for a moment.

“One! — Two! — Three!” and the two pump carriages shot off, always side by side, accompanied by cheers and hollering of all men present, and followed by those who hadn’t found their place on the ropes. Inexorably they kept going, as if a locomotive had pulled the pumps and other extinguishers. Neither one fell behind the other, and when other companies turned into Eighteenth Street, they joined the wild chase, and the procession approaching Miss Sally’s house became endless.

The news had spread like a wildfire among the companies that the aim was to take the notorious house by storm. When the Jackson and the Eagle Company arrived at the same time in front of the cast-iron gate, only a slight order was required to position the various pump carriages position in such a way that they could precisely spray all windows, all doors, yes, every cellar hole.

Not five minutes had passed and the long leather hoses were tightened to the pipes of the water lines; the water gushed in streams into the empty containers; from every side one could hear the hard work on the pumps, and then, magically lit up by torches and lanterns, seven or eight thick jets of water shot up high and fell in a wide arch onto the roof of the endangered house.

Thousand of wild throats made their approval known by loud shouts. Close to the pump carriage of the Eagle Company stood Andree, the *Halfbreed*, and Lefèvre,

the latter still entirely out of breath from the undecided race in which he had led the head of one cavalcade. All three had their various thoughts. Andree trembled when he watched the excited mob that might his daughter under the house's rubble in its excitement. The *Halfbreed* let his gaze glide quietly from window to window, from opening to opening, in order to confirm the presence of the girl he had grown so fond of, and to jump to her rescue in time. Lefèvre on the other hand entirely reveled in the joy of seeing so many healthy fellows, as he called them, who aimed for nothing less but to punish evil and give a father back his child.

14. Mob Justice

The atmosphere was cheerful as usual¹¹⁵ that evening in Miss Sally's house. Music played, adulterated¹¹⁶ wine bubbled and sparkled, and both served to lull the awakened conscience back to sleep, to drown the memory of happier times, or the thoughts of an ignoble future.

Miss Sally had retired. She was in a small, charmingly decorated chamber on the third floor, where Buschmark had been awaiting her since the beginning of the night. A small, round table stood between them, and visible on it on it were the remains of a choice meal, which they had apparently enjoyed with a hearty appetite. Two empty bottles were placed to the side, but a half-empty bottle and a full one, still sealed with wire and pitch, proved that Buschmark was not quite as measured as he had indicated in Kendrick's tavern; and that Miss Sally even knew what could

¹¹⁵ *es ging lustig her*

¹¹⁶ *verfälschter*

enhance the joys of the meal because if unadulterated champagne could be bought in St. Louis, she knew how to procure it for herself and her circle.

“Miss Sally, I must for the hundredth time drink to your health and to the successful outcome of our undertaking,” said Buschmark while he contorted his face into an ugly grin and held his full glass over the table. “It was indeed cunningly planned, and the twins deserve the greatest recognition, aside from the large reward.”

“Don’t think that they care much about recognition, unless it comes in shiny gold,” the woman replied, clinking her glass carelessly against her companion’s. “They are a couple of useful fellows, but the young wench has come to their aid considerably by fainting.”

“Hm, yes, what did she say when she woke up in your loving arms?” the notary asked.

“What did she say? Not much indeed, she started crying hysterically, pushed me away, and broke into such a loud wailing that it almost deafened me and I was lucky to have placed her in precisely that room which muffles every sound for the outside world. Yes, the silly thing didn’t not want be spoken to, she showed the wildness of an angry lioness and would have eventually even attacked me if I hadn’t chosen to withdraw and give her time to reflect and let her hot blood cool down.

“Almost an hour has passed since her arrival,” Buschmark remarked, pulling out his pocket watch. “I wonder if she is asleep?”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ *Ob sie wohl schläft?*

“Certainly not! By the way, I have placed a guard by her door who will report to me immediately if she falls out of line.”

“She is too attached to her old fashioned father for us to fear that she might harm herself. What do you think, Miss Sally, what if I went into her room? A familiar face sometimes has a comforting effect and inspires trust.”

“Do what you must. She can’t run away from us anymore. But if you believe that you inspire a comfort or trust with your visage, then I have to tell you that you are wrong to the highest degree; you have also prejudiced the girl against you by your overt ingratiation, and that your amiability is really not increased by your indulgence in wine.”

“Not increased?” asked Buschmark while he popped another cork and poured the foaming drink in his glass. “Not increased? But have you not just told me that wine loosens the lover’s tongue? Yes, Miss Sally, I will go and try to comfort the poor girl. I will squelch your anxieties, I will” —here he emptied his glass, “I will prop the shy dove up.” —

“Yes, yes, go,” interrupted Miss Sally, who didn’t wish anything but a hot reception for the notary, and thus with a certain malicious joy goaded his conceit, which now emerged twice as strong. “Just go, or do you doubt the impression you will make on the little dove? But it is true, my friend Buschmark, I haven’t seen such a beautiful girl in a long time.”

Struck at the core, Buschmark jumped up and hurried away, but in the same instance he heard the piercing sound of the fire bell, followed immediately by a dozen others.

“Fire,” he called to his companion with a displeased expression, and she answered “fire,” without hiding the annoyance she felt, although less because of the fire itself, and more due to the vanishing hope of witnessing by wine excited Buschmark being thrown out of the captive girl’s door with contempt.

“Let’s investigate where the fire is burning,” Miss Sally continued, pushing open a window shutter, “or do you welcome this sound to keep you away from your comfort-and-inspire-trust-visit?”

“No, certainly not!” replied Buschmark, who felt insulted again. “Just tell me that there is no fire in our neighborhood or on lower Chestnut Street and I will be on my way.”

“Convince yourself, my anxious friend, everything is quiet in our neighborhood, and you can make sure in this window here that it’s not your dirty office, yet.”

Buschmark leaned far out, looked for some minutes in all directions, and since he saw everything pertaining to his property and person in no danger, he took leave with an awkward bow and hurried *spornstreichs*¹¹⁸ to the room where the unfortunate girl was locked up.

¹¹⁸ A noun used as an adjective. *Spornstreich* is a hit or brush with spurs by a rider to the horse.

Miss Sally watched the notary disappear, then she slowly closed the shutters; a derisive smile appeared on her otherwise expressionless face, and following the passionate Buschmark, she muttered to herself: "Fool of a jurist! To lose control like this! But wait, you will pay for this fun with your best gold coins. The devil may come if I can't understand every single word thorough the hidden door." And suddenly changing her direction in the hallway, she reached a cramped compartment from where she could not only hear, but also see everything that was happening in the captive girl's room.

Buschmark had meanwhile entered the room after having removed the old person who had been standing guard. He was surprised since what he saw was entirely different from what he had expected. The captive girl wasn't defiant and ready to fight, no, he found her crestfallen and broken down by the burden or the most awful terror and despair.

Any other man's heart than that of the evil-doer and his accomplice's, which were hardened by vice, would have been touched when the girl, who was lying in the middle of the room, extended her arms at Buschmark and begged for mercy and for charity. Her voluminous blonde hair fell around her beautiful, pale face in a disheveled manner; the large eyes overflowed with tears of bitter despair, and her violent sobbing and inner struggle prevented her from uttering any words.

"Save me, Mr. Buschmark," she pleaded with a touching expression, "save me! I have been on my knees before you before, and you closed your heart to my

words then. But today, please hear my pleas.¹¹⁹ Terrible men have tied me and my poor father up. I was brought here under the most indescribable suffering. My father lies helplessly in the cabin, let me go, let me hurry to him to undo his ties, before sorrow and anguish kill him, let me go, Mr. Buschmark, and until the end of my days will I bless the memory of you. O, don't look at me with your burning eyes; I never insulted you knowingly, yes, never even wished you harm! Have mercy with my father! Let me hurry and save him!"

Renewed sobbing made Franziska unable to talk more, and as if the thought of her father had broken her last strength, she cowered. Shiver after shiver shook the beautiful figure, and she wrung her hands with the expression of the greatest pain. It was a picture that would not have left the cruelest savage untouched. But Buschmark stood with a calm demeanor, almost devouring the victim that was now in his power with his looks.

He couldn't feel the nameless pain so clearly expressed in front of him on the floor in each word, in each movement, and each look; he only had eyes for the beauty of his prisoner, and the thought that she now belonged to him made him smile.

When the girl fell silent after the initial outbursts of agony, Buschmark came closer.

¹¹⁹ *Laßt Euch erbitten*

“Calm yourself, my beautiful child,” he said with duplicitous¹²⁰ friendliness. “The men who brought you here didn’t kidnap you by my order. I heard about it by chance and came here for the sole purpose of rescuing you.”

“Rescue me? Rescue me? Why are you waiting even another second? Yes, I believe you are noble, you are high-minded, but let’s hurry and let me free my poor father from his ties!” and rising up halfway, her looks rested on Buschmark’s mouth, from which she hoped for a favorable decision.

“Your father is not worried about you, his ties are undone by now, since before I came here, I sent a reliable man to the log cabin. You can calm down. But to release you from here is not in my power at the moment. I was only able to see you by being cunning myself; but be patient, my beautiful child,” Buschmark continued, approaching her with friendliness, “I will make it my concern to reunite you with your father.”

“Then I am entirely under the sway of that terrible woman?” Franziska exclaimed with desperation in her voice. “But tell me, what does this woman want from me? What have I done? Why did she bring me here? Oh, Buschmark! You are a man! You can free me, if you want. Oh, do it, do it!” and once again she was at his feet, her hands stretched out with a pleading gesture.

“Yes, my beautiful little dove, I will rescue you, but stand up, let us discuss in what manner it is most easily done;” and trembling with inner excitement he took her beautiful hands to pull her up and against his breast.

¹²⁰ *gleißnerisch*

As soon as Franziska felt the touch of the inebriated lecher, she pushed him away with such force that he staggered backwards and fell to the floor. “You are lying, shameful fraud!” she exclaimed with a voice that could have been heard far away, if the room hadn’t been on the third floor and double windows and shutters kept her cries muffled. “Don’t touch me, boldfaced swindler!” she exclaimed with flaming eyes when she saw Buschmark, who was grim over her resistance, come toward her. “Don’t touch me, unless you want me to take my own life! Back, wretch! Back! Help!”

But Buschmark approached her inch by inch, grinding his clenched teeth, and his lurking eyes rested ominously on her.

“Ungrateful creature!” he exclaimed with a suppressed voice; “ungrateful creature! Your cries for help are lost in these walls! Rejecting my sincere, honest affection with contempt, so I will force you despite your resistance, and —”

He wanted to continue to speak; a thunderous noise on the street, which he hadn’t heard the entire time, and the loud shouting of a thousand voices now reached his ears. He blanched, since the distinct sound of doors being slammed shut told him that the noise came from Miss Sally’s house. But it could be an error, he had to make sure, and with two leaps he stood by the four-times-over closed window¹²¹, where he began to push back the bolts that were hidden, albeit known to him.

Franziska, too, was silent; she realized something unusual was happening, and a weak hope of perhaps being able to flee in the melee that was about to happen filled

¹²¹ *vierfach geschlossenem Fenster*

her breast. She listened with delight as the clamor became clearer when Buschmark one window after the other; she regarded the cowardly man, who sought to lift the last barrier with clumsy, trembling hands, with anxious interest.

Due to the strain he exerted to open the lock, both shutters suddenly and unexpectedly slipped from his hands, and before he had time to pull them back in, a mighty stream of water swished into the open window and threw the wretch backwards onto the floor with force. Franziska trembled when she saw the notary hitting the ground with his head, lying as if lifeless. The thundering shouts on the outside however let her know that her rescue was not far, and even if she couldn't explain the entire turn of events, she nevertheless felt reassured. If the house had really been on fire, as she had initially feared, she would not have heard such wild cheers. Resigned she awaited the outcome of her fate, looking for protection from the incoming water.

Buschmark's torpidity was meanwhile only of short duration. Ever new jets of water swished into the room; tearing the broken window panes along, bouncing off the ceiling and falling like heavy rain onto the groaning notary, who whining and bending, tried to regain his balance in vain, but kept being thrown down again and again from the rush of the water.

There was a hard knock on the door and Buschmark was prompted to open it. But he, who had meanwhile managed to escape the force of the water pumps, gave no answer. Anxious that someone had come to punish him for his crimes, he held the key, which he had pulled out of the lock after entering the room, in his pocket with a

convulsive grip and crept, as if seeking cover, to the young girl, who was vacillating between fear and hope.

The commotion in the street had meanwhile turned into truly deafening noise. Each jet of water that was sent up was cause for new cheers, yet one kept looking in vain for success of this offensive tactic. There was no window, no door where a pump hadn't been tried; the entire house dripped heavily in the truest sense, but the shutters were fastened, the doors were locked twice and thrice, and one began to grow tired already from this kind of work.

When Buschmark opened the window, a short excitement certainly followed, likewise when Miss Sally stepped out onto the balcony to talk to the people, and someone, after having recognized her, sent her back into room headfirst with a well-aimed jet of water; still, this wasn't enough for the wild mob, which had become acrimonious from the resistance and aimed for nothing less than the total destruction of the entire house.

“Hurrah for the ladders and axes!” it sounded suddenly. The pumps were stopped, numerous ladders were pushed up around the house, and the skilled firefighters climbed like an army of gigantic spiders along the bare walls from window to window. The axes and hatchets shimmered in the light of the torches, the woodwork split loudly under the powerful blows, wood chips flew, and after ten minutes no unbroken window shutter remained in the house.

As soon as the ladders had been pulled back, the pumps began their destructive work again. The masses hollered, men pressed harder against the pumps,

and the jets of water swished through the air more fiercely. They aimed for window after window, driving the content of several pumps in,¹²² and even though the water ran out under the closed doors already, but still no human being, on whom the crowd could have taken out its anger, was visible.

Suddenly, the beating of the drums could be heard. “The militia is moving in!” someone said, “Hurrah for the merry militia!” Yet nobody was bothered at his work. Only a few firefighters were sent out into various directions to show the approaching troops the way.

“What's the matter?” a company leader of the citizens' brigade asked.

“Miss Sally's house is being pumped full of water!”¹²³ was the answer.

“An unlawful act, we must intervene!”

“Of course, but it might be better if you take a little detour. There is such a crowd on this side that you will have trouble passing through.”

With a glance of agreement the captain showed his gratitude, his soldiers on the other hand, and the many citizens who were only hastily half clad, showed theirs with a boisterous Hurrah; The command “turn around, march!” followed, and a detour was chosen that lead to an entirely different part of the city. The pumps meanwhile continued their wet work uninterruptedly, and to the degree to which their effect became visible, the wrath of the roaring crowd grew.

¹²² *hineingeschleudert*

¹²³ *ausgespritzt*

Andree regarded the destruction with inner terror. "What is to become of my poor child if she is in that house," he whispered to the *Halfbreed*, who was standing next to him.

"Trust me," the latter answered; "You see that I am not participating in this; I'm only waiting for the right moment to enter the house. But listen to my advice and don't leave the Eagle Company's pump. The people here know you and will protect you when I leave; and then it will be easier to meet with you again, after I have found your daughter."

At this point, Lefèvre, who had just been relieved at the pump, came. "Joe," he called, breathing heavily, "we can't wait any longer; here is an ax, it belongs to the Eagle Company. Let's open the dance, and you will see how the fellows will follow."

"Well then," the *Halfbreed* said, while he gave Andree his hand, "don't leave this spot, and I will see you soon!" He swung the ax over his head and rushed after Lefèvre and toward the house with a loud yell.

It took only a few hard blows and the small iron gate was in ruins. Then, the two hunters flew up the six steps, and, accompanied by the approbation from the mob, threw their heavy weapons against the door. But the approval was evident in another form as well; since not half a dozen blows had fallen, when an entire crew of fire fighters came with axes and asked to take over the hard work. But blow upon blow fell booming upon the cracking door, chips of wood flew about, the locks and hinges yielded, and both sides of the door sank to the inside under triumphant cries.

As soon as the looks of gathered men in front of the house fell on the now open and lit entryway, the noise stopped, but only for a few minutes; because when Lefèvre in his rough manner prompted the garishly dressed ladies and gentlemen gathered there to leave the house, the commotion and the shouting started again with twice the strength.

“Open a passage! Open a passage” it came from every side, and magically there appeared a small opening, which led from the door of the house through the dense crowd of people.

“Come out!” shouted Lefèvre and the firemen who had followed him, and were trying in vain to penetrate the group of ladies and gentlemen. But the rouged girls cried, the pale gentlemen cursed, and everyone stood as still as if they had been nailed to the ground.

“Step back, fellows!” the leader of the Eagle Company now called. “Back! We want to move¹²⁴ them!”

The two hunters jumped out¹²⁵ the door after the firemen, the pumps rattled, and accompanied by a thousand-fold derisive laughter, two jets of water simultaneously penetrated the heap of velvet, silk, and human limbs.

The wailing that now arose was almost louder than the deafening noise of the men rushing the house, but the unlucky ones stood here in front of a judge who knew no mercy.

¹²⁴ *lose* [?] There are a number of pages in the text where the print is cut off on the right side of the right page, although not significantly. The book is an exact reprint of the original, and the printing flaw is likely present in the original.

¹²⁵ *hinaus*

“Give it to them, those shameless harlots! Give it to them, those tempted fellows! Wash of their sins!” voices could be heard shouting wildly, and the men tore at the pumps as if they had wanted to break them to bits.

Finally, there was a pause,¹²⁶ and one could see the jolly Billy Tucker darting up the stairs in two leaps and prompting the embattled group to make room and clear leave the house. This time, the command fell on more willing ears; but when the wailing and dripping people began moving together to make the way through the mob in a cohesive column, Billy Tucker once more stepped forward as speaker.

“Gentlemen of both sides!” he called to the people with his stentorian voice, “gentlemen of both sides! It can only be in our interest to meet the pretty ladies face to face. It is also just as important for us to know who the man gentlemen are who spend their or other people’s money in wild orgies and disturbed the nightly peace of their neighbors so many times with their noise. Gentlemen of both sides, I thus propose to parade every member of this lovely company individually for your review!”

“Individually! Individually! For review!” the mob roared.

“Forward, gentlemen!” said Billy Tucker, turning to his captives again, “one of you has to be the first,” and to give his words more emphasis he took hold of a youth of approximately seventeen years by his arm and marched him to the first step rather ruggedly.

¹²⁶ *es wurde innegehalten*

“Shame on you! Shame on you!” the mob shouted, “so young and already secretly in the den of wrongdoing!”

For a split second the young man looked around helplessly, then he put his hands over his face and rushed down the gauntlet.

A man stooped with age followed him. He, too, covered his countenance with a handkerchief, but the sparse, grey hair, which was dripping and sticking to his bald head, showed the number of years he had lived.¹²⁷ The mob watched the old sinner pass with disgust. Only once in a while a loudly uttered “ugh” could be heard, but the silence damned this wretch more than the loudest reproaches could have ever done.

Dainty fops¹²⁸ with bold, twirled mustaches and golden lorgnettes, now of course robbed of their splendor by the involuntary bath, citizens, even Senators who enjoyed a respectable reputation, officers who were too proud to interact with citizens, in short, members of all ranks had met in this morass. The vice had left its unmistakable traces on the features and looks of most of them. The mob taunted and condemned them without regard for rank and position because vice had made them equals.

The ladies followed the gentlemen, but not individually. They were allowed to leave somewhat unnoticed. It was a sad sight, those fallen creatures, who might have been the pride and head of a family; how they slunk away deeply ashamed, or sometimes with defiant, challenging looks. They still had tinsel in their hair, and the

¹²⁷ *man konnte die lange Reihe von Jahren erkennen, welche über denselben hingezogen waren.*

¹²⁸ *Zierliche Stutzer*

wet, expensive clothes clung to their bodies, a faithful picture of their poisoned youth, their own fall.

The mob was not derisive, but it was silent. However, it felt deep pity for the lowliness of the young, beautiful girls; lowliness that was in most cases the consequence of unfortunate circumstances, or boldly conceived criminal schemes.

When the last of this pitiful procession had disappeared into the dark shadow of the street, pity gave way to indignation and rage. Miss Sally hadn't been among the company, and the father still agonized over his stolen daughter.

“Miss Sally is still in the house! Get the woman¹²⁹ out! Get the panderer! Stone her! She must give the father his child back!” roared and blustered the mob. A number of firemen rushed into the house to smash to smithereens what had not been destroyed by the water.

Soon, the furniture audibly burst under the blow of the axes, the mirrors clashed, and if there was anything at all that had been spared even partially, the grim mob attacked it as if they had discovered a treasure, but only for the purpose of taking its lust for destruction out on it.

When the rows of Miss Sally guests and friends who considered the entry hall their last refuge had thinned out enough to allow single beings to enter, the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre hurried up to the second floor to look for Franziska. They looked in every room, every wardrobe, and where they found a locked door, be it niche or closet, a few blows with the ax helped them gain entry. Finally, they reasoned with

¹²⁹ *die Hehlerin* a receiver of stolen goods.

worry that she could not be hidden on that floor, and with a pounding heart the Halfbreed followed his friend, who, taking two steps at once, hurried up the stairs leading to the third floor. Once more they started their search, and once more they hurried from room to room, without coming across a trace of the girl. From the street they heard the terrible threats and curses uttered against Miss Sally, and then commotion arose in the house. They hurried to beat the quick tempered men because the wild fellows might frighten the girl, and, since none of the storming men knew her, prevent possible insults and rough treatment, but their search was in vain. They began to doubt that Miss Sally had played a part in the kidnapping, when Lefèvre suddenly discovered the small door to the compartment in which Miss Sally had eavesdropped on Buschmark an hour earlier. The door was ajar, and when he pushed it open, the light of the torch fell on Miss Sally's figure. She sat in a corner, drenched, and trembling with cold and fear.

He didn't know her, and neither did the *Halfbreed*, and most likely they would not have paid any further attention after questioning her, if Billy Tucker had not approached and asked about Miss Sally's well being in a scornful manner.

"What!" Lefèvre thundered, "This is Miss Sally? *Sacré mille tonnerre*, that's a lucky coincidence. Out, you old woman, so I can make you talk!" With these words he grabbed the woman by the neck and dragged her to the middle of the hallway. "Answer now, woman," he exclaimed, "if I am not to split your head with the torch! Where is the daughter of, — of—"

“Franziska Andree!” the *Halfbreed* added with a loud voice, aiding the trapper’s memory.

“Here!” called the young girl, who had heard the *Halfbreed’s* voice through the hidden door. “Here, dear Joseph, oh come and rescue me!”

When he heard the voice, the *Halfbreed* felt as if an electrical current had struck him. “Let the woman be and follow me, Lefèvre!” he exclaimed and jumped out of the compartment. “Here she is, here she is!” and with each exclamation he threw himself against the thin wooden veneer with the entire weight of his body, and with the third attempt he fell—on top of the entire wall—into the room in which Franziska and the notary had locked themselves in.

When the *Halfbreed*, who had fallen, rose, he saw his lovely friend, who extended her arms toward him with delight, at the opposite side of the chamber.

She was so moved, that “God bless you, Joseph!” was the only thing she was could utter.

“You are not injured?” Joseph asked anxiously, when he saw the destruction the water had caused in even this room.

“Not injured, but where is my father?”

“He is fine and waiting for you in front of the house!”

“Thank goodness!” Franziska exclaimed, her eyes overflowing with tears, extending both hands to the *Halfbreed*. “But look, dear friend, I can’t move.”

Only now did Joseph see Buschmark’s figure in the dim torchlight, lying at the girl’s feet, holding on to her dress. The wretch, in full knowledge of his guilt,

twisted and turned on the damp floor, and when he saw the young *Halfbreed's* threatening looks, horror distorted his ugly features. "Franziska!" he lamented. "Miss Franziska, have mercy with me, don't let him kill me! I am rich! I will make you happy! Dear Mister Joseph, spare my life! I will pay you for it! I can pay you, but spare me! Come to me, and I will make sure that no murder burdens your soul. Don't stain it by killing me, a defenseless, old man. Franziska! For your father's sake, forgive me!"

"Wretch," the *Halfbreed* replied with a voice seething with rage, when he heard the man he despised begging for his life; for his life, that wasn't threatened anyway. "Wretch, you want to blind¹³⁰ me with new lies? Just like this, the girl was once at your feet, asking for what a thousand of lives such as yours can't make up for; but you, did you show her mercy? Move your hands and don't taint this pure being with your touch! Move your hands away from her, I tell you, if you don't want me to beat you into the dirt!"¹³¹

"Franziska! Mister Joseph! Protect me from the wrath of the mob! I am doomed!" and creeping closer, he tried to clutch Franziska's knee.

"Free me, but spare the wretch," Franziska whispered to the *Halfbreed*, who looked like he was going to remove the notary by force. At that moment, old Lefèvre, who had grasped the situation with one glance, rushed in.

¹³⁰ *berücken*

¹³¹ *besudeln*

“Damned ink slinger!”¹³² He exclaimed, and hit by a forceful blow of his foot clad in supple deerskin, Buschmark rolled to the other side of the room with a whimper.

“Away from here!” the Halfbreed said to the young girl, and taking her hand he hurried out the door with her and toward the staircase, which he found occupied with scores of men who had stormed the house.

“I am bringing the kidnapped girl!” he called to them, and immediately the voices fell silent. Probably everyone looked at the beautiful features that had not yet lost their marks of sorrow, but they all stepped aside reverentially when the couple walked past them, only once in a while one could hear the exclamation: “Good fellow! Good *Halfbreed!*” which accompanied them to the door.

When the *Halfbreed* stepped outside with his companion, he was greeted by a thunderous Hurrah, the loudest one coming from the Eagle Company, which now saw proof that its undertaking had been successful.

Silently the two young people walked through the crowded mob, which made way for them. But as the two approached the Eagle Company pump, Joseph delivered the daughter into her father’s arms and when the reunited pair exclaimed, many a rambunctious fellow turned away to conceal how touched he was, and each one told himself that—even though in a manner that did not follow the law—he had been part of a good deed.

¹³² *Tintenkleckser*. German schools have always placed emphasis on proper, clean handwriting, which was considered a mark of academic aptitude.

After Andree, his daughter, and the *Halfbreed* had left the crowd behind and started in the direction of the log cabin, the milling mob would have likely dispersed if a new scene had not suddenly demanded its attention.

That is to say, Billy Tucker and Lefèvre suddenly appeared in the door, illuminated by the light of torches, the first dragging the notary who was half-dead with terror, while the latter pushed the voluminous Miss Sally ahead of him. The fierce applause that had greeted them subsided when Billy Tucker—following his unconquerable urge for “speech giving”¹³³—motioned that he wished to speak.

“Gentlemen of both sides,” he began. “Here I introduce to you the notorious, beautiful Miss Sally, along with her companion, the very noble notary Buschmark. The lady’s merits may in any case not be unknown to you; I don’t have to recount them to you again. Likewise has the noble lawyer Buschmark shown his good side tonight, so that it is really not necessary for me to highlight his special merits! Gentlemen of both sides! I now leave this noble couple to your goodwill!”

“Hurrah for Billy Tucker!” the crowd thundered, but Billy Tucker wasn’t finished yet.

“Gentlemen of both sides! Miss Sally and her company are deeply indebted to us for the heavy cleaning we have undertaken for them. They say that they have enough for a while. Well, that is not my opinion!”

¹³³ “*Redehalten*”

“Tar and feathers!” various voices roared; but Billy Tucker, who feared that such an undertaking wouldn’t have a good ending, perhaps even pitied the two wretched creatures, just wanted a milder punishment, and thus continued:

“Gentlemen of both sides! I disagree with tar and feathers. However, permit me to suggest that the said lady and the said gentleman undertake a little race!”

“Hurrah for the race! Hurrah for speaker Billy Tucker!”

“Gentlemen of both sides! I am in no position to express my gratitude for the applause in a sufficiently dignified manner, but let’s get to the heart of the matter! I suggest thus to make room and to place the said lady and the said gentlemen in front of two full pumps that are manned by healthy arms. An impartial third person will count to three, and the lady and the gentleman will begin their race, another impartial third will count to ten, and the water jets will shoot after the runners as long as they can reach them. Who runs fastest, wins the bet, and reaches dry ground first in return!”

At this point Billy Tucker signaled through a polite bow that he was finished.

The thunderous applause from the crowd indicated the level of approval, and indeed not five minutes had passed until the pumps were set up in the Eighteenth Street, and the trembling Buschmark and the now cursing Miss Sally had taken their place in front of them.

“One—two—three!” it sounded; but only Miss Sally left in a hasty pace in the only direction possible. Buschmark on the other hand turned around, fell to his knees,

and extended his arms toward the pump leader in a pleading manner. But his supplication disappeared in the scornful laughter that surrounded him.

“Ten!” it came, the tips of the hoses were lowered, and whooshing the tips hit their two victims.

Miss Sally fell to the ground with the first blow, but she stood up quickly and attempted to escape the ridiculous situation with increased precipitance; she was still in reach of the ice-cold rain when Buschmark surpassed her at full speed and disappeared in the next cross street accompanied by the loud Hurrah from the people. She herself followed Eighteenth Street. Her destination was the tavern Hungry Belly. “I still have the gold,” she murmured to herself, while she walked along gasping for air. “If St. Louis is off-limits to me, there are still hundreds of cities where life’s greatest pleasures beckon for gold.”

The fire companies had meanwhile reorganized themselves for their return home. Pumps, and hose, and ladder carts followed one another in long columns, and the exhausted firemen followed arm in arm.

“Hail Columbia happy land!” —a thousand voices sang, and using the National Anthem as marching music, the cheerful Young America marched along to the beat.

The last section hadn’t lost sight of Miss Sally’s house yet, when the sound of the fire bells could be heard in the night once more. This time there was a real fire, and as fresh as if they had just left their beds after a restful night’s sleep, the entire

company fell into a quick trot, which soon turned into a wild race because everyone wanted to be first on the scene to rescue and help.

The streets, which were just minutes ago the setting for noisy mob justice, were now magically deserted. The lanterns lit up the rows of houses in their usual, immutable manner, but human figures were not visible anywhere. The storm bells and rattles of the rushing pump carts were audible, but otherwise it was quiet and deserted; quiet in people's houses, the streets were empty; the bleakest however was Miss Sally's house with its small yard. The lanterns illuminated something so uncanny, so terrible on its exterior that faded the further up one looked.¹³⁴

As it is with residences that were deserted long ago, left to decay, here, too, the black remainders of door and window openings in which fragments of shutters hung crooked on the hinges, and washed off strips of wallpaper, torn curtains and drapes moved, pushed around by the draft, like ghosts behind all the openings.

The former den of vice looked gloomy and forlorn, and strangers¹³⁵ might have hesitated to walk past, and yet human beings stirred inside.

That is, after the noise in the adjacent streets fell silent completely, the small trapdoor of a barely noticeable basement window fell to the inside. Cautiously a head slipped out, and after peeking to all sides, the body of a slight man followed. The latter had barely gained a foothold, when he quickly walked to the corner of the house, looked up and down the cross street, and when he had convinced himself that

¹³⁴ *je weiter nach oben man schaute, um so matter wurde es.*

¹³⁵ *man*

nobody was close by, he stepped back to the opening and called quietly: “All clear, back to work!”

Soon thereafter one could hear the panting of a laboring man, who prompted the man on the outside to help him. The latter stuck down his arm and began to lift with full force. After a short, but strenuous effort, a small suitcase with iron locks blocked the opening entirely; the hidden man pushed once more, and the suitcase slipped out into the open.

As soon as the opening was free again, the head and shoulders of a man appeared again, who, supporting himself with his hands on the ledge, jumped out with ease. Without hesitation and without speaking as much as single word, the two men took the suitcase between them and hurried away with their burden around the corner and toward the city's outer limits. After having walked for a quarter of an hour and passing the last lantern, they set the suitcase down and sat on it to recover from the arduous task.

“What do you think, Mr. Toby, Miss Sally will say when she returns and finds the golden eggs missing from the nest?” the taller one of the two asked his companion now.

“What will she say, Finney? That’s not hard to guess. She will say the twins have robbed her.”

“She can say whatever she wants to, I am just happy that we have finally got somewhere.¹³⁶ But it’s too bad that we had to leave the silver behind.”

¹³⁶ *auf den grünen Zweig gekommen sind.*

“Ugh, Finney, who can be that greedy. Just think what poor Miss Sally will have left after she pays rent and repairs for her house. I bet it will cost the last ring off her fat fingers.”

“I care little what remains, just as little as she would care if she saw all her old friends on the gallows. But lets move ahead, Toby, we have suddenly become rich, so let’s make haste and carry our treasure to safety. I think California will be our next destination.”

“It’s possible,” replied Toby, and he rose together with his companion.

A few minutes later the two men had vanished in the darkness.

15. To California

Andree, Franziska, and the Halfbreed had not yet reached the open field, when Lefèvre caught up with them. He was still so excited by the events that he walked alongside his friend for a small stretch without talking to him, or answering his questions, but the brief, hearty laughter he gave off from time to time showed that the various scenes played in his soul time and time anew.

“O, Joe,” he finally exclaimed, “you missed a lot by not watching the punishment of the woman and her companion. If their conscience could be washed as clean as their bodies were, they should be declared at least three quarters a saint. And then, Jo, this beautiful speech by Billy Tucker! Sapristi! If I ever help vote for Senator of Missouri, Billy Tucker gets my vote, as my name is Lefèvre! But, Joe, I have completely forgotten that this young lady doesn’t know me yet!”

“She has known you for a while,” Franziska interjected, “and my father knows you as well, yes, in fact almost as long as we call your friend here our friend.”

“And love you as long as we call you our friend,” Andree added warmly.

“Thank you, my boy,” Lefèvre replied, squeezing the *Halfbreed’s* hand with a touch of emotion. “I thank you that you haven’t forgotten your old teacher, considering all your erudition. But let me tell you, Andree, —and you, too, beautiful daughter with the sweet voice—you could not find a more sincere friend than Joseph. I have known the lad for twenty years, and he was a teachable boy when I took him on a beaver hunt the first time. That is to say, he learned nothing but how to set traps from me, since I can barely write my own name.”

“Now I have to thank you, Lefèvre,” Joseph said, “for all the good traits you have instilled in me. I hope you will continue to consider yourself as my teacher, since it is very likely that we will go on another beaver hunt together.”

“As independent trappers,” Lefèvre quickly interjected. “When I am by myself, I might as well be in the service of the Fur Company, but together with you, every limitation of our free will has a something disagreeable to it, and the devil may come if we can't make higher wages as independent trappers than the fur company usually pays.”

“Only as independent trappers,” Joseph agreed, “but I don’t want to leave St. Louis before the beginning of next spring; since we vouched for our friend Andree and his daughter, —allow me to speak of you—we can’t withdraw our protection now, when Buschmark will surely leave no method untried to avenge himself terribly

for the public punishment he received. People like him are capable of everything. In his fear he tried to convince me that I didn't in fact bludgeon the Negro in New Orleans, a deed with whose consequences he threatened me just a short while before. That runt,¹³⁷ he just wanted to get away from us. But I will look for him and demand that he sheds light on his words."

"I agree entirely with you," Lefèvre said. "We must defend our friends against the intrigues by the knavish notary, and that being said, it will be good for these old bones to get some rest for a winter. But I won't stay in the city; there are too many houses. I have the urge to move to the country where it snows and the wind play with the bare trees. I hope to find a farmer who will take me in for the boarding wages I would pay in the city. I feel like moving out here, I like this area, and in particular the location of Andree's cabin; and if Mr. Andree would take me in for boarding wages, —and I promise I won't pay more than is customary in the city—I would be overjoyed. I would even be able to save money, since there is no opportunity to waste it, unlike in the city."

Joseph realized the intention of Lefèvre's words not without a certain feeling of uneasiness. He knew well what the kind hunter intended by praising the location of the cabin he had only seen in the dark, and when he asked Andree to let him stay for boarding wages. He, too, had concealed his own plan to support Andree and his daughter and to make their lives easier, and according to his own opinion and had

¹³⁷ *elende Wicht*

made it to the best of his ability inscrutable,¹³⁸ but this concealment in particular, which made his friend's intention all the more clear, was what might most likely insult a man like Andree. He was thus silent and waited tensely for the answer that would follow the well-meant suggestion.

“Mr. Joseph has already saved us once when we were in a very sad predicament,” Andree began after a short while; “the two of you have given me my daughter back. Why then should I reject it if you want to move to our farm, for our protection, which we require to a high degree in this country, and to alleviate some of our sorrows? No, Lefèvre, come out as soon as you please, to try the country living, and rest assured we will do our best to make you feel comfortable. Many before me opened a lodging house, why should I not do the same on a smaller scale?”

When the Halfbreed heard this, he felt at ease. He felt heartfelt joy for Andree, but also for Lefèvre, since he knew the latter well enough to know that he would not be able to live in a city for longer than six weeks. He was certain however that on the farm, out in nature, the passionate trapper would not only be able to postpone his departure until spring, but also that he would not feel unhappy during that time. On the other hand, he felt a certain regret that he couldn't make a similar plea, since what seemed natural for the old hunter might be taken the wrong way if it came from him. But even here Lefèvre helped him with his frankness, because as soon as Andree had finished, he stood still and exclaimed loudly: “*Diable!* Monsieur Andree! You are a

¹³⁸ *undurchdringlich*

gentleman from head to toe.¹³⁹ I was already afraid you weren't going to take me in. But while you are turning your cabin into a lodging house, one person more or less can't matter. Now, I think you should ask my friend Joe here as well to move in with you. Sapristi! I don't like to be separated from him, considering the fact I barely reunited with him!"

Andree walked on, thought for a short while, and then turned back to Lefèvre. "How can you be so sure that Mr. Joseph will accept my proposal and would like to agree as well?"

"I do," replied Joseph, before Lefèvre had found time to answer. "I feel like my teacher does. I, too, prefer nature over city life, and especially now, after I have for the first time come to know a big city like this one, and its darker side of having a dense population."

"Yes, city life has a dark side," Andree mused. "I tremble when I think about the latest experience. Good God! If I had lost my child."

"Don't think about it anymore, father," Franziska said, while hooking her arm more tightly in the crook of his. "Do you see how God has watched over us; do we not have reason to be thankful? Did the difficult tests not also bring us these decent men? Even if Buschmark want to haunt us further, now that I know the danger and looked it in the eyes, I feel much, much safer!"

¹³⁹ *von dem Wirbel auf eurem Skalp bis herunter zu eurer Fußsohle*. It seems that Möllhausen translated the English idiom "from head to toe" somewhat literally. In German one would use *durch und durch*.

“Well said, my daughter!” Lefèvre exclaimed. “Forgive me, but I am old enough to be your father. Well said! If the man who takes you home sooner or later is only half as good as you, then you must be the best pair that has ever married between the Atlantic and the Pacific! Here is the boundary fence, give me your hand my daughter so I can help you over it, Joseph will help your father.” With these words he jumped across, helped the young girl, and soon thereafter all four stepped into the room that was still in the same condition in which they had left it the night before.

Soon the *Halfbreed's* skilled hands had produced a cozy fire, which burned in the fireplace, and in whose glow Franziska brought out provisions to prepare a meal for the men. Andree immediately retired, since the consequences of the night of excitement were terribly exhausting that he fell asleep almost immediately and Franziska became seriously worried about him.

Lefèvre on the other hand praised the interior arrangement of the little cabin, which, of course, had only two rooms that were separated by a wall of boards, but was for the old hunter the ideal of comfort. “The room right there will be Miss Franziska’s sanctuary,” he remarked with a chattiness that always indicated a happy mood. “Andree retains his place of honor; I will spread my buffalo skin on this side of the fireplace and Joe will take the other side. Wonderful, wonderful, in the name of the holy Saint Napoleon! More room than we need!” Lefèvre continued to praise in this manner and to wander around in the chamber, until Franziska invited him amiably to take part in the meal.

Daybreak wasn't too far off, when Lefèvre curled up on the floor to "close my eyes for an hour" as he said. Franziska and the Halfbreed moved two chairs in front of the fire and sat down. But Franziska was unable to resist fatigue much longer and her head fell onto her chest, and she fell into a deep slumber, while the Halfbreed regarded her with a mixture of emotion and admiration, stoked the fire at her feet, and attentively listened to her regular breaths.

On the next night, the four inhabitants of Andree's farm sat together in front of the cozy fire. Lefèvre soon felt at home; he smoked his pipe, told his stories, as if he had been living there since the beginning of time, and preferably addressed his words to the young girl, for whom he seemed to have developed a truly paternal affection. With the frankness characteristic for his age, he soon called her his daughter, soon his little lamb, or his white wild flower, all names she loved to hear and rewarded with a friendly smile or a few joking words.

Things were different with the Halfbreed, though. Not that he felt less content now; no, certainly not; even the circumstance that Buschmark, whom he wanted to find, had now disappeared, he found convenient, since it saved him from disagreeable disquisitions. But a change was recognizable in his shy, guarded demeanor, even though he never isolated himself, and his attention was equally divided between Andree, the young girl, and his old friend.

The days passed in this manner. Hardship and sorrows had disappeared from the log cabin and happy contentment had taken its place, typically followed by the most beautiful harmony. Indeed, there was nothing here that could have worried these

good people, since Andree had recovered and regained his strength, and the letters from his son brought only news of his well being. The latter had entered the service of a blacksmith and had made himself indispensable to his bread giver due to his teachableness, diligence, and the ability to keep the bills in order, so that the former increased his salary significantly of his own accord, and promised even bigger advantages if the young man gave up the intended journey to California and stayed on with him entirely.

The young forester's intention to seek his destiny in California however was too certain to be swayed by such promises. He said so openly in his letters; yes, he went even further by drawing his father's attention to the sad circumstances of their current existence, and suggested to him to summon up everything in his power to make a journey to those regions possible, since many a man had managed to lay the foundation for a secure, worry-free existence there.

In the beginning, such plans were disregarded as the daydreams of a young man with a penchant for adventure. When the invitations repeated themselves in each subsequent letter, and the young man even spoke of his savings with which he would be able to help his kin purchase equipment for the journey, and as proof sent a small sum, one began to take a closer look at the matter, even though Franziska fought the decision with all her might.

Lefèvre was the first who declared to be in favor of the journey. "We can't remain together beyond the spring," he said to Andree. "Our life's calling is taking us away again to the western regions. But you should no longer live on Buschmark's

property if you don't want that vengeance-driven gnome to come back after our departure in order to ruin you. Since you have to establish a new home that is as far away from St. Louis as possible, it makes essentially no big difference if you went straight to California instead of settling further up [the Missouri]. I wouldn't even be averse to accompanying you on your journey, because I haven't returned to the Pacific Ocean since gold was discovered and would love to see with my own eyes the changes that have taken place since my last visit."

The Halfbreed refrained entirely from advocating in favor of the journey, but he was far from advising against it. He, too, had contemplated it numerous times if it might not be best for him to move to the gold country, amass treasures there, then step in front of his father once more, only to ask for his fatherly affection and patrimonial name. But to induce the young girl, who was little used to troubles, to undertake a journey through the wilderness, well, that was something he couldn't do. He parted reluctantly from the people who had become so dear to him, and to whom, he had to admit to himself, he had not remained irrelevant as well, but the cost of seeing the dutiful daughter, for whom he would have easily given his life, fought deprivations and dangers, that cost was too high for having her as a companion on the months long journey. But he admitted this much, and he confirmed it wholeheartedly, that, if Andree considered migrating to California, he would gladly join him and accompany him to his destination.

Influenced from all sides in this manner, Franziska became more and more inclined to agree with the men, and it finally took only a salient incident to bring the discussed plans to maturity and convert them into a firm resolution.

They didn't have to wait for too long for such an incident to occur.

After the fall storms had blown the fragile, thin leaves off the bare trees, and the nightly frosts had pressed them to the ground with their heavy hoar frosts, the winter came; winter with its fine snowflakes and frozen windowpanes, with long nights in warm parlors, and with its somniferous quiet that falls on all of nature with the first snowfall.

In the peaceful log cabin, one noticed all this with easy feelings. The few pets had, thanks to the two hunters, a protective roof over their heads, mighty piles of chopped wood were in front of the door, venison in sufficient quantities decorated the chimney hood, a row of books stood well-ordered on the board above the fireplace, and in a small wall cabinet were a few bottles and a significant supply of tobacco, which the two elders used to for their enjoyment once in a while.

It happened on Christmas Eve. In the cabin, around the roughly hewn table, sat Andree, his daughter, and Lefèvre, the latter listening intently to Franziska speaking of her home country in lovely simplicity and describing the richly decorated, glittering trees around which all members of the household would typically gather on this night.

The *Halfbreed's* entry interrupted the young girl. He came from the city, where he had run errands to make small surprises.

“The greatest joy I can give you today, must be this,” he said, placing a letter in front of Andree after the first greetings.

“From Robert!” “From my brother!” father and daughter exclaimed at the same time when they saw the writing, and with hands that trembled with joy, Andree broke the seal.

Everyone was quiet and waited for the words Andree would speak to them after he had finished reading the letter.

“The boy is safe and sound, and he seems to feel as happy working as a blacksmith as he did working as a forestry apprentice,” Andree finally began in a pleased manner, “but he seriously intends to persuade me to go to California. He writes that the emigration will begin again on a grand scale in the spring, and he can’t emphasize often enough how beneficial a journey across the prairie will be for my and his sister’s health. Hm, he also writes about the land of his dreams. If it is only half as good as he imagines it to be, we can’t do anything more sensible than to follow his advice. What do you think, Lefèvre?”

“I think Robert is a pretty smart fellow, and you will find more in California than you are giving up here!”

“And what is your opinion, Joseph?” Andree continued asking a question he had asked the *Halfbreed* at least a hundred times before.

The latter refrained from answering, but instead placed a second letter on the table that had been unfamiliar handwriting, and had been stamped in St. Louis.

“Who could this be from?” asked Andree while he opened it and immediately saw the signature.

“From Buschmark!” he exclaimed puzzled.

“From Buschmark?” everyone asked, just as puzzled.

“Yes, from notary Buschmark! But let’s see what he writes.”

““Venerable friend. I am writing you this letter while I am passing through. I want to explain to you how much I regret the foolishness that I have committed once against you and your daughter, due to the excitement caused by an unaccustomed consumption of wine. The circumstances appear to speak against me to such a degree that I cannot dare making the effort to apologize.¹⁴⁰ Time will reveal the extent to which I am guilty. But enough of that. I want to assure you that I will put nothing in your way if you want to remain living on my farm, and I am changing—to make your life easier—the terms of the lease, so that you do not have to pay half, but only one third of the earnings as rent to my authorized agent. I will be undertaking a long journey and will most likely settle in New York. Years will pass until I have the pleasure to greet you again, but showing this document in my old office will suffice to make sure you are entirely safe. Send my regards to your two venerable friends, Mr. Joseph and Mr. Lefèvre. I don’t dare offer my regards to your good daughter, perhaps later, when she has come to a better opinion of me. May a duly earned fortune etc.””

¹⁴⁰ *Der Schein ist zu sehr gegen mich, als das ich den Versuch wagen möchte, mich in Euern Augen zu entschuldigen.*

“Sacré tonnerre!” Lefèvre exclaimed. “If the sun ever shone on a scoundrel, then it would be this miserable notary wants to go on a big journey, wants to settle in New York! Sapristi! He will remain in St. Louis, in some gloomy robber’s den. How does he know the venerable friends are living with you?! I am telling you, he has watched us and eavesdropped; he wants us to go away from here, so he can kidnap your daughter again, perhaps unpunished this time. No, Andree!” the hunter exclaimed, while he let his clenched fist drop onto the table so that the entire log cabin shook; “this is not your place here, but California is! In February, we depart from here, in March we will be in Kansas with your son Robert, and on May first we begin our journey to California together!”

Franziska was the first to find words after the trapper’s fierce speech. “I believe, Lefèvre is correct,” she said with a secret terror that Buschmark’s letter had caused her. “And if we are all together, my brother in our midst, the journey can’t hold any dangers, and we can’t fare worse anywhere else than we do here.”

“Yes, Lefèvre is correct,” the *Halfbreed* said now. “Now, since Franziska seems to have decided, I am no longer hesitant to admit that I have considered an emigration from here the best solution for a while. Buschmark’s words may be sincere, but the thought of a new villainy, which after our experience is conceivable enough, would not let you sleep peacefully on this farm. Withdraw thus from his presence, since I also don’t doubt that he is still in St. Louis. Wherever you may go, Lefèvre and I are independent; we will accompany you and not leave before we know your future is secure.”

Thus spoke and thought the *Halfbreed*. He, and Lefèvre as well, came close to the truth when they judged the notary this way; but that Buschmark aimed for removing the Halfbreed from St. Louis in order to destroy¹⁴¹ him with impunity, that part nobody knew. Three motives guided Buschmark's writing of the letter, namely to get the young girl in his power, to take revenge on the Halfbreed personally, and finally, what promised the greatest advantage, to let the son of the planter disappear according to Antonio's and Brown newest, urgent requests.

When Andree heard his young friend speak in this manner, he fell into deep thought. One could see, there was a struggle going on inside him. Finally, he looked up, and turning to his daughter he asked her with an demonstrative voice: "Franziska, my daughter, you shall decide. Tell me, is it according to your feelings and wishes if I decide in favor of the emigration? Don't answer imprudently. Take your time to consider it, like your mother once did when I asked her the same question." And tears came to the dignified man's eyes, for whom the memory opened up a barely closed wound anew.

"Let us travel, let us travel," called the emotional girl, putting her arms tightly around her father's neck. "I don't require any more time to consider. Let us go, God will watch over us!"

"Well, then, my decision has been made," Andree said in a determined tone, while he extended his hands to the hunters across the table. "We are moving to California! May God watch over us and guide us!"

¹⁴¹ *verderben*. Lit. to spoil, here a euphemism for to kill

“Amen,” replied Joseph, Lefèvre and the girl, and from now on the journey was talked about as a decided matter.

16. The Last Will

Yellow fever had ravaged New Orleans. Throughout the entire autumn, scores of people had fallen victim to this dreaded epidemic; thousands had fled, following the Mississippi upstream or deep into the country’s interior; circumstances prevented many more from leaving the city, and they walked around gloomily, fearing to fall victim to the deadly disease at any second, and there were few people who were not touched by the sad times and continued living in their old, usual manner.

December had already advanced, and light frost at night cleaned the atmosphere, the refugees were for the most part returning again, but yet, one heard of single cases where people, smitten by sudden malaise, expired¹⁴² within a few hours.

Moving around in public places, one could easily see to what extent the epidemic had affected everything¹⁴³ in that city where a human life didn’t generally count for much.

One could see many people who wore clothes and emblems of mourning and attempted to console one another by descriptions of their own loss. Someone had lost his parents, the other his siblings; this one his friend, that one mourned his acquaintance; the countenance of some individuals was marked by the most sincere pain, in others one could discover, despite the black mourning band, a certain

¹⁴² *den Geist aufgaben*

¹⁴³ *in alle Verhältnisse eingriff*

satisfaction, that at times found its cause in a pretty inheritance, or in the coquettishly-cut, becoming¹⁴⁴ mourning suits. All showed a hint of wellbeing that came from the fresh, clean air, which was already considered especially cold at three degrees, and, depending on the mood of the individual, influenced the expression of the physiognomy more or less.

On Newfort's plantation, one could only mourn the loss of money, since, despite all caution, the merciless disease had crept into the Negroes' huts, and the entire damage could be almost twelve thousand dollars, even if one only estimated the old and the young at mediocre prices. In any case, enough to ruin the mood of a woman who likes to spend a lot of money for several days.

Newfort himself was less concerned about the loss because like a cattle rancher who considers it understood that a herd will be decimated once in a while by epidemics, and takes comfort in "where there is action, there is waste,"¹⁴⁵ the wealthy plantation owner consoled himself easily over the misfortune. Of course, he pitied one or the other strong, young Negro who had gone to his grave too early, and who could have worked at least three or four more decades; and perhaps he thought that instead of one of his best slaves he would have rather lost two white overseers, because the latter existed in abundance and were easily obtained through an

¹⁴⁴ *coquet geschnitten, gut kleidend*

¹⁴⁵ "*das da, wo etwas vorhanden ist, auch nothwendigerweise Abfall sein muß*" an instance of what is perhaps a literal, or a mistranslation of "Where there is action, there is waste". The German proverb would be *wo gehobelt wird, da fallen Späne* (lit. planing produces chips).

advertisement in the paper, which cost at most half a dollar, while a good Negro could be assumed to be equal to a sum of twelve hundred dollars.

But he did not engage in such annoying thoughts more than any other reasonable estate owner, who would for the same reasons rather lose all his farm hands than a single horse, or cloak his coachman in a rainproof coat, but only to not have the shiny, expensive uniform spoiled by rain or snow.

At the bottom of his heart, Newfort was not a bad man; he was only influenced to a high degree by the genuinely American prejudices, and would have certainly kept a warm heart, if it had not become a habit in his position as a slave owner to regard any darker colored skin as not equal. A habit that easily squelches all noble feelings, all tender sentiments, as thousands of examples show. However, there were times during which he sincerely wished to be able to call a child his own, even if only a half-Indian, but in this instance his milder feelings were only in regard to this one particular case. Unfortunately, before they could take hold, such sentiments were immediately nipped in the bud by his wife, who astutely understood how to restore full prominence to the prejudices that had arisen partly through continued association, partly through inheritance.

If the planter had known that it was his son who had been turned away from his door; had he known what traps had already been set for the young man, and still did, he would have loosened the ties with indignation, in spite of his ailing state, fetched the *Halfbreed*, and felt proud of him. But now, when a strong incentive was lacking, he was weak and without will, and yet he was feared; for he might receive

elucidation from somewhere, or on accident, which would collapse Antonio's and Brown's entire artificial scheme.

Lonely Newfort sat in a tastefully furnished room on a heavy, upholstered rocking chair. Pensively he looked at the small, blue flames, which danced over the wood-glow in the wrought iron stove. His thoughts wandered far back, back to his youth. Oh, how different was it back then when he had visited the Far West at the height of his strength! Now he was aged, aged early by the unfettered, unwise indulgences of an opulent life. Was there any joy left for him? He envied the slaves their health and good mood that made them sing their cheerful songs, even in the face of the looming bloodstained whip. What he would have given to be this joyful! A tear rolled across his hollow cheek. He considered his wife whose only task it was to nurse him; and she nursed him with the devotion of an angel. How could he reward this dedication? "Yes, Browns is correct," the old planter spoke to himself, "when he draws my attention to the fact that according to the laws of nature, my wife will survive me. Good man Browns, he delays my demise for quite a while yet, as if I didn't know that a condition like this when barely anything but medicine passes my lips can't last too much longer. He is correct in observing that after my death my relatives will challenge my wife—the only creature who cares for with self-sacrificing love—for the ownership of my property, unless I make legally binding provisions while I am still alive. Yes, I will draw up a testament. It will comfort me to be able to say that I took care of my wife to the best of my ability. The poor woman, it will move her deeply to hear of my intentions from Browns; I couldn't do it. And to

make the last will in secret? How could it have been possible since she hardly leaves me an hour a day; and how I had to convince her to accompany Browns on his walk through the grounds.”

Thus spoke the ailing planter to himself and pensively observed the small, blue flames, which danced over the wood-glow in the wrought iron stove.¹⁴⁶

At this hour, Mrs. Newfort, at the side of the deceptive Browns, peregrinated the charming pleasure grounds that bordered the villa on all sides. In spite of the winter [climate], trees and bushes were resplendent with the most beautiful foliage, which was given an even more picturesque appearance by the red and yellow hues the nightly frost had left behind.

The strolling two people were so engrossed in what was for them an apparently important conversation that they hardly noticed how the sun disappeared behind the dense forests across the Mississippi, and the shadows of dusk fell on the forests and the fields.

“Believe me, dear Browns,” the Cuban woman said after having listened to her companion's long speech, “believe me, I am touched when I think about how much Newfort strives to secure my future, even though we conceived the plan to make a will. He wouldn't do it if he knew about the relationship that we have been entertaining for years now.”

¹⁴⁶ The sentence in fact appears in this repeated manner the original as well—the only change is from *blicken* (to look) to *beobachten* (to watch, to observe) in the second sentence that closes the scene.

“You are wrong, dear friend; your husband is not without feeling, he doesn’t forget what he owes you for the long period you spent nursing him. He believes his end is closer than it actually is, and only wishes that after his passing you as the absolute heir of his entire fortune would be able to satisfy your desires and at the same time remunerate you for the years you spend at sickbed. But now, sweet friend,” he continued with a meaningful glance to the side, “we are approaching the moment you have wished for so often and so long. And it must certainly be a pleasant feeling to be able to call oneself the wealthiest, most powerful mistress in all of Louisiana, yes, in Havana; to surround yourself with oriental splendor, to be able to live in any given European capital or America, and to be admired and honored. Yes, dear friend, you will be envied and will not remember me, your old companion. But I will seek solace in the knowledge that I have contributed to your fortune, and preserve my devotion until the end of my days.”

The black eyes of the frivolous woman gleamed brighter and brighter as the clever Browns painted such a magnificent picture of the future. When he finished, she had forgotten her sick husband for whom she had had a weak feeling of pity just a short while before; her southern blood coursed faster,¹⁴⁷ and squeezing Browns’s hands with impatience, she exclaimed: “Charles, dear Charles, is this what you think of me? Do you doubt my affection? No, calm yourself; you can’t be more sincere with me than I am with you, and nobody else shall share my fortune with me. But

¹⁴⁷ *Das südliche Blut geriet in Wallung.*

Antonio? Why does he continue to remind me of my promise to make the church my heir? And continuously remind me of my own demise?”

“You misunderstand your brother, dear Juanita. His brotherly care is justified.¹⁴⁸ He considers that the will might be contested after Newfort’s death by his relatives, yes even by the *Halfbreed*, and in that case you would have a mighty, invincible protector in the church. But don’t worry about such matters for now, continue to assure him that you will keep your promise, and if he wishes go ahead and record beneficence. Your brother and I will make sure that the document will not be recorded in an entirely legally binding manner; unless your puerile piety and devotion to the blessed¹⁴⁹ religion, which makes me into a prophet already, changed your disposition over time.”

Mrs. Newfort had become contemplative; it appeared as if she was having doubts about the sincerity of Browns words since she brushed her brow several times with her white hand. Browns perceived it with terror; he felt that it would be his final blow if the victim slipped away, and hence he sought to direct the conversation to other topics. He tenderly pressed his companion’s arm against himself and asked—in order to conceal his own disconcertment—whether she felt ill and wanted to return home.”

“Not ill,” Mrs. Newfort replied, “it’s the nightly chill that makes me uncomfortable and gives me goose bumps from time to time. I also felt lightheaded a

¹⁴⁸ *Es ist nur eine gerechte Fürsorge, die er euch als Bruder schuldet.*

¹⁴⁹ *alleinseligmachend* lit. means it alone brings blessings.

couple minutes ago, but only as I thought about the future you painted fairy-like.¹⁵⁰

—You think then that the Halfbreed could take his foolishness so far as to contest a legally binding will?”

“Certainly, dear Juanita, and even further, if there is even the slightest hope for success.”

“Where is he currently?”

“In St. Louis, where he is considering moving to California with a German emigrant family.”

“To California? Even better. He will no longer interfere, and you will no longer find it necessary to speak of harsher means, which you want to use against him. Certainly, he is only an uncivilized being,¹⁵¹ but I have to admit that I would feel regret to have contributed to the demise of the young, beautiful man.”

Browns bit his lip, since too often had he heard the passionate woman call the *Halfbreed* a beautiful man. He collected himself immediately and answered with feigned indifference in his voice: “If nothing has happened to the Halfbreed so far, so does this satisfy your wishes no more than mine, even though he might arrive here at any moment to our greatest detriment. I doubt very much that he will be safe in the future. That is to say, he made enemies in St. Louis by arranging the storming of a house in which a young girl that was as little his business as she is ours was supposed to be.”

¹⁵⁰ *feenhaft*

¹⁵¹ *ein Wilder*

“I didn’t know he was capable of something like that. But he is half savage, and one has to excuse such people. But let us hurry, the feeling of dizziness has come again, my head is beginning to ache, and the night air is becoming more and more chilly on my body.”

Heavily, as if she feared a loss of consciousness, Mrs. Newfort leaned on her companions arm, who, almost carrying her, hastened his steps. The conversation fell silent, and the woman only mechanically moved her feet, which were unable at this point to bear the burden of her frame.

Gasping and beset by mortal terror about the Cuban woman’s condition that threatened to topple his plans with one blow, Browns reached the entry door to the villa. When he began to climb the stairs, Mrs. Newfort’s last strength left her, and with convulsive twitching she collapsed on the first step, but without uttering anything but a deep sigh.

Realizing the impossibility of carrying the ill woman any further by himself, Browns now called for help, whereupon in the next second from all doors Negroes with lamps and lanterns rushed to his side and in their usual noisy manner inquired for the reason of the unusual call for help. But as soon as the glow of the light fell on the countenance of the unconscious woman, everyone dispersed suddenly with loud wailing, except for two grey-haired servants. They had realized that the yellow fever, which they assumed had disappeared, had returned to the plantation and claimed their mistress as its first victim.

She, whose glance once made hundreds of slaves tremble; she, whose garment her slaves once kissed in animal-like submission, now laid there helpless, a picture of terror and disgust for her own subordinates.

And indeed, she must have caused terror in anyone who did not know the terrible disease intimately, since her otherwise pale complexion had transformed itself rapidly into wan olive-green, and her eyes were blood-shot, while her limbs twisted as if in she was in unspeakable anguish.

Mute with terror the two Negroes stood in front of the woman, and mute with terror Browns stared at the woman, who had been more his victim than his accomplice, and—he couldn't conceal it—who was about to go to her final judgment.

A loud, wailing cry wrested itself from her breast, a similar cry answered from the door to the hall, and when Browns turned around, he saw Newfort, who, supporting himself on two canes, had slowly walked over.

“The yellow fever!” called the two servants who were able to speak first.

“Why do you stand here gaping?” Newfort answered, barely able to keep himself upright. “Bring her inside, your poor mistress. Oh, God, my God! And I'm unable to help! Browns! My only friend! Make sure that she is handled carefully and be brought inside! Send an overseer with the fastest horses immediately for the doctor, maybe she can still be saved!” And as if these orders had sapped his last strength, the distressed planter sank onto one of the cold marble benches, and again and again he uttered the words: “My God, that I have to still witness this.”

Meanwhile, Browns had with the assistance of the two Negroes brought Mrs. Newfort to her room, and watched with sorrow the deterioration the illness in her countenance and her entire body. He held her hands in his, and over and over again he pleaded with her in a desperate tone of voice to open her eyes and just utter one word of recognition to him.

But an hour passed, before the woman who was fighting death regained consciousness, and even then, she only made it obvious by uttering a loud cry, which was followed by the words: "Forgive me, Newfort, I am dying, and I am dying a traitor."

"Don't die, don't die!" the planter exclaimed, bending over his wife upon hearing her self-indictment. "Don't die! Oh, don't leave me alone!"

Once more, half an hour passed without anything being audible in the room except the sounds of pain.

The black servants had retired; Browns on the other hand sat in the corner and regarded the scene in front of him with horror. But it was neither the woman's physical suffering, not the husband's pain that caused such violent feelings,¹⁵² no, it was fear of a contagion, it was the fear that the dying woman might still make revelations to her husband, and even more than this, the thought that his long-held hope for riches now vanished and that he would fall victim to the arbitrary will of the priest entirely. His gaze fell on the black lips of the unfortunate woman, and as often

¹⁵² *ergreifen*, to seize

as they opened to utter words or wailing sounds, he trembled noticeably, as if he were to receive his death warrant in them.

The ill woman finally appeared to calm down, but Newfort didn't nurture false hope. He knew yellow fever too intimately and thus knew that this was the quiet that preceded death; he was prepared to watch her take her last breath¹⁵³ any moment.

After a while, Mrs. Newfort looked at her husband with dull eyes.

"Newfort," she began with a soft voice; "Newfort, I am dying! But it is fine.¹⁵⁴ You won't be alone. In these last minutes of my life, I want to try and atone for how I have wronged you. Listen to my words carefully, since time is running out. You have a son, it is the Halfbreed who was turned away from your door four months ago!"

"Stop it, dear Juanita!" said Newfort, who thought she was having visions.

The ill woman could guess his thoughts, since she pointed to a small locker at the height of their heads, instead of making more reassurances. "There, in the locker, when you open it, you will find two drawers full of letters. One is filled almost entirely; they are letters which concern my life and will give you proof of my guilt. Don't read them, but burn them; when I am no longer here, even the proof of my guilt has no value. Be satisfied with the fact that while dying I asked for your forgiveness from the bottom of my heart, and regard it as a just punishment that I had to end my life in this terrible manner. Burn the letter thus, so that they may not cause any more bitter feelings in you and you will think of me in kinder ways. — I was reckless, I

¹⁵³ *den letzten Seufzer austossen zu sehen.*

¹⁵⁴ *gut so*

betrayed you, but I regret it, I deeply regret it. Forgive, oh, forgive me!” at this point she closed her eyes once more from exhaustion.

Newfort heard the self-indictment. But he only had pity for the pain, which his wife apparently suffered to the highest degree, and thoughts of the impending separation. His hands still held hers, and tear after tear ran over his hollow cheeks. He had no reason to complain about negligence on her part; why should he thus be angry at a time like this, and perhaps even over offenses that were figments of her imagination?

Browns on the other hand sat in the corner trembling and shaking. He would have loved to retreat to somewhere else, but an irresistible force kept him as if he were tied; he had to know how far the revelations would go. As soon as the dying woman closed her mouth, he wished with his whole heart that she might never open it again, that it might have been her last word.

After a drawn-out interval, and when the two men already believed that they would not see the ill woman regain consciousness, she suddenly sat up. Her eyes were half-broken,¹⁵⁵ and her countenance, which had appeared full of vitality just a few hours ago, was terribly distorted.

¹⁵⁵ *Ihre Augen waren halb gebrochen*. A term translated literally here. Although it is beyond the scope of the present work to explore it further, the notion of the “half-broken eye” echoes the work of the German polymath Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-1894). Helmholtz, who trained as a physician, invented the ophthalmoscope in 1851 and was brought to the University of Bonn as chair in anatomy and physiology in 1855 by Alexander von Humboldt. By the time Möllhausen published *der Halbindianer*, he was very likely at least familiar with Helmholtz’s 1856 work *Handbuch der physiologischen Optik*, a work that ushered in a new scientific

“Newfort!” she called, “in the other drawer there are only two letters. They were addressed to you many years ago; they are from the missionary who raised your son to be a decent human being. I withheld them out of jealousy; later though, I will be frank, I feared to be replaced in your heart and also in your will by your child. I hated the child without knowing him, because it was brown. Forgive me! Newfort, forgive me! You will find proof in the letters that your child is alive! Find the *Halfbreed*, find him fast! He is surrounded by danger. Browns, who has always called himself your friend, Browns, who has your trust, Browns, who with a pale—face—over there—God in heaven, have mercy on my soul! Jesus—Maria—Joseph — — —”

The Cuban woman fell on her bed, and only sounds of sorrow from her mourning husband broke through the silence of the death chamber.

Juanita Newfort had ceased to suffer; she had unburdened her heart through a full confession to her husband, but she had died too early to warn him of her accomplice, whose entire criminal intentions she had probably only become aware of at the last minute.

After Browns had reassured himself of the unfortunate woman passing, he regained his composure entirely, and with his usual cold-bloodedness he felt the desire to even interpret the last words of the dead woman to his advantage and to act as much as possible in Antonio’s best interest, and hence in his own.

approach that sought to reject nonphysical vital properties and instead grounded anatomy and physiology more firmly in chemistry and physics.

His musings were interrupted by the entry of the doctor. The latter, however, just stayed long enough to ascertain the Cuban woman death and to prescribe the usual methods in order to prevent further infection; then, with Browns's help, he lead the ailing planter to his room and urged him to observe the utmost physical and mental rest.

When Newfort perceived himself to be alone with Browns, he gave him his hand.

"You heard Juanita's last words," he began; "she called you my friend, my friend who had my unlimited trust. She was right, dear Browns. It is our turn now to execute her wishes, just as she ordered it. Consider it thus a proof of my trust if I ask you to fetch the locker and help me destroy what according to my poor wife is proof of an offence against me. It will be a certain comfort to me to have obliged immediately. When it comes to finding my son, my wife's second task, which gives me a certain woeful pleasure, you will likely have to be my sole support. But let a couple of days pass before we come back to this issue, and if I didn't misunderstand Juanita's last words and looks, you are able to give me further information about this."

"That you have a son," Browns replied, "and that it was even your son who was turned away from your door so rudely once, your late already wife told me already several days ago. Tonight however, while I was preparing to speak to her regarding your testament according to your decision, she approached me with the urgent plea to reunite father and son. She knew your prejudices against the brown

race and thus feared that the news might leave you unmoved; and yet, she hoped that it would make you happy in light of her own childlessness to know that someone who has the right to carry your name is alive. The young man presumably is at the upper Missouri once again, where he is engaged as a fur trapper. However, in light of the new information which I received from your wife tonight, I want to ask for your permission to have my acquaintances and business associates conduct inquiries about him without delay!”

“Do that, do that, dear friend! You don’t know, you can’t know how much in debt to you I am for this. The poor, faithful woman! If she only could have seen how I will take my son into my heart with sincere love, despite the brown color.”

Sad, the planter looked down. With the knowledge of having a *Halfbreed* for a son, milder feelings for the colored races had entered his breast, but it would take a period of contemplation to conquer the deep-seated prejudices entirely; because even in contemplation of his wife’s death, he could not consider his so ardently wished for heir without at the same time considering his skin color as well.

After the interpretation of Mrs. Newfort’s words to his benefit, Browns, the obdurate miscreant,¹⁵⁶ had regained his composure entirely, and thus began to consider his future with a slyness and easiness bordering on impertinence. He had not derived a certain plan yet, since the design of one always hinged on coincidences, but in the meantime he meant to remain in Newfort’s confidence, and foremost to destroy the letters, which could only contain his and Antonio’s correspondence. He had to

¹⁵⁶ *verstockte Bösewicht*

admit to himself that Mrs. Newfort, whose conscience awoke at the last minute, would not have painted a nice picture of him for her husband if her life had been only five minutes longer, and that when she urged the burning of the letters, she was less looking out for him than for her brother, in which case her sisterly ethos prevented her from antagonizing her husband further against him.

Newfort, distressed over the initial sorrow of his loss was ready to destroy the letters. But would he be tomorrow when sorrow had given way to calm contemplation? Could he not get the idea to inquire about his son in those documents? Yes, the letters must be destroyed under any circumstances.

Without waiting for a second request, which might have likely not been made, he entered into the death room. Indeed he hesitated to approach the woman whose memory he abused for his purposes and trembled when he saw her distorted face; but too much was at stake for him, he had to act.

Keeping his eyes fixed firmly on the locker, he walked past the body; not without effort he picked the locker up from the table and then hurried back to the planter, where he set the weight down in front of the fireplace.

Newfort woke from his dim brooding when he heard the sound of the approaching man. "Oh, well, the letters," he said as if distracted, and handing Browns the small key his dying wife had placed in his hand, he asked him to unlock the compartments and to give him the two separate letters. Browns did as asked, and after Newfort had convinced himself that they were the correct ones, he prompted his companion to begin with the destruction of the remaining papers.

There the two men sat silently by the fireplace. Their features soon appeared to be glowing in dark red, then covered in deathly pallor in the changing light, depending on how the small blue flames from the bituminous coal or the flickering paper cast their light on them. Their gazes rested on the light ashes that were driven into the chimney by the draft, and only Browns showed signs of life as he bent down, took up a new letter, and, unfolding it halfway, gave it to the flames.

“I recognize her step brother’s handwriting,” Newfort said once, as if in a dream. “Her whole crime was that against my wishes she communicated with the insidious priest, who once, like an evil spirit, came between us and created strife. Poor Juanita! If that was the extent of your crime, you didn’t have to worry about it and torture yourself with it. He was your brother and I forgive you with my whole heart!”

Browns placed the letters he recognized as his own onto the coals a bit more carefully. He would have liked to conceal one or the other of Antonio’s letters on his person, but he couldn’t risk it, since Newfort mechanically followed every strip of paper with his eyes from as soon as it was taken from the locker to the fire, but certainly not from suspicion. In the meantime he was content to watch one after the other that could have still caused suspicion disappear.

“This is the last one,” he finally said to Newfort, who was roused from his gloomy deliberations as if he were frightened.

“Well then,” replied Newfort, and a deep sigh rose from his chest, “may I be able to fulfill her last will regarding my child as well. I can only think of her with the

most sincere love because she was a faithful and loyal wife. Oh, I wish I could have placed my ailing body in that grave instead of hers! But Browns, you won't leave me at a time of sorrow, you will help me bury my wife, and bestow the last honor on her, together with me."

Browns did not answer; his thoughts were occupied with entirely different matters, but with feigned emotion he gave the planter his hand, which Newfort squeezed warmly and sincerely.

During that night, sleep escaped them both.¹⁵⁷ The loss of his wife had touched Newfort too unexpectedly, too heavily for him to find rest. Browns on the other hand was kept awake because he was redesigning his schemes. An idea had appeared in his soul, for whose realization he required the advice and the assistance of the cunning priest. But Antonio was in California where he held the pious position of a missionary, and months could pass before he might receive orders of conduct from him. A matter like this on the other hand demanded no delay, and he had to act quickly if the enormous wealth was not to be lost for him and Antonio.

At daybreak, Browns felt clear about it. His plan was meticulously thought out and could not fail. He could count on Antonio's approval and at the same time on a larger portion of the robbery, which he alone would receive. In light of this conviction, his doubts and worries about the future vanished, and in the next few days he could direct all his attention to appear to Newfort in a manner that was most conducive to his plans.

¹⁵⁷ *Der Schlafloh in dieser Nacht die [sic] Lager beider.*

A few days later, three days before Christmas that is, Buschmark received a letter with the stamp: New Orleans, which was signed “your always faithfully allied B.....”

At present, he was in the tavern Hungry Belly, where, robbed of her former splendor, Miss Sally had taken over the inn at the side of the eternally inebriated Kendrick, when his secretary gave him the letter marked “express.”¹⁵⁸

Buschmark, who seriously considered leaving the city of St. Louis since his name had gained such notorious fame there, had for this purpose already discreetly directed his treasures to be at his disposal, and had become a regular guest at this ill famed place in order to remain in hiding. His life was certainly not a pleasant one because if Miss Sally didn’t argue with him and reproached him bitterly for the failed undertaking, then he could always count on being tortured with her complaints about the twins’ shameful behavior. The two had barely left her as much as was necessary to pay her most pressing creditors, if she didn’t want to take up involuntary residence in the debtors’ prison.

In the meantime, he endured such inconveniences with stoicism because he wished that his stay remained unknown.

He usually countered Miss Sally’s laments with unshakable equanimity, and if the reproaches directed at him threatened to turn into a serious assault, he calmed the raging shrew by giving her a few dollars, while he never failed to add a confession of his own truly destitute situation.

¹⁵⁸ *cito*, lat. last, quickly

When he received the letter, no one else but him and Miss Sally was present in the tavern. He thus sat down in a corner where no one could look over his shoulder and began to read with growing interest:

“Dear Buschmark, Mrs. Newfort’s unexpected death, of which I wrote to you in my last letter, has, if the matter is handled correctly, come at just the right time for us. Unfortunately, we are unable to conclude the endeavor without Antonio, since he can easily cross my plan, without compromising himself. I have thus acquainted him with the matter as far as necessary and we are thus assured not only of his advice derived from priestly slyness, but also his active help; of course, in exchange for the lion’s share—a fact we can’t fight too much. — But let’s get to the heart of the matter. Write to Newfort at once, telling him that you have inquired about the *Halfbreed*, and that he has gone to California or Oregon, but that you are trying to find out his next location. Do not withhold praise about the young man, and if you can add another, similarly positive testimony from the fur company, which of course cannot reveal his presence in St. Louis, well, that would not be insignificant either. I only need to tell you that now it is a question of receiving a will that favors the *Halfbreed* and sending the fellow himself up the Missouri or anywhere else where he is within our or Harrison’s reach. Whosoever reaches him, certainly secures great advantages. I reserve the rest I mean to tell you for later when I no longer doubt the successful execution of the plan. For now only this: make sure Newfort receives the most positive news about the *Halfbreed*, and remove the fellow himself as far as

possible. My influence over the planter is increasing steadily; I can do anything with him now.¹⁵⁹ Caution and precipitance!!!”

Take note: Should the *Halfbreed* leave St. Louis, write to me immediately; to N—t however send the irrefutable proof that he has gone to California.”

“When he no longer doubts the execution of the plan!” Buschmark spoke to himself with a loathsome grin. “As if his letter hadn’t told me everything! Antonio would have been more careful with his words, but Browns has already learned a lot from the sly priest. His plan is really not bad. —But first the letters; hm, nothing more easy than that, paper is very patient. But to where to send the accursed *Halfbreed*, and in what manner?” and an expression of the most bitter, irreconcilable hatred came on the notary's face. Suddenly, his face lit up. “Wonderful, wonderful!” he exclaimed in a low voice. “Wonderful! I take revenge on the *Halfbreed* and his cranky companion at the same time, I receive the rich reward for the disappearance of certain people, and in one stroke I get the prudish German girl! Wonderful, wonderful! Yes, my reach extends far, it extends as far as to my Mormon friends at the Great Salt Lake, it extends to the goldmines in Sacramento, and that’s where they all shall go, the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre, the girl and all those who are his followers. And what is needed?” he continued, automatically turning his thoughts into words. “And what is needed? A single letter. How lucky that I had them under surveillance. For some time now they have considered leaving the farm because they don’t trust the cunning notary. Yes, yes, Buschmark is clever. They even spoke of California. Wonderful,

¹⁵⁹ *Ich vermag jetzt alles über ihn.*

wonderful! In that case, Lefèvre and the Halfbreed will accompany them. Even better yet! I'm going to write to the old man, ask him for forgiveness for my foolishness, and offer him the farm for half the rent; that will be cause for suspicion, even fear; the coarse Frenchman will squelch the last objections with his simple garrulity. The “crafty Buschmark with his sweet words” will haunt them like a ghost; they will decide, they will depart, and all, all of them will fall into the trap! Oh, wonderful, wonderful!” the insidious scoundrel exclaimed, joyfully rubbing his hands.

“Yes, very wonderful, old scrag!” grumbled Miss Sally who had observed the musing notary for a while from afar. “You have come thus to ridicule me? You, who single-handedly is at fault for my misfortune. But try just one more time to pull your ugly face into a grin and I will knock on your head with this whiskey bottle until either the bottle or your head breaks to pieces.”

“Calm down, beautiful friend,” replied Buschmark, pulling out his money pouch to look for a gold coin in it. “Calm yourself, here is an advance of what I have destined for you once I successfully conclude the business mentioned in the letter. Yes, Miss Sally, one might think where need is the greatest, help is the closest. I would indeed have been worried about my future if this prospect for rich gain¹⁶⁰ hadn't appeared. It concerns the bankruptcy of a wealthy New York establishment, and I will likely have to travel there for a while. But don't worry, Miss Sally; you shall not suffer any want during my absence. But quickly now, paper and quill; I recently gave you that to safe keep!”

¹⁶⁰ *Reicher Gewinn*

Miss Sally, still grumbling, brought the requested items, Buschmark then climbed up to the swallows' nest, and there, under the sparse light of a dim winter's afternoon, he penned the letter that would arrive on Andree's farm on Christmas Eve.

17. The Blacksmith's Shop

Approximately three hundred miles upstream from St. Louis, on the right bank of the Missouri, is the young, flourishing Town of Kansas.¹⁶¹ It is picturesquely situated on a continuous chain of hills that forms the edge of the prairie, and the city's appearance is characterized by the fact that the first houses are situated only a few feet above the river's high water mark, while the major part of the town rises in tiers up the hills and then over them. The view from above is charming: a mighty river populated by numerous steamships, tall forests, graceful clearings, dainty country homes, and half-hidden cabins in arbitrary and appealing order.¹⁶²

But the streets, too, hold many things that demand attention, even though it is less the stores, so characteristic for western America, which are packed with anything one might think of from the fashionable coat to the plows and medicine, from the fat Ohio ham to children's books, but rather the population that exhibits just as colorful a mix in its way¹⁶³ as the stores. There, one can see the wealthy merchant and the elegant company director, the bearded trapper, the half-civilized Potawatomi and the

¹⁶¹ In 1850 the Missouri river landing area of the Kansas Town Company was incorporated as Town of Kansas. Only on February 22, 1853, the City of Kansas was created. Möllhausen's narrative takes place in 1851 when the proper name of what is today Kansas City was still Town of Kansas.

¹⁶² *zu bieten vermögen*

¹⁶³ *in ihrer Art*

serious Delaware, the white man, the Negro, the mulatto, the mestizo, the half-breed, in short human beings of all shades and colors who mingle peacefully, letting it come to a few shots from their revolver or blows from their bowie knife only when they have to resolve a serious dispute.

And this way Kansas can truly lay claim to being a beautiful, promising western town, whose significance increases due to the fact that it is the beginning point of the trail to California; thousands upon thousands gather here yearly to undertake the long journey through the steppes and deserts.

The manufacture and mending of the indispensable wagons and the shoeing of horses and mules has attracted a large numbers of blacksmiths who never lack work and thus have splendid business in those locations.

Approaching the western end of the city, one can hear the cheerful sound of hammers falling heavily onto a chinking anvil. During the time when the emigration takes place most intensely, the hammer sounds do not even fall silent at night, since hundreds of people delay their departure only because there is here a bad axle and there a burst coil, or horses have lost their shoes, and this is pretty much the last opportunity to fix such problems¹⁶⁴ easily and durably.

Travelers count on the fact that if something breaks on a wagon, it usually happens on the first day of the journey, and thus only after a short march they can

¹⁶⁴ *Übelstand*

identify all the flaws that were overlooked on the unloaded wagon, or that possibly only became apparent after the wagon was set in motion.¹⁶⁵

In order to save those who were afflicted by such small mishaps the trip back to town, simply because of the distance, and to be able to ask a higher price for any help (a price increase people were happy to accept), smithies were built every now and then along the emigrant trail for about a day's journey from the town of Kansas, which were often greeted with jubilation by the travelers.

Most of the smithies were almost hidden in dense, graceful groves, which provided protection from the winter snowstorms of the nearby prairie, and where aside from the forge fire wood, grass, and water invited the travelers to rest.

Now, if one leaves the town of Kansas and turns west on the Emigrant Road, then rides briskly for about four hours, one reaches the next-to-last smithy, from which one can already glimpse the endless grass fields by looking through the groves of trees and is able to see the blue horizon unite itself with the green plain within a short distance.

The smithy, if it hasn't given way to a statelier building by now, consists of a spacious log cabin to which the shed with the forge is connected,¹⁶⁶ while the small stable and feed sheds stand wherever the mighty hickory trees allow room for them without having to be cut down. The entire scene, by the way, looks more like a young

¹⁶⁵ *Auch darauf ist gerechnet worden, dass, wenn an einem Wagen etwas zerbricht, dies gewöhnlich am ersten Tage der Reise geschieht, und sich daher nach dem ersten kurzen Marsch alle die Mängel zeigten, die an dem unbeladenen Wagen übersehen wurden, oder auch dann erst zu Tage treten konnten nachdem sie in Bewegung gesetzt worden.*

¹⁶⁶ *sich lehnt*, lit. to lean oneself

farm than a smithy because of the genuinely American fences¹⁶⁷ that enclose it; the high-piled¹⁶⁸ farm equipment and a whole row of working and non-working carriages complete the bucolic appearance of this lonely scene of human activity.

At the time we are considering here—it was in March of 1852, thus three months after Christmas Eve on Andree's farm—nothing of the beautiful greenery that concealed the smithy for most of the year could yet be noticed. Single long snow banks, the last remainders of the most recent storm, cut through the clearings from northwest to southeast with a certain regularity, but that didn't make the lonely smithy with its grey sheds and building less inviting. On the contrary, the white columns of smoke rising continuously from the chimney of the house and the smith's hearth were visible from afar and stood in stark contrast to the heavily clouded, grey afternoon sky, the pale clearings, and the bare little grove of trees and they gave the entire landscape such a peculiar charm that one felt doubly attracted and regarded the spot that marked the center of it all with double the interest.

The smoke whirled cheerfully into the still atmosphere, describing big circles and balling itself into small clouds, and when it finally was high enough to take a good look over the countryside, it disintegrated suddenly as if it was scared by its own temerity. Whoever saw the smoke from afar certainly imagined the groups of people who moved around the fire that was underneath it; and it would have to be a very hardened, or even proud wanderer who, when looking at this cozy shelter while

¹⁶⁷ Möllhausen most likely refers to heavy split rail fences, in which the post has a number of holes into which the rails can be inserted.

¹⁶⁸ *Übereinandergetürmt* or *über einander getürmt*. Lit. stacked on top of one another in a manner that it forms a tower.

expecting a wet, stormy night, would not have felt the desire to spend the next twelve or sixteen hours in front of the warming fire, under a protective roof, rather than out in the open.

Whoever then came close enough to the white houses and white pillars of smoke to hear the sound of one light and two heavy hammers that fell onto the sparking iron in a regular rhythm and perhaps even to notice the heavy sigh of the bellows, which snorted untiringly with inflated cheeks into the glowing coals, would certainly hasten his steps; and if he wasn't entirely without feeling, he would feel a certain twitching in his arms, as if he wanted to step in, take hold of the fourth hammer and cheerfully start to pound, as if he had been born with a hammer in his hand.

The four people who so noisily enlivened the smithy had of course not been born with a hammer in hand; some of them had even only taken up the noble trade a short time ago, but that didn't diminish the force of their blows the least bit, and there could have hardly been another smithy in the world in which the sparks flew more madly, the softened iron bent more easily, and the bellows breathed more deeply than under the hands of Master Bigelow, his eldest son Sidney, the young German Robert Andree, and the spry wife of the master, Mrs. Bigelow.

It was a wonderful sight to behold. There stood master Bigelow, a tall, lean American, with his bare, soot-covered arms. In one hand he held the forging tongs with the red iron that was destined to be transformed into a horse's shoe, in the other he was swinging a light hammer, with which he intermittently struck the emerging

horse shoe on the anvil, then with a light double-stroke on the bright sounding anvil, at the same time he turned¹⁶⁹ the white-glowing iron as skillfully and easily as a goose feather.

Across from him stood his son, a lean, sixteen-year-old boy, and a bit off to the side, the young German, a beautiful, strong figure, and both almost vied with one another to make the old shed quake under their heavy blows.

The Master's light hammer now fell on the anvil three times, the heavy hammers were lowered, and young people watched attentively how the forged rod bent itself into a horseshoe in skillful hands.

“Some air,¹⁷⁰ my boys” called Master Bigelow then, while he held the already cooling iron on the sharp corner of a smaller anvil. Robert let his hammer whiz through the air, and several seconds later the almost finished horseshoe fell onto the barn floor.

“Some air, Mrs. Bigelow,” called the cheerful Master again, while he pushed the rod that he had still in his hand back into the blaze and tested another one, which was already glowing.

“Yes, air!” Mrs. Bigelow answered with a bright laugh, while in doing so she didn't take her eyes off the bellows. “Easy for you to order me around with your small hammer and the bit of turning of the iron!”

¹⁶⁹ *Drehen und wenden* (to turn sideways and to turn over). Both terms are usually translated as “to turn.”

¹⁷⁰ *luftig*

“Come here, Elisa, my dear!¹⁷¹ Take the hammer and the tongs, and play Master of the easy work while I work the bellows!”

“Easy for you to say, William, since you know I am not able to turn the turn the right way, even though I have ten times the strength required.”

“Ha, ha, ha, there you have it, dear! Anyone can pound and blow air, but being able to forge, forge, and forge, that’s what marks the Master, Like William Shakespeare already describes so beautifully in “The Bell.”¹⁷² Master Bigelow had the weakness of ascribing every beautiful poem he had heard of to the English national bard, even if it had translated from other languages, because he had read a number of Shakespeare’s works during his youth and he had found them extraordinarily appealing.

Mrs. Bigelow looked very proud when she heard her husband’s educated words, Sidney regarded him reverentially and wished to be just as educated one day as well; Robert Andree smiled furtively; but when Master Bigelow pulled the hissing rod from the fire and held it on the anvil with the words “forge, forge, forge,” the hammers were raised, the anvil rang, the shed trembled, the sparks flew in a wide circle, and more than once Mrs. Bigelow had to cease working the bellows to remove a treacherous spark that had become caught in her apron.

The new horseshoe wasn’t finished yet and all eyes were still on the anvil, when a young girl of about fourteen years stepped through the open door. The

¹⁷¹ *Herzensweib* (n.), the wife of my heart

¹⁷² The Poem is, of course, Schiller’s famous work *Das Lied von der Glocke* (The Song of the Bell).

similarity of her face easily gave her away as Mrs. Bigelow's daughter, one didn't even have to observe that the girl approached the lively woman, called her "mother," and whispered something in her ear.

"Soon, my child," Mrs. Bigelow answered, letting the handle of the bellows go. "Soon, my child, just wait until the iron has cooled.

The mercilessly pounded iron cooled and turned black, arms rested, and when Master Bigelow wanted to push the rod back into the blaze, then his wife stepped in front of him and told him that lunch was on the table and waiting for them. Due to the short days and the urgency of the work, they weren't able to eat lunch until suppertime.

"Good," exclaimed the Master, wiping the sweat of his brow, an example his two assistants immediately followed. "We will come in a minute and a half. *Tunder and Blixen!* How Robert says in his gibberish,¹⁷³ we were busy today! In four weeks we will have finished enough horseshoes, rings, and such knickknacks to equip a caravan of 500 men and 1000 animals! What do you think, Robert? Isn't it better to be a blacksmith than walk around with a *Schaafschinken*¹⁷⁴(this is what Mr. Bigelow called guns) in your old country, without being allowed to use it, or even to have to lift your hat to every buck and ask him how he is doing and he slept at night?"

¹⁷³ The Master mistranslates *Donner und Blitz* (thunder and lightning) into the names of Santa's reindeers from the 1823 poem "The Night Before Christmas."

¹⁷⁴ The term is *Schapschinken*, a low German 19th century colloquialism for bayonet (*Seitengewehr*). The rhetorical mishap here is that Mrs. Bigelow uses *Schaafschinken*, a nautical term for the mutton sail on a boat.

“Of course, forging is wonderful work,” replied Robert, while he looked at his Master with his big blue eyes, and at the same time removed the soot from his muscular arms, his curly blond hair and equally blond but youthful beard. “It's really nice work, but I wouldn't disregard my gun entirely for it.”

“You will have enough opportunity to use your gun when you are on the way to California, and I hope that you will not use it for anything but shooting buffalo and antelopes, at the most.”

“Why not a grey bear?”¹⁷⁵

“Grey bears too, I mean just no natives. I mean, I don't want to ruin your journey; quite the contrary, not that your decision seems to be made, and your father and sister will be your company, and even some diligent hunters, it is my wish that you begin the trip as well equipped as possible. I truly want to come along—”

“And leave wife and children behind!” Mrs. Bigelow interrupted her husband. “But that's the trouble with men, first they get married and then they lack the patience to stay home with their family. If I were you, I would leave today already, Mr. Bigelow!”

“I would want to see your face if I saddled the brown horse and took you at your word,” the smith replied laughing.

“Go on, go on! Leaving your family is legal grounds for divorce, and there are thousands of men who would be happy to have my hand!”

¹⁷⁵ Robert, who is the son of a veterinarian and a forester by training, is perhaps pulling the Master's leg. There is, officially speaking, no grey bear. The grizzly bear and the black bear were sometimes referred to as grey bear by Native Americans based on whether their fur appeared grey.

“Calm down, wife,” the smith consoled her, putting his arm around her neck. “I am staying here, because you might be waiting a long time until you find such a good man—which I believe I am—as me again.”

“Go away, vain fellow,” Mrs. Bigelow continued to pout, while she endured her husband’s affection with pleasure; “but before you take off, come inside and eat until you are full one last time, it won’t be offered to you later on. Hurry up,” she continued in a louder voice, “so that Lucy’s cornbread doesn’t get cold!” and arm in arm with her husband, she marched to the door.

“Father, mother!” Sydney now called after his parents, “let me tell you how to take care of this matter. Father stays at home, and I will accompany Robert to California instead!”

“That’s right, my son,” Master Bigelow replied halting his steps, “you have courage and I like that. However, don’t think you can even consider going to California before you turn thirty, unless you want me to treat you like a red-hot iron.

Sydney laughed, but he didn’t let on to what was happening in his soul. His mother might have known it in her heart, since, with a voice that was supposed to sound disinterested, but shook in terror over his words, she said to her husband: “Don’t listen to the silly boy, he is still too immature to take this seriously.”

In the meantime, the entire party had convened in front to the smithy and was moving slowly towards the log cabin, when Bigelow suddenly saw a lone rider on a horse who was approaching in a fast trot from the direction of Kansas.

“Hello, children!” he exclaimed cheerfully. “It appears as if we are going to have visitors.”

“Go inside, Lucy, and put another plate on the table,” said the mother, who was just as hospitable as her husband. “Let the children move closer to each other and offer the stranger a place next to father.”

Lucy disappeared through the door, where four younger siblings received her; the others stayed outside to receive the stranger.

“And when can we expect your family?” Master Bigelow asked Robert.

“They might arrive any day,” Robert answered, “since they have been traveling for three weeks.”

“Three weeks?” They should be here already, the smith said. “But the roads are in poor condition, and perhaps the bad weather has made them to rest for a day when they found themselves staying with a hospitable farmer. By the way, the rider appears to be an Indian.”

“I think so, too,” Mrs. Bigelow replied, “and a handsome Indian on top of that.”

“No, he is a *Halfbreed*,” interrupted Sydney, who prided himself on being able to see and identify better than anyone else.

There was no time to continue the conversation, since in the same moment the rider stopped his steaming horse in front of them.

“Welcome stranger!” Mr. Bigelow called out to the rider as the latter politely greeted the assembled group. “Welcome! You arrive at the right time to eat our meal

with us. Dismount; my boy here will stable your horse, and you can be assured that he will take good care of it.”

“I thank you wholeheartedly,” the rider said, placing his gun on the ground next to the horse and then dismounting;¹⁷⁶ and in response to your friendly invitation, I can say that I accept it as offered. Good day, Mrs. Bigelow, good day, Mr. Bigelow,” he continued while extending his hand to the addressed couple. “But good day to you as well, Robert Andree; and greetings from your father and your sister, who are both well and will be here before tomorrow evening.”

“Then you are Joseph, my kin’s good friend?”

“I am Joseph,” the Halfbreed replied, “and I am sincerely pleased to hear that you consider me a friend. We will become even better friends since we have a long journey ahead of us.”

“That you have, children,” the smith said now. “But tell me, Mr. Joseph, have you seen Robert before, since you recognized him at once? I am not surprised that you knew my name since every boy in Kansas can tell you it.”

“I have never seen Robert my good friend’s son before, but since I knew he was working for smith Bigelow, you can’t be surprised that I called the young man with the foreign physiognomy by his correct name. By the way, I would have recognized him anywhere else because he has such a striking resemblance to his sister. You will see for yourself, and I am convinced that as intimately known as

¹⁷⁶ *und sich dann selbst aus dem Sattel schwingend.*

Robert's countenance is to you, you wouldn't pass his sister on the street without speaking to her.

"Gentlemen, don't let the food become cold," interrupted Mrs. Bigelow the conversation of the two men now. "It's been on the table for half an hour already, and we can talk much easier in the warm parlor than out here in the cold air." With these words she linked arms with her husband again and led the small company into the interior of the cabin.

One would require a voluminous book to write down everything that was discussed, negotiated, and recounted that night around the long table. The wife had sought out their best provisions, the Master provided a true American drink, and in this way these innocent people made for such a cheerful circle as it can only come from the conscious fulfillment of one's duty.

It is true that Mrs. Bigelow's attention was often taken up by the four youngest children, who had no inclination to go to bed at the usual time; any attempt to send them off only caused smiles, which in turn reinforced the children's resistance, but without ever ruining the good mood of the housewife, whose thoughts were with the young German woman and who expected pleasant things from the new female companion.

Master Bigelow on the other hand once again waxed lyrically about the old bear hunter and the German "gentleman," who had read Shakespeare and thus must be a scholar, and more than once he assured everyone that his house was spacious enough to hold ten such families, and that it hurt him to the core to think of them

parting again after a few weeks. “But I promise you, Mr. Joseph, and you as well, my friend Robert,” the honorable smith continued, “if I ever put a tire on a wagon wheel, or fit a shoe on the hoof of a horse, it shall happen on the occasion of the preparation of your journey without the expectation for financial gain, and my name shall not be Bigelow if what I make for you doesn’t last until San Francisco!”¹⁷⁷

Long into the night the circle remained by the cheerfully flickering fire and attentively listened to the *Halfbreed*, who gave an exact description of the journey he had undertaken. According to his narrative, the winter weather and the poor road conditions had caused many unpleasant hours, but they were always lucky enough to reach a farm in time to spend the night under a roof. Only twice did they have to spend the night in the woods, where Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* provided as much comfort as nature could offer for Andree and his daughter, so that the two found the nighttime stay under the sky more interesting than cumbersome, and they remembered the journey through the prairie as having a certain tranquility, yes, even a certain delight.

¹⁷⁷ Carriage- and wagon-making was an art that could be learned through correspondence classes from the American Association of Carriage Makers in the 19th century. The wagon was first drafted by hand, and then a woodworker, wheelwright, and a blacksmith would work together to build the carriage. The most delicate part of the carriage, and the one requiring the most highly skilled craftsman, was the making and repairing of the wheel. Repairing a tire for instance not only required exact measurements, but also the heating of the iron tire and then setting it around the wheel, where it was cooled by water to set it in place. Wheels were easily ruined by less experienced blacksmiths who made the iron tire either too loose or too tight on the wheel. Only the most expert smith was able to gauge with accuracy the proper fit. Master Bigelow’s claim that he can make a tire to last until the party arrives in California can thus be understood to mean that he is in fact considers himself to be among the finest smiths in the trade.

When they eventually parted, everyone had grown fond of the *Halfbreed*, and he considered himself lucky to have once again encountered people whose acquaintance warmed his own heart and enlivened his spirit.

“My pious adoptive father would have said that this family is the purest image of western innocence and neighborly love,” thought Joseph as he reclined at ease on the hard but carefully prepared bed. “How excited Franziska will be when I accompany her here tomorrow, and how comfortable her father will be! With how much charity must the young girl have presented me in her letter to the brother to make such a reception possible! —Only six more months at the most will I spend in her proximity, then there is no longer a reason to bother her with my presence. Six months is a long time, and yet, how fast they will pass!” With such considerations, the *Halfbreed* fell asleep. Now, the discussion Master Bigelow and his wife had about him was very, very lengthy, and he would certainly have been pleased if he had known that not even once was his brown skin the issue, and Mrs. Bigelow called him a gentleman so often that the Master at last jokingly wagged his finger at her.

In the earliest hours of the next morning, Robert and the *Halfbreed* were on horseback in order to ride toward the anxiously awaited party and to meet them in the Town of Kansas. Meanwhile, they hadn't reached the town yet, when they saw a sturdy wagon drawn by two horses and a single hunter coming toward them. The *Halfbreed* pushed his horse into a canter; Robert followed his example, and several minutes later the son was once again in the arms of his father and his sister, who both cried tears of joy. Lefèvre regarded this scene without flinching, and said, extending

his hand to the *Halfbreed* in a greeting, in a sentimental tone: “Joe, we never had a sister who might have given us such a warm reception.”

“No, Lefèvre, but we have friends.”

“That’s right, son, friends who kindle the wish in me to live a long time. A magnificent lad, our Franziska’s brother,” he continued, pointing at Robert. The old trapper had taken up the habit in his multiple conversations with Andree to refer to the young girl as “our Franziska.” “The man has a great and powerful physique and will likely enrich our company in a pleasant manner.”

At this moment, Franziska whispered something to her brother, who immediately turned and walked toward Lefèvre.

“Lefèvre,” he called out to him, “I am a child compared to you; but will you allow me to shake your hand wholeheartedly grateful as a friend?”

“As a friend! Yes, Sacré tonnerre!” replied Lefèvre, jumping easily out of the saddle and gave Robert his hand; “but don’t prattle about gratitude; you have no reason for that. I made up my mind to accompany your father and your sister to California; and I want to see the one who can convince me otherwise. But give me your horse, my boy, and climb into the wagon with your family; you probably have a lot to tell each other.”

Robert complied happily, and soon thereafter the small company continued their journey toward Bigelow’s smithy.

In the front rode the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre, deep in discussion about the equipment for which their finances were insufficient. The wagon followed them at a

certain distance. Robert had taken the reins and sat between the father and the sister; he alone talked, and when the half-hidden smithy came and the white columns of smoke, Andree said not without being moved: "Here is where the good people of whom you have written so much and who want to take us in for the next couple of weeks live?"

Franziska didn't say a word; her eyes had come to rest on the *Halfbreed* who had met her brother like a brother. She considered her first meeting with him and the beneficial influence he had on their family since then. An involuntary sigh came from her breast: "How noble he is," she said to herself; "he does good for good itself; what other reasons could he have to sacrifice himself for us poor people?" Thus thought Franziska, whose whole heart was filled with gratitude. Why the thought to be obliged to thank the *Halfbreed* in particular made her so happy, she couldn't explain to herself. She didn't try either, since it seemed so natural to her.

18. The California Emigrants

When people who have a certain similarity of the soul, of character, and of aptitude encounter one another, then they very quickly grow close to one another, and within a short period of time intimate trust develops among them that is the unshakeable foundation of a friendship that last beyond the grave.

And so it happened in honorable Master Bigelow's house, where two families grew into one, but didn't forget to include the two hunters as members.

Yes, it was a joy to watch how these human beings passed the days in beautiful harmony, and how they managed not only to gain a momentary joy, but also to garner sweet memories for life from every common task, every chance encounter, every serious word, and every hearty laugh. How happy was the cheerful Master when instead of the housewife loquacious Lefèvre worked the bellows, and the Halfbreed swung the hammer in unison with Robert and Sydney.

The work ran so smoothly, and old Andree felt so comfortable standing close by, smoking his meerschaum pipe. And when the latter marveled at the mighty blows from the young, powerful people, and the master's dexterity, and perhaps concluded with the fact that he liked his son better with bare, blackened arms than he did at home in his green, fashionable suit: how the master's heart beat faster then when he understood enough of the broken English to recognize a sincere admirer of the smith's art in Andree.

Mrs. Bigelow, who had from the first moment of their meeting recognized young Franziska's exemplary character and her warm, loving heart, didn't feel any less happy than her husband. When she realized that Franziska exhibited an apparently tender affection for her, and yet always observed indescribable modesty and deference, she couldn't do enough for her, and it filled her with pain when she considered the fact that they were to part from one another soon again.

"You are too beautiful and delicate," she often said to her sweet companion, "much too delicate for a journey through the deserts, much too delicate for California itself. I want to keep you with me. Let the men go and you stay here; you can't help

them pan for gold anyway, and if they fare well there, you still have time to reach them in a more comfortable manner.”

“And who shall take care of my father?” asked Franziska then, “who shall keep watch when he is sick and weak, and my brother, who has to provide, is forced to be away from him?”

“So let your father stay with us together with you,” replied Mrs. Bigelow, while she looked in the good daughter’s eyes in a friendly manner.

“You don’t know my father,” Franziska replied, “he is undoubtedly poor, but he has a certain pride you can’t reproach him for. That is to say, he still feels strong enough to work or use his knowledge. As long as he is able to do this, he will never accept a life devoted to inactivity. We have to thank the two noble men, who appear to have made it their mission to help us succeed in the world, for the largest part of the journey’s provisions; and certainly, my poor father wouldn’t be able to die in peace one day if he hadn’t at least made the attempt to repay the debts, which he was forced to incur by an adverse fate. He knows that in the worst case my brother and I would take over his debts as a sacred legacy, but he wants to do something for his children, and that desire keeps him alive.¹⁷⁸ I believe that if he had time to ponder, he would perish under the heavy weight of memories of the many blows of fate he has received. No, no, Mrs. Bigelow, what my father has decided, that must be executed, and until death parts us, my place is by his side!”

¹⁷⁸ aufrecht.

“God bless you, dear Franziska, for your true love and devotion,” said Mrs. Bigelow, while she hugged the girl gently and kissed her pale brow. I will no longer dissuade you from your journey, because I sense that God will reward your sacrificial love with which you care for your father a thousand times over. Oh, that I may one day say the same thing of my children! But I fear that Sydney is already playing with the thought of leaving his parental home; his mind is also set on California.”

“He certainly won’t leave his good mother,” the young girl replied warmly. “The preparations he watches us make may excite his lively mind a bit, but if you think he might carelessly head out into the world at his young age, you are certainly mistaken!”

“A mother’s instinct doesn’t easily err, dear Franziska. The boy has some kind of plan, and it wouldn’t be the first time that a boy his age left his parents.”

Such were the conversations the smith’s wife and the German immigrant girl had, and they brought their hearts closer together.

Franziska’s pleasant demeanor also brought her the esteem of the youngest members of the house, who continuously tried to show through small acts of kindness how much their young hearts liked the “stranger,” who in turn showered them with caresses, the only and best thing she could offer.

The men watched such scenes not without being touched, and when Lefèvre then fulminated in his usual manner and assured the *Halfbreed* by invoking all saints and semi-saints that “their Franziska” was the best girl between the Atlantic and the

Pacific Ocean, the young man felt a happy pride that he was allowed to be in her vicinity until the last worry about her and her father's future had vanished.

Time passed this way in peaceful tranquility. In the morning, one could find the inhabitants of the secluded smithy working busy according to their strength and inclinations and would look in vain for a cheerless face. Certainly, a hint of sadness once in a while showed on Andree's serious countenance when his thoughts turned to the past, and the women showed a wistful expression when they considered the impending separation, but their minds did not at all become disquieted, since the hope for a better future and a happy reunion came like a friendly, comforting angel to each breast, and enveloped the cabin with an air of indescribable contentedness.

The genial gathering suffered a brief interruption when the *Halfbreed* left for two weeks to visit his old nurse Nekoma and the resting place of his unforgettable benefactors in the Council Bluffs.

He found the mission unchanged; and his foster father's apartments had remained unaltered as a sign of special respect, and it brought him comfort when he realized the new missionary, whose lovely wife had accompanied him there, was driven by a particular desire to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor.

Nekoma, drawn close by the missionary's and his wife's pleasant ways, had returned to her former way of life. She once again inhabited her beloved old room, sat with the children in the schoolroom, or sought to make herself useful to the young housewife and was in a sense regarded as a member of the family. The sorrow over her beloved master had considerably weakened her usually black hair had turned

almost entirely white, and the wrinkles that cut through her sharp, wood-colored countenance had become more numerous.

She continuously showed her grief in that she made a daily pilgrimage to the missionary's grave, cowered down cloaked in her blanket, and sang her songs of mourning with a subdued voice.

When she saw her darling, the *Halfbreed*, who had arrived unexpectedly, she displayed her joy in a truly touching manner. She had no words, but tear after tear rolled down her brown, sunken cheeks, and just as in the days when he was a child sitting on her lap, she now brushed the long, black hair from his brow.

“Joseph, if you leave now, look me in the eyes,” the faithful creature said to him while forcefully holding back tears. “Look deep into my eyes, because when you return, I will be resting in the cool earth, by the feet of my good master. I will bring him your regards, he has promised me that I shall come to him where I will find my bludgeoned husband and my children, and what he said, that must be true.”

This way the Indian woman professed her attachment to her foster child. Moreover, as long as he stayed in the mission, she never lost sight of him, as if premonition had told her she would never see him again.

According to the new missionary, Harrison had traveled downstream, without indicating where he might go. Nobody could provide any information about the Pawnee medicine man. The latter had left his tribe entirely; some wanted to claim that he had been bludgeoned by the Sioux, but it seemed more credible to the *Halfbreed* that, as others asserted, he had migrated south to lead a relatively comfortable life of

begging and stealing among the white people, which was in line with his natural inclinations.

As expected, Joseph found the warmest reception in the Omaha village. Wabash Ginga was delighted when he saw the *Halfbreed*; but when he heard the two old hunting companions planned on undertaking the journey to California, he immediately professed his intention to join them, and to cross the prairies together with them. In any case, Joseph pointed out to him that the route led them through the territory of the Oglala, the Sioux, and the Blackfeet, the Omaha's sworn enemy, but Wabash was not deterred. He referred to the fact that he was childless, and since his squaw would accompany him, he would have more than pleasant travels, so that Joseph finally conceded, and did so all the more readily because he didn't doubt that it would be good for Franziska to know another female was present in the party. He determined Fort Kearney on the Emigrant Trail as the point where Wabash would have to wait for him at a set time.

After having warmly recommended his nurse to the missionary one more time, nothing further could keep him in the Council Bluffs, and content with the orders he had given, he returned to Kansas, where, as he knew, everybody was looking forward to his arrival with joy.

The month of April came to its end. Invigorating spring breezes blew over the forests and meadows; the blossoms on the trees opened, shimmering in the most tender green, fine tips of grass pushed themselves out between the old, weathered blades of the previous year, and wherever there was fertile ground, the quiet, eternal

workings of a nature's creative force that had for so long slumbered in winter's sleep, revealed itself.

The frogs awakened and tested their croaky voices; the lizards left their hiding places to luxuriously sun their scaly bodies in the warm sunshine; the forest's tiny, feathered inhabitants chirped as they had a presentiment of the approaching summer, and in long rows broad-winged cranes and geese followed each other, cleaving the clear air with resounding cries of joy, with which made their *wanderlust* known.

In the people, too, wanderlust had awakened, and nowhere did it show itself more clearly than in the Town of Kansas and its surroundings, where this year once again numerous caravans equipped themselves to go to land of their longing and hopes, to gold-bearing California.

Tents stood on the streets and in empty building plots, in the yards and in the surroundings of the city; that is, rather than forming one large, single encampment, there were groups separated by spaces in between, formed by random impulse of hundreds of families according to their needs.

Numerous, like most of the different self-contained small encampments, were the goings-on in them, yes, it would have been difficult to find two families who were similar in their appearance, their movements, or in their conversations — conversations that revealed their educational level.¹⁷⁹

There one could find the merchant equipped with all comfort items, or the speculator who comfortably rested in front of his carefully erected tent, surrounded

¹⁷⁹ *Ihre Bildungsstufe verratenden Unterhaltungen.*

by friends and relatives, while a short distance away a heavily loaded mule-drawn wagon stood in symmetrical order. A somewhat short distance away, one could see a heavy wagon, pulled by two oxen, whose cover formed at the same time the owner's shelter. It belonged to a poor Irish man, who, with his wife and five children—the youngest of which still clung to the mother's breast—hoped to find his luck in the Eldorado of the West. In another spot, there camped a rugged looking band of fellows who regarded wagons and tents as superfluous burdens, and thus carried the journey's necessities on some pack animals. In contrast to them stood some wealthy Mormons, who sought to move a steam engine on ox carts to their holy city on the Salt Lake and thus were surrounded by the appropriate amount of servants, ox drivers, and workers. In the immediate vicinity of the Mormon caravan were two delicate tents, in front of which stood two light, but sturdily built barouches and a single luggage cart. Several Negroes and one white man appeared to be the only inhabitants of this small encampment, but the true owner and main members, of the party, including several ladies, were in one of the inns in town, where they wanted to enjoy the conveniences offered by civilization until the last possible minute. In yet another corner there were two older rough-looking men who enjoyed themselves with a bottle of whiskey and some slices of sliced bacon roasted on the fire. Their leather garb and fur caps revealed them to be western hunters, and their entire equipment consisted of their horses, blankets, long rifles, and the required ammunition. They regarded the journey as a business matter, and only went along as far as the opportunity offered itself to trade fresh venison for hard cash with the emigrants.

One could also find two travelers on foot; without means to equip themselves extensively, they had supplied themselves with a handcart and a light tin stove, and they took turns transporting the latter. They counted on the regions devoid of wood where the renting out of the stove, which required only a little fuel, would bring them rich gains.

As colorful as the various encampments were the people that mingled in the streets and in the inns, among the tents and open spaces; but what filled everyone's spirit equally was the joyful hope for the future, and it manifested itself here as cheerful song, there as loud joking with a full cup in hand.

Livestock was herded to the pasture; horses and mules reared under the keeper's spurs and crop; wheelwrights and smiths fixed wagons; porters and workers carried loads and provisions to be stowed on wagons; children played their merry games; dogs barked and, sometimes arguing and bickering and sometimes drinking to brotherhood, whole groups of Young America strolled through the tumultuous crowd of people and animals, here bothering people, and there urging them to make haste with crude jokes.

Yes, it was a beautiful time for the Town of Kansas; because money was loose in the pockets of those who believed themselves to be in the country soon where a man only had to lift a hand to gain shiny riches, and who without a second thought they paid the prices asked for everything that looked like it might even remotely add to their comfort in the field.

Older, more experienced travelers might have shaken their heads and smiled with pity when they saw such things because they knew that before the crossing of the Rocky mountains the greatest part of the things many travelers now considered worth their weight in gold would be thrown away as useless; but what good would it have done to give advice where everyone thought to have made the most purposeful arrangements?

One steamship after another landed and unloaded emigrants; the number of ferries had to be doubled in order to bring those coming from the east to the right bank of the Missouri, and long wagon trains, which had regarded the stream as a sort of guide, came from the south. The traffic snarl in and around Kansas had thus not yet reached its climax as the influx continued, but not one single caravan seriously thought of departing before May first because of the still existing shortage of grass.

In order to prepare themselves better for their departure, many groups had set up camp on the Emigrant trail itself, and far from Bigelow's smithy one could still see white tents, canvas-covered tents, large herds of cattle, and the smoke of numerous camp fires.

Andree's expedition had completed its equipment, not as noisily as in Kansas, but with more care and forethought. According to a general wish, Lefèvre had taken on his position as the journey's coachman, and there was not one single screw on the wagon, not one nail in the animals' hoof he had left uninspected, yes, he even open every little bag and every little box that contained food supplies to convince himself of its quality.

A canvas roof stretched itself over the wagon, and under its cover comfortable seats had been made for Andree and Franziska by cleverly moving boxes, and here Lefèvre even found a tolerable quarter for the night. The remaining men had their hardy horses, and since they didn't need any other roof over their head other than what the wagon provided because summer was approaching, Lefèvre said that nothing that would make their journey into an enjoyable endeavor was missing.

The day of departure finally came. It had been postponed by two days according to Mrs. Bigelow's wishes, and thus the travelers had had the opportunity to watch the emigrant trains that moved past the smithy from early morning until late at night.

And how cheerful and happy did the various companies appear! Naturally, once in a while one could see women with eyes reddened from crying and men who looked serious; but the reason was their departure from home and separation from beloved and dear kinfolk. But only a few realized that the harshest losses and the most severe blows of fate would seek them out on their journey,, and when they thought of it, they refrained from sharing that with others. There was time enough to wail and cry when misfortune really struck.

A group of horsemen with pack mules approached the smithy; they all were young folks who commemorated their departure from home by singing the song of home known to every American with their strong voices.

“Home, home, sweet home,” it echoed across the prairie in a melancholy manner, and almost simultaneously Franziska’s and Mrs. Bigelow’s eyes filled with tears, since she, too, was far from the soil where her cradle had once stood.

“Home, home, sweet home,” the singers repeated with a subdued voice. Andree heard and understood the words. Silently he looked over to the riders, keeping his hands folded, and if he thought something at this particular moment, it was a devotional prayer, rising to heaven from the bottom of his heart. Joseph humbly stepped back. He wasn’t ashamed to make it known that the song touched on the most hidden strings in his chest, and the view of his mourning, homeless friends filled him with wistfulness.

“There is only one home!” the song now concluded. But Lefèvre, who heard loud sobbing during these words, quickly turned around and looked at the smithy’s smoking chimney as if he wanted to discover something new about it. He didn’t want anyone to see his eyes, and to suppress his own emotional agitation, something he hadn’t felt in years, he tried to whistle “*J’aime à revoir ma Normandie*” joyfully.

Wagon after wagon passed, and the singers approached after having finished the last part of their song. They saw the wistful expression on everyone’s faces, and to cheer them up one of them began the funny parody of the known Negro song “Oh! Susannah, don’t cry for me! I am going to California, wash pan on my knee.”

“Good luck on your journey, boys,” Lefèvre called out to the riders, for due to the cheerful melody the hunters softened mood had disappeared as quickly as it had come on. “Good luck on your way! Watch out that I don’t catch up with you!”

“Thank you, thank you, old friend,” it came back; “We can certainly use luck on our way there, better yet an old leather-shirt like you! Quickly then, tack up your horse and come along!”

“Tomorrow I will follow you,” answered Lefèvre, who found the young men’s invitation the most flattering thing they could have told him, “but you must have damn good spurs if you want to arrive in California at the same time as me!”

“Good bye then!” they called back, and went cheerfully on their way.

“Yes, good bye!” the trapper replied, as if talking to himself. “Who knows how many or how few of you will reach the Promised Land; it’s far, and hunger, thirst, and illness are your enemies, but so is your own inexperience.”

Only the *Halfbreed* heard these words, he gave Lefèvre a sign to not continue with his musings and pointed to the girl, who still stood there with tears flowing from her eyes.

The trapper indicated he understood by winking his eyes, and then turning to Andree, he cheerfully exclaimed: “Now then Monsieur Andree, I think we have seen enough of California for today; how about we smoked our pipe for a while?”

Andree obeyed the hunter’s words and walked toward the house by his side. The two women stood by the road for some time still and watched the people who traveled toward an enticing but uncertain destination. The smithy on the other hand kept droning on and on under the heavy blows of the hammer with which the industrious master and his helpers, whom the *Halfbreed* had joined, forced the iron into any desired shape.

The following day was a day of mourning for the charitable Mr. Bigelow's entire family. But even the departing ones were deeply moved when they shook hands for the last time to take leave and heard the heartfelt wishes of the family members they were leaving behind. They had spend happy days in the lonesome smithy, and their hearts felt more than abundant gratitude for those who had not only received them with great hospitality, but had even kindled a sort of feeling of home in them. They carried sweet memories with them, memories for life.

"Forward then!" Lefèvre exclaimed finally, clearing his throat and saying that the entire emotional scene took too long, but in reality he feared being overcome by emotion himself. Andree cracked the whip, the wagon began moving, and soon it turned onto the wagon road into which so many before it had turned, and so many would follow after.

Bigelow, who couldn't be kept from accompanying his friends a bit on the first part of the journey, rode in front of the wagon alongside Lefèvre, while the *Halfbreed* and Robert stayed alongside it. Nobody spoke; everyone's thoughts were too occupied with the future, which lay in front of them as if cloaked with an impenetrable veil.

In the meantime, Lefèvre and Bigelow appeared to have engaged themselves in an increasingly more serious conversation, because not once did they look back to the wagon where all eyes were mechanically fixed on them.

The conversation was certainly important enough to demand the trapper's and the smith's full attention since it concerned the latter's elder son.

“I assure you, I am worried about the boy,” Bigelow said to his companion in the course of the conversation. “He has some sort of plan, because as much as he used to talk about a journey to California back in the day, you, too, must have noticed that since you arrived at the smithy he has avoided at all costs any mention of his desire to travel. I am telling you, the boy will want to leave me and follow you.

“Hm,” replied Lefèvre, “I deem Sydney to be a reasonable, nice boy, who has the physical constitution to make the journey to California quite easily, and I really don’t see the harm if one day he takes off to seek his luck in the world.”

“You are right, if I could only be sure he won’t regret such a step, I would never withhold my blessing, but on the contrary, would make sure he was fully equipped. If he has decided and has enough energy to withstand life’s turbulence, he shows it by turning his back on his father’s house, where he only experienced goodness, where he was loved as only a child can be loved. If he gets into difficult situations, he has only himself to blame. He will then return to his mother’s mourning bosom, or seek to fight destiny with doubled intensity. I can’t lock him up, since I don’t want to break his lively spirit; but I can’t encourage him by saying: go with our friends and learn from them. But I can do one thing, and that shall happen: I can give you my blessing. – If am not mistaken, the boy will meet up with you in three days, which is when it will be already too late to send him back. Know now, old friend, what I am about to tell you. When Sydney thus arrives, try to persuade him to go back; that is not you, because I know you well enough to know that you will receive my boy with open arms, but Andree, Franziska, and the *Halfbreed*. But if the boy

remains determined, give him this letter. Don't worry, don't worry," Bigelow continued when Lefèvre acted as if he was going to give him the letter back, "don't worry, there is not one harsh word in it, I only try to express my love and blessings this way, and my pleas and adjurations to never leave the path of righteousness. At the same time I have asked him to not separate from the Andree family because he can only learn positive things from them."

"By God," the old hunter burst out, "if I had a dozen sons, I wouldn't ask anyone but you to raise them. I would feel comfortable that they appear to have free will and their spirit wouldn't be suppressed."¹⁸⁰ But you can trust us; we will look after the boy like the apple of our eye, upon my good name.¹⁸¹ By the way, a bit of misfortune is the best school for any young man. *Sapristi!* If he was only here already!"

"You forger his mother's tears if he decides to really join you."

"True enough," Lefèvre answered, while he combed through his straggly beard with his hand. "There is no way to save your wife from tears and yet let the boy come with us?"

"I fear there is no cure but time. I may be wrong though, and he may not consider at all rushing head first into the unknown. But what I have told you here today applies in case he does in fact do such a thing!"

"I understand, I understand, I am prepared and will act exactly the way you asked me to. I am telling you, and your good wife as well, it makes no big difference

¹⁸⁰ *Ihr Geist night geknechtet würde*

¹⁸¹ *so wahr ich Lefèvre heiße.*

whether the boy leaves today or in four years; he is American through and through, and the American doesn't tolerate the parental home long."

"You are correct," Bigelow said heavy-hearted, "I myself ran away from home at age twelve."

"Even a year earlier than I did," Lefèvre said with a self-satisfied smile. "But you should have seen my parents' joy when I came back several years later for a visit. The worries about me had suddenly vanished and given way to great joy. When I left for the second time, they even accompanied me part of the way. The good people, how long since they have passed away [?!]"

Bigelow had become contemplative, and the two men rode next to each other in silence.

At the corner of the forest, the smith finally stopped his horse.

"This is the last point from where one can see my home; let's wait for the wagon and then continue the journey together."

Several minutes later, the rest of the group arrived. They took a last departing glance at the smithy, and then, after a short break, they followed the well-traveled wagon road westward.

The small caravan had turned yet another corner, when barely fifty feet behind them and close to the road, a pile of rotting leaves that the fall storms had gathered under ivy and a heavy thicket began to move almost imperceptibly. The black-haired head of an Indian, who carefully crept forward, became visible; as soon as the trees

and bushes concealed the caravan entirely, the head shot up, and soon thereafter the Pawnee medicine man stood in the middle of the wagon road.

A fiendish joy appeared on the red countenance of the wild creature when his glances followed those whom he considered his victims. He didn't move, so as not to reveal his intentions to the travelers, but instead, as if he was following fleeing game, stepped back into the shadow of the forest, and finally reached the City of Kansas via a long detour.

19. The Potawatomi Family

In Kansas, only a few steps from the main landing area of the steamboats, stands an expansive, two-storied house made of planks that attracts the traveler's attention from afar due its white exterior paint. Its broad gable is reflected in the muddy waters of the Missouri, while the two sides respectively face up and down the river respectively until its next turn and even looking deep into the forests growing along the banks.¹⁸² All three sides have written on them "Inn and Restaurant," and any traveler approaching from St. Louis from the upper Missouri, or from the Iowa side, across the water has his eye caught first thing by the prominent lettering enticing one to stop.

If one then finds oneself in the inn, it is easy to discover that it is not a first class establishment, but in fact with one where the sign is the only inviting thing. The taproom—the most important part—is unclean, the floor and hallways, the rooms are

¹⁸² *schauen in die Uferwaldungen*. The verb *schauen* can be translated as "facing" but also as "looking."

unclean, the furniture and beds, the people one encounters in the house are unclean, and most certainly it follows that food and drink, which during times of high traffic will only be granted on advance payment if one is not carrying luggage, is likewise unclean.

Such circumstances, which present nothing unusual for a certain class of people and even contribute to the highest degree of comfort for them, have a less than beneficial influence on the fruitful business of the inn, since at almost any time of the day one can see the taproom overflowing with guests sitting in dull idleness, yet not without talking politics over a glass of whiskey while smoking their pipe or cigar despite having black wads of chewing tobacco in their mouths, which they roll from one cheek to the other, and whose color is slowly transferred to the walls and furniture due to a less than amusing habit.

It is thus a rather mixed company that enlivens the rooms, and makes it advisable to the guests seeking quietude to look for another inn.

In the western gable room, as far removed as possible from the heaps of emigrants¹⁸³ that encircled the inn, lived at the time of Andree's departure two single men. They paid rent and board in a timely manner, but seemed to have a certain dislike of the tumultuous ado on the streets because they were only seen once in a while during the evening hours enjoying themselves on the banks of the river and extending their walks into the nearby forests.

¹⁸³ *Emigrantenhaufen*

What kept the two men in town was a mystery; or, more precisely, everyone was too busy to turn his attention to other, unknown people. Even the innkeeper didn't care about their whereabouts, as long as they didn't owe him anything, and never even took the time to look at their appearance when they came to him to ask for something.

These two men thus lived in the gable rooms. Dusk had already settled, so that the interior of the rooms was hard to discern. The inhabitants might have perceived the lack of light because one of them was busy attempting to light a small tallow candle with a match, while the other, hands behind his back, was pacing back and forth contemplatively.

The light—quickly generated, but insufficient—appeared to have made the two talkative, since as soon as the man who was sitting by the table had discarded the spent match, his companion suddenly stopped in the middle of the room, cleared his throat a couple of times, and, lifting his bent head, exclaimed in a glum voice: "I hope that that Pawnee scoundrel didn't lead us on. Today is already May third, and the company was scheduled to leave on the first."

"Don't worry, Buschmark," replied the man thus addressed, revealing Harrison's pale, sinister countenance, "I have known the medicine man for a long time, and I am sure of his vengeful feelings against the *Halfbreed* and his old companion. I don't expect treason in this case. They may have delayed their departure for couple of days, and it seems logical that the Pawnee doesn't want to show his colorful face here until he can give a notice of the departure."

"I hope that you are correct," said Buschmark, while he once again began his walking. "You have thus decided to accompany me to the Great Salt Lake?"¹⁸⁴

"Of course I have; I would hate to have to pass on my share of the money after having spent so much time and effort on the matter; I also don't doubt that Antonio expects this next step from me. Yes, Buschmark, I will make the journey to the Mormons under any circumstances; you would consider me a fool if I left the last step entirely up to you, now that the end is in sight. By the way, you should know that my presence at the Salt Lake is just as important, may be even more so, than yours, since it you would hardly be able to manage to win over a man like my old friend Joel for your plans. He is at my service with his entire ragtag band of Indians; but I do concede that you have some acquaintances in the Salt Lake area as well."

"Don't overestimate your influence, my dear Harrison," Buschmark remarked, who kept pacing without cease. "At one point, we were obviously convinced that we can only be successful together, and that's why we should not waste our effort on envy or other things that drive us apart. We must do our part, just like Browns and Antonio. Specifically Browns has lately shown a presence of mind I didn't expect of him."

¹⁸⁴ Möllhausen was fascinated by the early Mormon settlers and their journey and would return to them in his novels *Das Mormonenmädchen* (*The Mormon Maiden*) [1864] and *Der Fanatiker* (*The Fanatic*) [1882]. In 1851, when this narrative ostensibly takes place, the Utah territory was really in its infancy. The Mormon pioneers had settled in what they referred to as the state of Deseret in 1847, but the United States refused them recognition in 1850 and established the Utah territory with Fillmore as its capital. Only in 1858 did Great Salt Lake City become the capital, at which time it also became simply Salt Lake City. Möllhausen was not kind in his portrayal of the Mormons, although he did admire their ability--or perhaps tenacity--to irrigate the desert and make it usable for settlement.

"Yes, he came into desperate circumstances after Mrs. Newfort's death; but still, looking back now, the entire matter has taken a more positive turn as a result from it, since we don't have to rely on the church as beneficiary to toss us a bone, but rather the godly Antonio, who will share the loot with us."

"Truly, a significant advantage," remarked Buschmark, contorting his face into his usual grin. "But tell me, do you know what Browns and Antonio's next steps are?"

"I don't know more than you do, which means I read Browns and guess his intentions, but like just as little as you to share my thoughts about it."

"That's praiseworthy of you; in the meantime, it is certain that Browns will send the planter to California via waterway to welcome his son after receiving our secure message about the *Halfbreed's* departure. It is now entirely in our hands to present him with the real *Halfbreed* or his imposter."

"I wonder if Newfort has already legally recognized the *Halfbreed* and made him his heir?"

"According to Browns' last news, not yet, but one can hardly believe that he will entrust the sea with his frail body without giving proper directives regarding his still unknown son."

"Don't consider his body frail, because since he has become stubborn and doesn't need medication anymore, his strength has increased in a for us unpleasant manner!"

"As if I didn't know that! Senõr Antonio and Browns will take care that the planter becomes so frail that after finding his son and validating his last will he will succumb to the burden of the sea travel, and our *Halfbreed* will receive the colossal inheritance without dispute.

While Buschmark was still speaking with his companion, the door opened almost imperceptibly and the Pawnee medicine man slid into the room.

"All go!" he said in broken English, and when the two men turned to him, he repeated: "All go, Joseph, Lefèvre, white squaw, white brother, white father. Also smith went, but smith back home."

"That's good news, Wolf," said Harrison, who found the name "The-Man-Who-Only-Eats-Buffalo-Humps" a bit too long, and hence only addressed the medicine man by the simplified name of his tribe. "Well then, Wolf, but is it true what you are reporting? Your eyes haven't deceived you?"

The medicine man contemptuously shrugged his shoulders, first considered Buschmark, whom he had only become acquainted a short while before, then looked at Harrison, and then said gloatingly:

"I never lie, if no advantage, if no pay for it. Wolf's eye good. Wolf see what he say. Wolf no tell lie!"

I believe you, Pawnee," Harrison assured him, "you have no reason to betray me, but you have reason to be loyal. Don't forget, if it comes to be what I have asked of you, you shall have so much money as you need to buy a big bottle of whiskey every day."

The medicine man's face contorted into a grim smile when he heard his beloved firewater mentioned; but just as quickly his expression of pleasure gave way to one of anger and animosity when he was reminded of the coming possibility avenge himself for the wrongs the trapper and the *Halfbreed* had inflicted upon him at the *Eau Qui Cours*. His hand felt for the long knife he carried on the right side of his belt, and drawing it from its sheath and pushing it back in, he said with a subdued voice: "I find heart of *Halfbreed* and great hunter. They bludgeon my son!"

Harrison shot Buschmark a significant look, as if he wanted to ask him how he liked the medicine man, whereupon Buschmark nodded approvingly with a satisfied look on his face.

"Wolf," Harrison continued after a short while, "you are as strong as a wolf, but also cunning like a wolf. Your son's spirit shall find peace because you will avenge him and sacrifice many lives for him. But be patient and wait until we reach the Western side of the Rocky Mountains. Haste endangers not only your life, but also your revenge."

Once more Harrison looked with satisfaction at Buschmark in whose countenance the surprise that his companion knew the Indian's character so well as to literally make him his slave had become visible. Turning once again to the latter, Harrison continued: "Remember then, Wolf, to never act without my approval if you don't want to see the whiskey or your opportunity for revenge disappear. But what about Louis, will we meet him tonight?"

"I like whiskey lots," the Indian replied, "but I like more revenge. I fear lose it. I wait for time come. Louis in his wigwam all night; Louis not like you not come. He angry."

"Well then, Buschmark, if that's fine with you, we can speak with Louis tonight and make sure that he really leaves with the Pawnee tomorrow already in order to keep an eye on our emigrants. But when do you plan on departing for the Salt Lake?"

"I plan on the fifteenth, traveling by United States Postal coach. This way, I will arrive at least four weeks ahead of them. That is if Browns, from whom I expect news any day, doesn't ask for a delay."

"Whenever you plan on going, please don't forget to secure my a seat in the coach as well. I will need less than an hour to prepare for departure."

"Fine," replied Buschmark, extinguishing the candle, "let's go see Louis then; I am curious to meet him"

Silently the three men walked down the street, and after making haste, they arrived at the river on whose banks they hurried downstream. They might have walked for about half an hour, when they reached the outlet of a small creek that came from the impenetrable forest and poured itself gurgling into the Missouri.

"Stop!" commanded the medicine man, who had led them all this time. Buschmark and Harrison halted, and soon they watched the Indian disappear into the black shadow of the overhanging trees. After several minutes they heard a slight splashing from the creek, and almost at the same moment a light canoe glided into

sight, which the medicine man steered with a shovel-like rudder and then pulled ashore. After the two men had taken a seat in the vessel, the Pawnee let it drift with the current into the waters of the Missouri, where, dipping the oars alternately left and right, he began to paddle assiduously.

Without a sound, the canoe with its silent crew drifted toward an island, where the Pawnee apparently had picked a small fire as their destination. He approached quickly, and might still have yet been approximately fifty feet away from that point, when suddenly the howling of two angry dogs pacing up and down the bank and seemingly trying to prevent any sort of disembarking could be heard. Even though a voice from the thicket immediately calmed the dogs, the cocking of a gun could be heard, followed by a question in Indian vernacular.

The medicine man must have expected it, since the man asking the question had not even finished when the Pawnee forced his voice into an unnaturally high pitch and gurgled an answer.

A cranky "How" came from the willow thicket on the bank, the medicine man paddled more diligently, and two minutes later the thin branches of beached driftwood crackled under the canoe's bow.

"Closer, gentlemen!" a rough voice called out, whose owner was concealed by the black shadow on the bank.

Harrison leapt ashore with certain agility in his movement, while Buschmark, intimidated by the rough greeting, followed hesitantly and let himself be led by Harrison.

Without paying further attention to the men who greeted him, the mysterious stranger approached the medicine man and started a conversation with him. Even though it didn't last more than five minutes, it appeared to take forever to the two men because they didn't understand a word, and could guess from the derisive laughter that they were not accorded a high degree of respect.

Finally, the tall man turned to face them, and slapping Harrison on the shoulder, he exclaimed: "Well, my friend, I am your man! Be prudent though with your suggestions for me, and keep the money pouch wide open, because I shall be damned if I am satisfied with a small sum!"

"Sir, you forget that we don't know each other and the reward must be earned before we pay," Buschmark replied trembling. The fear of having to sacrifice any of his money far surpassed the fear he felt for his life he felt in such sinister company. "We are poor, very poor"—

"Wait until you are asked!" the stranger barked at him. "Or do you really think I would even bother with you if I hadn't received a favorable report about you? By the way, don't bother, but simply wait until I reach an agreement with Harrison and then you have nothing to do but to submit to the conditions. In the meantime, don't worry, old friend. If there is anyone on this side of the Rocky Mountains who knows how to execute your suggestions and plans, I am the man for the task; Let's go now, so we can get to know each other better!" With these words he stepped to the front of the small procession and forced his way through the thicket in the direction of the small fire they had previously noticed from the other side of the river.

The scene that awaited the arriving men there was strange and in no way helped the trembling Buschmark to regain his composure; he now feared to had been ambushed by the clever Pawnee, who was going to rob and finally bludgeon him on the desolate island.

The fire burned on a small, empty space in front of the door of a buffalo leather tent, which at first glance could be determined to be Indian, judging by its shape and the rough drawings on the taut tent walls.

Over the fire, on simple scaffolding, hung a tin kettle that bubbled and boiled, and which apparently was the center of attention for the gathered company.

The latter was mainly composed of women, namely of full-blooded Indian women of all ages, from the two-year old to the sixty-year old matron. In some regards however, all were the same, in the terrible uncleanliness of appearance, and the infinite indifference they exhibited in their choice of clothing and style of hair, letting their long hair hang tousled from their heads.

Only one of them, the oldest one, was busy. In her right hand she had a long, forked rod, with which she moved the pieces of meat in the kettle, while she kept her long, shaggy hair away from the flames with her left hand.

The remaining women and children lay chattering around her in a wide circle and made the impatience with which they waited for the food known.

Only an old, grey-haired warrior and a boy of sixteen, who were aside from the arriving leader, were the only male inhabitants of the island, didn't participate in the noisy discussion, but seriously and solemnly first regarded the flames, then looked

at the strangers, while guarding a bottle of whiskey standing between them with hungry eyes, taking a swig from time to time.

This scene was additionally enlivened by a pack of half-starved wolf hounds coming from all sides, who were driven back with harsh kicks if they approached the fire too closely, and thus made their unhappiness known by harrowing howls.

There seemed to be no want for anything in the camp of the ragged Potawatomi family, since the surrounding trees literally bent under the weight of mighty pieces of meat; meat that originally walked around in the form of cows in the herds of emigrants and had reached the little island via theft.

Louis, the band's leading man who had introduced Harrison and Buschmark, fit quite well into the surroundings. His appearance and demeanor helped to complete a picture that was made uncanny, yet not without picturesque appeal by the changing light of the flames.

The only pieces of clothing he wore aside from a red blanket he had carelessly slung around his shoulders were a loincloth and Indian moccasins. Even though he had disfigured his countenance and his naked body by painting black and blue slashes on himself, it wasn't sufficient enough to hide his skin to a degree that made it impossible to recognize him as half-Indian on first sight. His figure was beautiful, tall and muscular, even his face was well shaped, as it is the case with most *Halfbreeds*. The latter in his case however revealed a remarkable expression of brutal effrontery and sly cunning, which aroused unbearable dread about getting into conversation with him, let alone any type of dealings.

Buschmark may have felt this apprehension, since in the face of his surroundings his innate cowardice took over.

The first thing Louis did when he stepped closer to the fire was to chase the women and dogs away with unintelligible curses, but the more clearly understandable kicks with his foot. He then invited Harrison, Buschmark, and the Pawnee to sit by the fire with him.

"You came here," he began without further introduction, "to entice me to do something that will bring you a significant advantage, but which you are unable or too cowardly to do yourself."

Buschmark, who now felt threatened from yet another angle by this disclosure, motioned to Louis and pointed to the group on the other side of the fire that was apparently eavesdropping.

"Don't mind them," replied Louis, who had guessed Buschmark's intention entirely. "First, they don't understand English, and then, even if they understood it, you could trust them more than you can yourself. But let's move to the heart of the matter. My Pawnee friend made it known that you want a certain *Halfbreed* and a white mountain-man taken care of. Well, I have to provide for my large family and I am inclined to fulfill your wish with the help of my Pawnee friend, assuming that the reward is sufficient enough to provide a worry-free existence for the entire clan here for some time to come."

"Indeed, it is in our interest to make the *Halfbreed* Joseph disappear; yet, this requires more than a simple gunshot or well-aimed blow of the tomahawk. Our

wishes are more elaborate than that. The *Halfbreed* can only disappear where it is most beneficial to our purpose, and that is certainly not on this side of the Rocky Mountains. What we require of you at this point is that you leave in the Pawnee's company, possibly as early as tomorrow, and that you stay near the traveling party that includes the two men we referred to. For now, you are thus to simply watch over the party. We will arrive at the Salt Lake well ahead of you and will send you instructions. If you pass Salt Lake without having heard from us, end your business as quickly as possible, but do it where it can still be blamed on the Ute, then return here immediately to collect your reward."

"And who will act as guarantor for payment?" Louis asked, looking at Harrison from the side.

"Our own best interest," he replied quietly. "You should know that if we enter into a contract, its duration would be for a period of a year. But before I elaborate more, I must ask you whether you can behave like a gentleman and play the role of a godly, well-educated young man if necessary?"

"A well-educated young man?" Louis automatically replied, appearing to gaze into the embers meditatively. "A godly, educated young man? Well, well, I haven't learned more than a full-blooded redskin needs, but I can try anyway." And once more he fell to his musings and nobody dared bothering him.

Suddenly, pure joy appeared on his painted features, and turning to Harrison and Buschmark, he said with a diabolical smile: "Gentlemen, I understand what you

want and I am yours. I will determine the price later. But now, come away from here, the Pawnee can eat while we continue our discussion by the river.

Louis walked through the thicket with his new friends, feeling growing interest and becoming more polite than he had been at the beginning of the conversation. Several minutes later, all three sat in the canoe and had a long conversation, bringing their heads close to each other. Not even the willow bushes, which were moving gently in the wind and brushing the canoe's sides, knew what they were talking about, since the sound of their whispering voices died in the rippling of the waves, which broke murmuring on shore and on the drifting logs that were rising up around them.

Buschmark had entirely regained his composure, and to the degree he admired the Indian's cunning and caution, his trust in him increased, so that he felt drawn to him and considered his opinions worthy, but also dared to openly contradict him. More than once he joyfully rubbed his hands together when he realized that his plans were so easily understood, and how the path that had to lead to Newfort's gold and to the German emigrant's daughter became more open and smooth in front of him.

Louis whistled and the medicine man hurried to meet them. They ended their gathering and shook hands in agreement; but if one had been able to look into another's heart, he would have seen that each one of them only thought of disposing of the new friends and allies as expediently as possible after gaining personal advantage.

The next morning, the Pawnee medicine man and the Potawatomi *Halfbreed* left the City of Kansas on horseback. They were heavily armed and carried provisions for a long journey. In the tangle of busy emigrants nobody paid attention to the fact that two men accompanied the departing horsemen on foot for some distance, and gave them this or that task and some good advice.

They departed before they reached town. The men on horseback followed the wide road that was decorated with long wagon trains; the two pedestrians turned back to town.

Their features showed certain self-satisfaction; yet, they didn't speak to one another. Each one was busy keeping his own thoughts secret.

20. The Strait of Panama

The mail steamship that was coming from New Orleans had landed in Aspinwall,¹⁸⁵ and goods and passengers had been transported by recently finished railway and through difficult mountain passes across the Panamanian Strait to Panama City on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, and now the ferry boat flew back and forth between the city and the steamship in order to bring all those destined for California aboard the stately Golden Gate as quickly as possible. Travelers were crowded on the pier because everyone wanted to board first in order to secure a good spot for the journey to San Francisco.

¹⁸⁵ Colón, Panama.

A short distance from the pier, separate from the tumultuous ado of the passengers who were hurrying back and forth, stood two men. They, too, were apparently part of the travelers, but watched the embarkation with visible indifference, as if they cared little what place they might obtain on the Golden Gate, or as if they might have claimed their cabin long ahead of everyone else.

Their entire demeanor showed that their paths diverged; one intended to travel to California, the other would return home, but that they were using this short time before their ship's departure for one last brief conversation still.

"Well, I sincerely wish you good luck on your journey, dearest Newfort," said the shorter one of the two to his tall, lean companion, whose straw hat had been wrapped with a black band to indicate mourning. "Yes, from the bottom of my heart: Good luck and success. May you find your son just as you hope. That is my wish for you and I don't doubt it will happen. I am not worried about you, since you easily managed to travel the distance to here. This speaks to your health and complete recovery. It almost seems as if the voyage across the sea in particular had a very beneficial effect on your health."

"You are correct, faithful, old friend," replied Newfort, who looked nothing like the ailing, old planter of earlier times. "I must admit that I feel significantly stronger than I did at the time of our departure from New Orleans. I expected it; and really, you could have spared yourself this uncomfortable journey here."

"Probably true," said Browns, "but I don't regret having accompanied you. My last doubts have vanished and I feel much more comfortable than a hundred letters

from you would make me feel. I will execute the heavy responsibilities you have bestowed upon me through the extensive power of attorney with a light heart now since I know that you will return safe and sound to ask me to render an account about everything I have done."

"What, render an account!" Newfort exclaimed, placing his hand on Browns' shoulder and looking at him amicably. "Tell me where I could have found a better deputy than you, my trusted old friend? Who knows my circumstances better, and who will share my joy more sincerely when I return with my son? Browns, the bright luster that will fall on my life is your doing. Who would have considered tracing my poor boy's whereabouts this meticulously? May God have protected him on his long journey, and may the ones who are searching for him soon find him. I will reward them; reward them quite richly and generously, since bestowing the only legal heir who carries my name with his full rights has become mission of my life. Yes, Browns, how things change over time! I am filled with such joy now to call a *Halfbreed* my son; that is, a Halfbreed who according to the testimony of the esteemed missionary and your friends a noble, respectable man."

"His pride alone, which made your journey necessary, speaks for him. I then, I can hardly chide him that after what has happened to him, he is hesitant to come in front of you. At least this is how Harrison paints his character."

"The journey will be a blessing to me, and especially so, if I don't have to wait in California for too long. When did you say your friends left?"

"On the fifteenth of May with the United States Postal Service. But since they are forced to stay in City by the Great Salt Lake for a while, we can hardly assume that they will reach Sacramento before the middle of September."

"Eight weeks from now?"

"Approximately that, unless the young traveler's tracks force them to take a detour."

"The wait will appear long."

"The healthy California climate will make it up to you. It will strengthen you."

"I won't stay in San Francisco, but go to Sacramento directly. My son can't have that much of a head start."

"If he had started on May first like all the other emigrants, they would have caught up with him in the prairies already. Unfortunately though, he left St. Louis in January already to return to the upper Missouri. That is what they believed and conveyed to us. Indeed, he is supposed to have been at the mission in the Council Bluffs and have started his trip from there alone, or at most accompanied by a couple of Indians. It is not impossible that he stayed with some of the allied tribes in order to complete the most difficult part of the journey through the desert and to the west of the Rocky Mountains in the company of some emigrants and traders. In any case, it will not be too difficult to find his tracks, and I don't doubt that within two months you will be reunited with your son."

A small sailboat manned with Mestizos and Negroes approached the two men. Newfort's black servants had rented the vessel in order to bring their master directly on board the *Golden Gate*, and to spare him the uncomfortable trip on the ferry.

Newfort recognized them from afar, and turning to Browns, he pointed them out. "Here they come to fetch me; but now, as we have to part, I feel that there is much yet to be said, and even more to be asked. We will stay in frequent contact by mail and will leave no chance to send mail go by unused. As soon as you hear that I have met my son, you give my Negroes a lavish ball. Those merry fellow, how they will like it!"

The boat had moored in the meantime and the two Negroes had stepped from the vessel and stood by their master's side.

"Hello there, children," said Browns with condescending friendliness, giving the grey-haired servant his hand. "I hope you will be spared sea-sickness so that you are able to care for your master."

"Thank you, Massa, thank you, Massa," replied the two old men, touched by such kindness. "We will watch our lord like the apple of our eye and help him look for the young Massa."

"That's right, boys," Newfort answered jokingly, "if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be able to undertake this journey."

When the Negroes heard these words, they stood proud and tall, looked at each other with shining eyes, their blue-black features showed a happy smile, and

when they noticed that their happiness wasn't considered immodest, they broke out into such a whinnying laughter, that Newfort and Browns couldn't help but join.

"That's enough now," Newfort finally said, "our time has come and we must go aboard." Turning to Browns, he gave him both hands. "Fare well, old friend," he continued with a touch of emotion. "I hope that you will make a home for yourself on the plantation, and that nothing that could make your life more comfortable and pleasant is missing. I will be back in four months, but until then, farewell!"

Browns let the planter finish, but even then it appeared as if he wasn't able to find words. I may have been his conscience—awakened by the planter's kind demeanor—that made him fall silent, or did he try to deceive the trusting friend even further by being quiet? It is impossible to know the truth. Only he knew, and he replied to the words of the departing man with an almost imperceptible "farewell!"

Supported by his Negroes, Newfort reached the boat, which soon spread its wing-like sails and flew as easy as a seagull driven by the breeze.

Browns remained on the beach for a while, deep in thought, and only when the boat disappeared under the broad hull of the Golden Gate, did he turn around and walk back to town slowly.

An hour later he was on horseback and rode the old, bumpy Spanish road toward the Atlantic Ocean. His next destination was the train station in the middle of the strait, where he arrived late at night. He stopped in one of the barracks that had been erected at this point. The following morning, despite the burning heat of the July sun, he walked a distance of three English miles along the railroad tracks.

Then, he reached a little clearing. There stood approximately ten huts made of simple frames, shaded by numerous trees and roof coverings made from palm leaves, which offered a reasonable protection against the vertical rays of the sun, while the only walls were only partially hung with canvas allowed every breeze to penetrate freely.

This small area of land, which was framed like a picture by the most luscious, impenetrable tropical vegetation, was reminiscent of the enchanted gardens in *One Thousand and One Nights*, where everything splendid nature had to offer lies without being used, and where all living beings attracted by so much beauty immediately fall into a deep slumber.

No breeze stirred, the heated atmosphere trembled and glimmered, and along with it all objects the eye could capture trembled and glimmered. Dark palm trees let their slender fans hang dreamily; almost as if conscious of their power, there stood blossoming magnolia trees and broad-leafed maple trees. Glossy lianas and other vines wound themselves around the mighty tree trunks, and most gracefully connected the crowns of separate trees with one another. House-high bamboo drove itself shyly between leaves and branches, nestling itself in its attempt to seek protection from the hurricane that might arise at any moment and break it. Powerful leafy greens and ferns, here resting high in the trees, there supporting itself on the black earth, spread their luscious, emarginated and serrated leaves apart fan-like. Among the thousand shades of green, which evidenced an inexhaustible potency of the earth, shone blossoms, fruits, and flowers in an indescribable splendor of colors.

Here some were visible like little stars; there they were prominent, large chalices in rainbow colors. Here, fibrous coconuts ripened half-hidden under the opulent canopy of leaves, and there in the mighty banana tree hung the queen of fruits. Not even a gentle breeze could be felt, yet everything trembled and glimmered visibly in the heated atmosphere.

The animals, which had made the landscape come alive so cheerfully in the morning, slept; Some in the shade, some in the sun, depending on how much they loved warmth. A bearded monkey and a resplendently colored parrot sat neighborly under a broad leaf. They were immobile, and from time to time their lids drooped over their clear pupils as if they were too heavy, and thus made the two different animals look similar in their shared overwhelming fatigue. Immobile, like a stone heraldic emblem, the great vulture was enthroned on the peak of the highest tree, holding his wings spread to catch the rays of the sun, and only came alive when he closed his wide-open beak once in a while. A black forest snake lay uncoiled on the dusty ground, the gecko on burning rock. The first too lazy to hunt birds, the latter lasciviously breathing in the hot air with a wide-open mouth. The locusts and the crickets made their chirping racket only once in a while, while the tireless hummingbird, like the busy bees, flew from flower to flower and dipped his tube-like beak deep into the flowers rich with honey.

That's where Browns found himself. Unconcerned with the pleasant view and the heavy beads of sweat that ran from under his panama hat, he turned from the tracks into the clearing. His gaze examined the picturesque huts, and when his eyes

discovered a small, red flag in front of one of them, the expression of doubt that had been there left his face. He hastened his pace, and without paying attention to the people who held their siesta in artfully crafted hammocks in the shade of the palm trees, he entered the hut that was so prominently marked.

When he suddenly stepped from the sunshine into the inviting shade, he initially felt as if he had been blinded. Slowly he took off his hat, took off the white kerchief he had placed inside it to protect him against the potentially fatal rays of the sun, and began to rub his dusty face. He had not finished yet, when he heard his name called from a corner inside the hut.

"You are on time, Browns," someone called out to him. "I had my doubts that you would manage to leave the plantation without causing a fuss. You are doubly welcome here!"

"Señor Antonio!" Browns replied, approaching the man resting in a hammock and taking his extended hand. "Señor Antonio! It has been a while since we have seen each other. Greetings, and believe me, it took all of my persuasive power to let the planter allow me to accompany him to Panama. But can we speak freely here?"

"Certainly," Antonio replied, moving his hammock into a swinging motion with a push. "I have been living in this hut, which I rented for my exclusive use, for four weeks now. But take some refreshments before anything else. Here is some lemonade, and over there are a couple hammocks. Take one and hang it up close to me. Then we can talk undisturbed and without anyone eavesdropping, just like we did in Havana back then."

Browns passed on the drink; for health reasons, as he said. But he hurried to fetch one of the nets made from bast fibers, which he then attached to the posts of the hut with skilled hands, so that it was only two feet from Antonio and hung parallel to him.

He disposed of all the pieces of clothing he could spare, and several minutes later he lay as comfortably as it was possible in such oppressive heat.¹⁸⁶

"Well then, Señor Antonio," he began the conversation. "Do you approve of the manner in which I acted after the death of your sister?"

The man addressed turned his yellowish face to Browns and looked at him for several seconds as if he wanted to guess his most secret thoughts.

"You acted," he replied, "according to the circumstances and to the best of your ability. Your plan is well crafted. And the church —"

"Forgive me, Señor Antonio," Browns interrupted, "You forget that I don't give a damn about your or any other church;¹⁸⁷ I don't need any protection except for the one that money can bring. The church no longer is the heir, but when everything I have set into motion comes to its conclusion, it will be us four; that is, I am first in line, then you, and then Buschmark and Harrison, who share equally in the entire robbery. After the enormous sum is no longer earmarked for some church, the whole matter is after all just common robbery that we commit equally. Don't bite your lips bloody, good father, but bite the bullet and be content with your share. It is still significant enough to make one betray the other."

¹⁸⁶ *drückende Atmosphäre*

¹⁸⁷ *daß ich mich den Henker kümmerge*

"Browns, it is indeed not fruitful for our purpose if we meet with animosity, or even threaten each other. Let's not share until there is actually something to share. I admit that we have to thank your presence of mind if we manage to bring what we have begun to a happy conclusion. Here is the letter in which you gave your life as a pawn back in Havana. I am giving it back to you to prove that I have no suspicion when it comes to you and to show you that I want nothing less than to make trouble in a matter that you consider a done deal, if I understood you correctly."

"Well then, let there be eternal peace between us then," said Browns, quickly taking the offered piece of paper and shaking the priest's hand. "It is true, the matter is as good as over, as long as nobody makes a false step. — I have the testament in my possession that names the *Halfbreed* as universal heir of the entire fortune in case the planter doesn't return from his trip. But he will only meet his son in Sacramento for the first time, and only then will he make his will legally valid. His son's right will then become incontestable, so that Newfort will only have to die a quick death in order to make us owners of the entire inheritance."

Antonio had turned on his back during the last part of the speech and looked musingly up to light rafters of the roof. Browns could see that something stirred his soul; something that was connected to the criminal endeavor. He thus refrained from disturbing the crafty priest in his contemplation and turned his attention to a glass of lemonade, which he had poured for himself from his hammock.

After an extended pause that had passed in silence, Antonio suddenly turned around as if he had woken from a dream and, looking at Browns triumphantly, he

exclaimed: "If you are man enough to see impediments develop, why are you not man enough to take care of them? Newfort must never see New Orleans again, if only for the reason that he once showed me the door in such a degrading way!" And the vengeful Spaniard gnashed his teeth. "He must never see New Orleans again!" he repeated. "But the *Halfbreed*, who can be dangerous to all of us, must be an obedient slave, a tool without his own will. He shall commit a crime, a crime so dark that civilized men would hang him for it. He shall commit a crime that benefits our plans, but makes him beg for mercy on his knees in front of us."

"He shall be murdered by his presumed son?" asked Browns, whose blood ran cold when he considered the coldblooded murder of the trusting, betrayed friend, even though he was in agreement, yes, even the creative force behind the idea that Newfort should not survive the trip. He had hoped that the ailing planter might succumb to the hardships of the sea voyage—which, after all, could be indiscriminately increased—the privations of California, or other hazards. Yet, he shuddered when heard that the planter was to be murdered. He heard the *Halfbreed's* death sentence without the slightest form of pity, he had even tried to speed up the execution of the deed after having set it in motion, but the victim was only a half-Indian, member of that colored race that could, according to the opinion of most Americans, be ruthlessly exterminated if the interested of as much as a single white man could be furthered by it.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ This is perhaps the most forceful and chilling comment on race relations in the U.S. the text makes. It seems appropriate to read it as an authorial insertion, something that Möllhausen had previously observed in his diaries perhaps. It is rather

It only takes the prospect for material gain, impunity, and a bit of persuasion to make a man who will commit the most heinous crimes against his fellow men simply because nature has given them darker skin perpetrate the same crimes against his fellow white men and neighbors.

Browns only needed to think briefly to be in agreement with Antonio's ideas. His conscience, which had been clear when it came to the *Halfbreed's* murder and which had just a short while ago winced at the idea to commit the same crime against a white man, fell silent as he considered the great advantages he would reap from the deed.

"He shall be murdered by his alleged son?" Browns repeated, but this time with a steady voice. "I see the necessity, but —"

"Leave it to me," Antonio interrupted, "but let's use the time of my visit to Cuba to at least bring most of the Negroes over there, or more precisely, to sell

uncharacteristic for Browns to engage in such deliberations—evil comes to easily for him to consider justifying it by conjuring up societal norms. The passage is perhaps also a poignant observation across the cultural divide on race relations in America. Americans themselves (although speaking of Americans in a wholesale manner is of course problematic as well, as the text points out by its use of "most Americans") were more apt to believe in the legal and rhetorical legitimizing mechanisms they had developed to address Native American dispossession. In a sense, the entire plot of the novel is a distilled commentary of race: the Indian has, or will come into possession of, what the white man wants. Therefore it is legitimate to kill him. The antagonists have no redeeming qualities, and there can be no debate over an alternative "good" cause for why they want to come into possession of the fortune, except for their own personal gain. Since Browns is part of "most Americans"—a term Möllhausen himself uses— in his agreement that Native Americans can be exterminated for a white man's gain, one should at this point pause and consider this social commentary on America the text makes.

anything from the plantation that we can manage to sell, without raising too much suspicion. Your power of attorney covers that?"

"My power of attorney goes so far that after erasing and adding some minor details I can liquidate Newfort's entire fortune."

"Well, let's not waste time then. Will you leave in the steamer that is going to New Orleans tomorrow?"

"Certainly, but when will a letter reach you in Havana?"

"Perhaps as soon as in two to three weeks. I will have to remain here for a couple of days to find transportation to Vera Cruz. I will stay there only briefly, and from there I will go directly to Cuba. It's possible that I will visit you on the plantation beforehand."

Hearing this, Browns contorted his face as if the promise of a visit didn't exactly bring him joy, a fact the clever priest didn't miss. Nevertheless, he affirmed that that he would be happy to see him and do his best to make his stay at the plantation comfortable.

Gradually, the two men's conversation shifted to more mundane things. They became less tense, and their hammocks swung quietly, and when they finally came to a standstill, both had fallen asleep.

Outside though things began to stir. The drowsy monkeys stretched their smooth limbs before beginning their mad games; sparing their wings, the parrots climbed from branch to branch using their beak; snakes disappeared into the thicket, lizards under the rocks, and the crickets chirped louder and louder, drowning out the

gentle lisp from the bamboo and its leaves that was caused by the hint of a breeze, which was carried in by the upcoming wind blowing across the ocean.

End Of Book Two

21. On the Journey and in Camp

The emigrants had been traveling for more than two months already, but most of them still found themselves east of the Rocky Mountains. The blue mountain chains with their proud peaks were in front of them, but they only slowly came closer to them because they were trying to save the animals by covering only short distances each day and saving the animals' strength this way for when they would reach the arid deserts west of the mighty mountains chain.

But there were some travelers among the caravans who couldn't travel faster if they wanted to. Not only had most their oxen and horses died, but their own and their family's health had deteriorated so far that the daily distance covered had in fact dwindled to a few miles.

The long treks of emigrants had seen a sad change. No cheerful song of loud jokes could be heard like back then when they left Missouri; horses did not rear anymore; no well-fed children could be heard humming; no, the animals did their duty morosely after having traveled the dusty trail for weeks where the sun had in the absence of any rain had singed the grass; and the people traveled feeling sad and despondent along the trail, their eyes fixed westward where their faraway destiny lay.

Even tears were shed once in a while, but not tears of wistfulness over the departure from home, but tears of deepest sorrow, of unbearable pain. The emigrants were visited by the cholera and the fear of contagion had spread the connected wagons of the caravan far apart. But what good was it? The ruthless disease bounded from one part of the caravan to the next, and jumped from company to company in mighty leaps. Here it took the father of a large family, there the mother. Somewhere else crying parents stood over the bodies of their children, and brothers dug graves for their siblings. A lonely traveler lay dying by the road, perhaps tended to by a likewise ill companion, looking in desperation at the rows of wagons that took a detour to avoid his dangerous proximity; or he beheld his faithful horse that was grazing on burnt grass close by. Somewhere else, an entire wagon had been transformed into a sick bay, and the entire group was simply waiting for the passing of the sick to then make up for lost time by increasing their traveling pace.

Certainly, those were heartrending scenes that took place among the emigrants over and over again. They transformed the entire caravan into a long procession of mourners. The trail itself, oh, how gloomy it looked! Travelers could tell by the wreckage that lined it just how bitter and harsh the losses and sufferings of those were who had just a short time ago bid their home farewell driven by the most ambitious hopes. They could see broken-down wagons, the skeletons of draft animals, and among them half-burned crates and suitcases that had been used for firewood; here numerous kitchen utensils that had been deemed too heavy, there sacks of salt or flour, next to them tools or worn out clothes, or even some in good condition. In

short, a bit of everything had been cast aside to lighten the load a bit, or because it belonged to someone who had been killed by the epidemic and others feared the hidden contagion in the possessions. The wolves, which followed the caravan in large number, had gnawed the skeletons of the dead animals until they were bleach-white. Everything else just lay untouched because the usually obtrusive Indians had stayed away. They had long ago made the acquaintance of the terrible disease through their contact with the white settlers, and justifiably feared it as their dreadful and unconquerable enemy.

The saddest sights to behold however were the graves that appeared once in a while close to the trail. Children and old men, men and women rested there; no coffin protected their earthly remains, cloaked only in blankets they had been lowered into the cool earth and were only protected from the wolves by a layer of rocks and twigs, over which there was a small burial mound. Some were decorated with wilted bunches of prairie flowers, but on most stood a little stake on which the name of the deceased and the date of death was carved almost illegibly. What a simple inscription! Most certainly, someone had cried bitter tears before departing from the lonely grave and its inhabitant. —

Owing to all the sound advice and the help of his experienced travel companions, Andree and his small party were among the first to reach the foot of the Rocky Mountains. He and his daughter had experienced relatively little of the journey's hardships since they were at all times surrounded by people who took pleasure in making the trip easier for them and to make them forget that they were in

fact crossing the heart of the American wilderness. The party had no losses to bemoan until then; quite the contrary, it had grown by several members since it left Missouri; members whose added power was not an insignificant asset for the daily chores.

Sydney Bigelow had been the first to join. As the American son of genuine Americans he had not been able to conquer the urge to seek a free, independent life. The knowledge that he caused his parents sorrow by leaving initially burdened his conscience quite heavily, but when he refused to return in spite of Lefèvre's admonitions and the urgent pleas from the young girl, and Lefèvre then handed him his father's letter in which there was probably nothing but fatherly teachings and advice, his young mind straightened up. Feeling grateful for the friendly reception, he tried to be useful as much as he could.

He stayed in Franziska's vicinity with touching devotedness because he still honored her as his mother's friend, and he waited with jealous attention for every opportunity to show his affection with small favors.

He had only reached them on the eighth day after Andree's departure, when nobody expected him anymore, even though he had left his father's house just one day later. The fear of being sent back by his parents' friends had made him hide out with another caravan during that time. Only when he considered himself safe from being sent back, did he adjourn to the campfire late one night where he found Lefèvre, Joseph, and Robert still awake.

The two days' journey west of Fort Kearney, the small expedition gained more members, when Wabash and his brown wife joined them. They had pitched their

leather tent right by the road and had been waiting for their arrival for some time. They had three horses with them, were well equipped for the journey, and proved themselves to be such pleasant travel companions on the first day that everyone couldn't help but like them.

The gentle Indian woman, who was significantly older, appealed to Franziska, which was heightened by the fact that she showed her affection for the "beautiful white girl" by voluntarily becoming her servant. Initially, Franziska was hesitant to use her services, but that intrigued the Indian woman, who had a natural ability to communicate with the girl, even more.

Under such pleasant circumstances it was no wonder that there was a cheerful mood among the travelers, and not a day went by that didn't generate a pleasant memory. Only the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre had an inkling of the scenes on the trail behind them, the scenes of horror and misery; both refrained from talking about matters that would cause their companions distress.

Heeding Lefèvre's wish, they had taken the northern fork of the Emigrant Trail after Fort Laramie because of the better water supply. Thus, they found themselves following the north fork of the Platte River, which offered always offered them a friendly place to camp either by its side or by one of its tributaries—even though it didn't always flow through the most welcoming regions, yes, sometimes even through the most horrible desert.

It may have been around the middle of the month of July when they reached a deep canyon one afternoon after having crossed a chain of hills. The gorge lead to an

expansive, barren valley, where close to its western edge the Horseshoe Creek was gracefully winding its way toward the Platte River. Joseph and Lefèvre had ridden ahead of the wagon train. When they reached the creek and saw the crystal clear water that was flowing noisily northward and cheerfully danced around slick rocks and colorful pebbles; when they saw some stunted, withered trees on a strip of grass close by, they agreed to spend the night there and not take the chance of failing to find another place with water.

"Here we have everything we need," the *Halfbreed* said to his older companion, " here we have water, wood, and pasture, I thus suggest to go no further today."

"Even though we would reach water again in another three hours, it might probably be too much for Franziska; let's stay here then." The old hunter dismounted, took his horse's tack off and allowed it to go to the water, while he threw himself down on the grass next to his rifle and waited for the arrival of the wagon.

The *Halfbreed* on the other hand had stayed in the saddle and looked around musingly until he caught a glimpse of the small procession that approached quickly.

There was no trace of another caravan. Most of their earlier travel companions had fallen far behind and a small group had managed to travel ahead of them, but this seemed to be the first time since leaving the Missouri that they could not be in neighborly contact with other travelers.

One again, the *Halfbreed* looked along the jagged edges of the mountain range, and content with the fact that he didn't see any suspicious columns of smoke, he turned to Lefèvre.

"We will have no company here tonight," he began the conversation.

"The less travelers, the better, my son," replied Lefèvre, who at this moment seemed to have nothing else in mind but teasing thick clouds of smoke from his little brown clay pipe.

"Yes, I mean that we are no longer in the Sioux's hunting grounds, but in those of the treacherous Ute Indians, in which case it is rather pleasant to know that other wagons trains are close by."

"I am telling you: being in the Ute's territory in particular makes it less desirable to be in company of others. Or would you like to have a visit from a couple hundred members of this dirty ragtag gang?"

"It would be awful; I think we have every reason to be cautious."

"Whoa, boy," Lefèvre laughed, "why so fearful, are you a woman?"¹⁸⁹ The Ute are not that bad—I have put more than one of them on ice; they are like hornets, not like red warriors. Just ask Wabash whether he would rather encounter three dozen Ute or three Sioux."

"The Sioux are sworn enemies of the Pawnee, Omaha, and Otoe tribes, and I can't hold it against Wabash that he avoids their proximity when he is alone. If I have

¹⁸⁹ *Ihr habt euch wohl einen Weiberrock übergeworfen*

shown concern, it is not for us—we know quite well how to handle a rifle—but for Andree's daughter, whom I wish to spare the sight of this wild mob."

"Sacré tonnerre! Joe, you are right!" Lefèvre exclaimed, sitting up, scratching himself behind his ear with his right hand, and carefully looking at his surroundings.

"And then," the *Halfbreed* continued, "remember the suspicious tracks we found so often near our camp since passing the Scotts Bluffs."

"No Ute traveling barefoot leaves such tracks, and if you don't trust your young eyes or my old eyes, you should at least trust Little Bear's opinion. He says it's a Pawnee who came near our camp. Likely some starved creature cast out by his tribe, trying to reach California by begging his way across the country, and stays alive there begging as well. Whoever it may be, he better watch out that Wabash not accidentally stabs him in the ribs with his knife!"

"I have never doubted for one minute that one of the pesky men wears Pawnee moccasins because one can clearly see the imprint of the seam under the toes in the soft ground. But it is hard to tell whether it is in fact a Pawnee wearing the moccasins, perhaps even harder what tribe his companion in the torn up shoes is from. They are Indians, that much is certain, since no white man is so pigeon-toed and presses the outside of his feet deeper into the sand than the ball or the middle of the foot."

"And a white man typically doesn't ride an unshod horse in these wild regions,"¹⁹⁰ Lefèvre added; and if the horses were in fact shod at one point in the last

¹⁹⁰ *von der Natur gepflastert*

two years, I will let myself be scalped from ear to ear. The clay and sand shows the hoof print so clearly as if it came from a wood-turner's shop.

"In any case, we have a nice place to camp here, and only a howitzer from Fort Laramie could manage to hit us from one of the rocks with a bullet, let alone with an arrow."

"That's right, son," Lefèvre replied smiling, "apparently, you haven't entirely forgotten what I taught you; yes, yes, a camp out in the open that allow you a clear view of your surroundings is the best. Let's use the time we have until night falls to explore the edge of the valley closer."

"But don't let the girl know about our worries."

"Joe, we are men, and even Sydney behaves like a man, and Franziska has a heart in her chest that is becoming of a great warrior; in the meantime, I consider it wise if we take nobody else but Wabash into our confidence. Women are women, and inexperienced boys will remain inexperienced boys, even if they may be able to hit a bull right in the eye from a hundred yards away. Which means, I believe they can't keep secrets; you can silence their tongue, but not steady their eyes."

The trapper had barely finished speaking when Sydney cheerfully trotted to their side, and just a short while thereafter, the wagon stopped next to them on the bank of the small river.

"We will camp here," Lefèvre called, acting in his capacity of leader. Then the busy to and fro that always precedes a comfortable rest and lazy quiet after a long trip began. The chains attached to the harnesses rattled; here they talked to the animal

in a friendly manner, there with stern words; the horses snorted and as soon as the tack had been taken off, they threw themselves on the ground where, groaning comfortably, they sought to rid themselves of the biting dust and sweat by rolling. Then they headed toward the water while everyone was busy pulling all implements necessary to make camp from the saddlebags and the wagon. One member of the group searched for dry wood, someone else took the food supplies Franziska and her father handed down from the wagon; someone else again walked down to the creek to fetch water. Not half an hour had passed this way, when everyone sat down on the blankets in order to pass the time in conversation until the food Franziska was cooking was ready.

Wabash, whose wife was helping Franziska, had thrown himself down next to Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed*. He held an arrow in his hand and playfully swinging it back and forth, he leveled the dry sand from which sprouted short little blades of grass. After he hit the ground distractedly a couple of times, almost as if he wanted to kill a grasshopper, he began to draw figures with the tip of the arrow in the same indifferent manner.

The tapping had directed everyone's attention to the spot where the dust was rising and all eyes were mechanically focused on the tip of the arrow that trembled slightly while furrowing the sand. Suddenly, but without interrupting the flow of his speech, Lefèvre gently nudged the *Halfbreed*. He had noticed that the Indian had drawn human face that resembled a full moon, and across the line that indicated the

mouth, he had drawn five more lines that connected to the lower portion and thus roughly resembled a hand.

"Secrecy then," the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre thought, and continued their conversation with renewed energy.

Wabash leveled the sand once more, and again hieroglyphic pictures emerged at the tip of the arrow, which the two men immediately recognized as the image of a Pawnee moccasin and a shoe.

Unconcerned with his environment, and apparently deep into very unimportant thought, the Indian brushed the sand once more with the arrow and made another picture, which, as he knew, the hunters interpreted correctly. This time it was a human head, which resembled a white man—yes, one might almost say Lefèvre—by virtue of its long beard. At last, he added the eyes in a manner that one appeared to be closed by being indicated as a straight line, and the other appeared to be open, being represented by a circle with a dot in it.

Apparently, Wabash wanted to avoid causing anxiety and thus indicating to a potential enemy that they were prepared. When he thus had done his duty and communicated to the two hunters in a clever manner that the two suspicious travelers were indeed close by and that it was necessary to sleep with one eye open,¹⁹¹ and to keep close watch, he once again tapped the arrow on the ground as if he wanted to swat some crickets in his vicinity.

¹⁹¹ *Nur mit dem einen Auge zu schlafen*. This is an expression not used in German—Möllhausen translated the English quite literally. The expression used in German is to sleep with open eyes (*mit offenen Augen schlafen*), although it does not have the idiomatic use that it has in English.

"I have understood my brother," Lefèvre said in Indian to the Omaha, while he laughed loudly to make the uninitiated believe he only made a joking remark.

"How," the Indian replied, looking around with a smile, and then they continued the conversation without inhibition and quite cheerfully. Nobody had any inclination of the news that had been exchanged between the three hunters.

Time passed unnoticed, the heat gave way to a refreshing cool, and the last preparations for the night were made, after which the company broke up into small groups and engaged in just as many conversations.

Like usual, Robert and Sydney were close to Lefèvre and listened attentively to the seasoned old hunter's stories and eagerly took in his teachings and advice. Wabash and his wife had already turned in on the bank of the creek; their heads were even with the slanted edge of the bank, and their bodies, which were enveloped in large blankets, resembled a bale of goods.

A short distance below, using the bank as a seat, Andree, Franziska, and the *Halfbreed* sat together in intimate conversation.

The sun had disappeared behind the foothills of the Black Hills, whose shadow covered the valley with a grey veil and hence made dusk last much longer than the open prairie. The entire western sky shone forth in glowing red, yellow-gold stripes of fog, and long herds of rose-colored cloud-sheep stretched far across arched across the quiet landscape. The slopes of the eastern mountains still partially glowed in sunshine, but where Laramie Peak stretched its snow-covered top above the clouds, the mountain glowed and sparkled like a mighty meteor, and when dusk's shadows

had long vanished across the jagged mountains, the proud peak of the large mountain still shed its glow far across the country, almost as if some rays of the afternoon sun had attached themselves to it to save themselves from having to make the journey around the globe.

It was a beautiful night; the valley, which had not exactly been endowed by nature, lay in peaceful quiet. White, moving banks of fog formed across the bottomland traversed by the creek, and when they grew bigger and sometimes moved higher, then lower, onlookers might have considered them for the airy gowns of elves that had gathered there for their nightly dance and to bestow each blade of dry grass with a friendly drop of dew.

The increasing dusk made the desert-like surroundings disappear and gave the environment a melancholy quiet that touched the spirit and made the lonesome wanderer think of times long gone.

The uncanny laugh of the tiger owl hunting its prey in the canyons; the wailing call of the nightjar circling the burned down fire's thin column of smoke with silent wings, or flying close to the ground with the speed of an arrow; the deep, hollow howl of the great white wolf and the yapping of the coyote,¹⁹² or the whimper of the mountain lion—all the sounds were in harmony with the wilderness cloaked in the night's shadow. The travelers felt more than comfortable in each other's company.

¹⁹² *Schakal*, (m.). While historically the term Jackal (*Schakal*) was used to refer to a number of small canids, including the wolf, coyote, and dog, today's use refers to the Jackal of either sub-Saharan or northern Africa. The Jackal in the narrative is thus properly a coyote.

"It is strange," Franziska said to the men in the course of the conversation, "it is strange how the character of the desert changes with the fall of dusk. The exhausting monotony seems to disappear and one doesn't need a lively imagination to think oneself somewhere else entirely. The black silhouette of those bare mountains look just like the vineyard-covered mountains bordering the Rhine, and when I look at the fog at their base, I almost feel like I have the proud river right in front of me."

"You should add, my dear daughter," Andree remarked, "that we like to conjure up the picture of things we favor in our phantasies. It wouldn't surprise me if our friend thinks about the Missouri and his beloved mission when he looks at the dark landscape with its mellow contours; the mission he talks about so much to us."

"I often and with great pleasure think about the mission and the years I spent there," the Halfbreed replied, "but I must confess that my thoughts are somewhere else at this moment, even though they are no less influenced by our surroundings. That is, I am considering how nature shapes and guides the human inclinations in general."¹⁹³

"What can we then expect from a human beings coming from a long line of people who have spent generations in a wilderness such as this? The entire existence of such pitiful creatures is an eternal struggle against misery that only ends in death. Since the earth has nothing to offer them that would make their existence easier, how shall they ever feel gratitude, the sentiment that is the pillar of civilization? There is not even enough venison in these regions here to prevent need, and they are left with

¹⁹³*Neigungen der Menschen.*

nothing but the warm sunshine to feel grateful about. They express their gratitude by elevating the sun to a higher being. As a result of perpetual, dire privation, animal instincts awaken in those poor people: the ravenousness for food and the predaciousness that comes with it. But if travelers who come from more blessed parts have been wronged by these wretched creatures, and they consider everything I just mentioned, they may reach a milder verdict when they sit in judgment on them. Instead of revenge, they will feel pity; they will not assert that indigenous man is not made for civilization, but they will express grief over the fact that there are almost insurmountable obstacles to their attempts at helping indigenous men becoming civilized, and that most white men lack the patience to overcome those obstacles and that the open intolerance will only increase this way."¹⁹⁴

"The forest offers its impenetrable thickets, the mountains offer their canyons, and the prairie and the desert its secrets," Andree began, following the *Halfbreed's* lead; "but everywhere we look, we see mankind, never satisfied, looking here, looking there to appropriate nature's treasures. He tramples on whatever is in his way, and there are only a few who affectingly perceive the creative power inherent in nature, who see the most omnipotent power in the most inconspicuous things, and

¹⁹⁴ *Wenn nun andere Menschen, die aus gesegnereten Landstrichen herkommen, wo die günstigsten Verhältnisse sie jederzeit umgaben, von diesen elenden Wilden Unrecht erfahren haben, und sie bedenken dann Alles, was ich eben erwähnte, eh' sie als verdammende Richter auftreten, so wird ihr Urteil milder ausfallen. Statt des Rachegefühls wird das tiefste Mitleid sich ihrer bemächtigen, und sie werden nicht sagen, daß der Urwilde unfähig zur Zivilisation ist, sondern sie werden bedauern, daß sich den Zivilisationversuchen Hindernisse entgegenstellen, die fast unüberwindlich erscheinen, welche aber zu besiegen den meisten Menschen die Geduld fehlt und daher durch die offen zur Schau getragene Unduldsamkeit nur vergrößert werden.*

thus will not miss the divine spark, as weak as it may be, in the wild man's breast. It is not only in America where "might" is the same as right. Believe me, dear Joseph, anywhere where people live together socially, such ills exist. Especially where civilization rules and there are no outlaw Indians, it is considered desirable to cripple man's spirit to such a degree that after his powers have been exploited, he becomes useless. Who then are the people portraying themselves as infallible? It is a poisonous subgroup of those who, with submissive expressions, proclaim to spread godly teachings; they force their way into schools to cripple youthful, soaring spirits because they fear that they might fly to high! They are people who demand blind obedience and blind faith at the cost of reason! People who see a killer of the soul in every inquisitive spirit! People who see God's truth, which reveals itself so beautifully to mortal man in nature, as a looming threat unless it is filtered through them. And those, my young friend, who have the power to remove humanity's afflictions, but won't do it; rather, they endorse the status quo, be it due to cowardice, ignorance, or inherent prejudice. God and his fellow men should condemn him who doesn't believe that indigenous people have any capacity for education and thus treat them like harmful worms; even more criminal are those who want to return the indigenous spirit that is longing for teachings and education back to its origins."

"You speak words you almost could have heard from my benefactor who passed away, the missionary; he, too, was a disciple of Christianity."

"He was a godly person," Andree replied with fervor, "or he would not have dared to utter such teachings. Unfortunately, there are many who can't speak what is in their heart because they must earn their bread."

Franziska had listened attentively to the men's conversation, and she felt great joy when she understood how similar the opinions of the two men were, but under no circumstances did she want to interrupt them.

She felt almost unpleasantly disturbed when her brother touched her on the shoulder with the rifle and told her he was going to take over the first watch.

"Lefèvre has probably already told you that we will have to keep close watch," The *Halfbreed* said. "The wolves in these desolate regions are very hungry and thus more rapacious. Even though they won't attack the horses, we must keep them away so as not to attract unnecessary attention. It might be best, if you laid down flat on the ground some distance away from camp."

"Lefèvre advised the same already, and you shall have no reason to complain about me being neglectful. Good night, good night!" and humming a cheerful hunting song, the lighthearted young man walked away.

The beginning of the watch was the signal to turn in. They parted in the usual manner, but when Andree was about to leave the bank of the creek, he noticed that Lefèvre was climbing down to the water's edge.

"Where to this late?" he called out to him.

"I just want to fill water bottle so it can cool during the night," the answer came, and only minutes later deep silence reigned in the small camp.

The *Halfbreed* had remained on the protruding bank of the creek and watched Lefèvre, who in the shadow of the depression had moved toward the Omaha and was talking to him. His looks fell on the wagon where the young girl slept. His heart was filled with anxious premonition, and it pained him to think about the dangers that the gentle, devoted creature might face. He couldn't deny¹⁹⁵ that the marks left by those who were tracking and watching them did not indicate friendly intentions. On the other hand, it filled him with peaceful happiness that he was able to be Franziska's protector.

The Omaha moved, which made him think about other things; without a sound he crept over to the wagon where his rifle was, and then he went back to the creek.

22. The First Attack

The three hunters must have considered themselves under surveillance since they avoided so assiduously letting anyone know that they had increased their own watchfulness. After Lefèvre had climbed down to the creek, but he only waited there until Andree and Franziska had gone to bed, then he hurried to where Wabash and his wife were sleeping.

"Are you ready?" the trapper quietly asked.

"I am ready," Wabash whispered without moving. "Do you want to go upstream or downstream?"

¹⁹⁵ *wegläugnen*

"I will walk upstream to where the cliffs begin."

"Good; it is better if you meet with those dogs and interrogate one or the other why they are following us. You have your bow and arrows?"

"Certainly. I leave my rifle here, it makes too much noise."

"That's right my son, the rifle might wake Franziska; I will be damned if you don't have more empathy under your red skin than most white men have under their embroidered batik shirts. But, let's not waste time. Father and daughter have gone to sleep and Joseph is waiting for me.

Instead of an answer, the Omaha looked down the sloping bank, and almost like a snake that leaves its hole he glided down until he was next to the trapper without moving the concealing blankets, which were held up by the Indian wife.

"Well then, Wabash," Lefèvre said when he saw the armed warrior standing in front of him, "don't delay things. I will range around camp with Joseph, but make sure you give me the warning sign if the danger approaches camp.

"How!" replied Wabash, while he fastened the string on his bow and pushing his knife and his tomahawk, which he had so far carried on his back, to the front. Then he disappeared behind the next prominent ledge on the bank.

Lefèvre then joined the *Halfbreed*, but after a brief counsel they separated again, and Lefèvre followed the creek downstream, while Joseph forded the stream and stretched himself out on the ground in a manner that enabled him as far as the darkness allowed to keep an eye on the wagon and the surrounding valley at all times.

The hours were passing. Sidney had relieved Robert, who had gone to sleep under the wagon, and nothing seemed to be interrupting the travelers' nightly peace.

The red glow that glides in short summer nights from the western sky on the northern horizon to the point of origin of the sun had already made it halfway through the sky. The well-fed horses were bedded down on the now cool ground, and in the state between dreaming and waking Sidney mechanically looked into the distance.

Suddenly, he thought he saw a figure that was approaching the horses slowly. He watched attentively and soon realized he wasn't mistaken, but that instead of one dark figure, he saw two that moved at times one after the other, and then next to one another, but seemed to be no bigger than a pair of raccoons. Indeed, that's what he thought it was, since wolves or grizzly bears would have alerted the horses.

In light of the putative game, his hunting instincts began to gain the upper hand over the strongly advised caution, and pushing his rifle to the front, he aimed it so that he only needed to lower his head a bit in order to aim at the target in question.

They on the other hand came closer and closer, drifted apart, and then Sidney clearly saw that while one withdrew, the other moved closer to the horse that was lying down the farthest away. While the figure changed its position, any similarity with a raccoon disappeared, and when Sidney then heard the drawn out cry of the cougar¹⁹⁶ echo muffled across the canyon, he became convinced that the long figure could only be one of the wild cats.

¹⁹⁶ *Jaguar*

Pressing his cheek on the rifle's shank and holding the weapon tightly, he readied himself to try his luck at such a noble specimen for the first time in his life. His heart beat faster, he strained his eyes trying to almost pierce the darkness, but the black object was still too far for him to shoot with certainty. Once more, the cry of the cougar—the Omaha's signal—could be heard, and the image that Sidney was watching all of a sudden became motionless. Silently Sidney crept forward, but he hadn't moved a foot yet when a hand appeared before his eyes and then took hold of the cocked hammer of his gun to prevent an accidental shot.

Abrupt fear took hold of the young man, but then he heard the *Halfbreed's* voice telling him not to move.

"It's a robber," the *Halfbreed* whispered, "a cunning robber, and we have to catch him alive."

Sidney didn't speak because he felt his blood run cold in his veins from the excitement, but then he followed the command almost mechanically and stayed as still as if a deep sleep had overtaken him.

The *Halfbreed* made no sound and appeared to be waiting for a sign, or for a certain point in time.

In the meantime, the mysterious figure began moving again and had approached the next horse. A soft, suspicious snort by the horse, which was answered by the other horses, seemed to have brought the figure to a decision, since before the snorting could be repeated, it stood up and revealed itself to have the black silhouette of a human being.

Sidney looked to the side, to the *Halfbreed* next to him, but the Indian was completely still and kept staring into another direction where Sidney himself could only see the dark plains.

Suddenly, the strange vibrating noise of a bowstring that had been released could be heard, and in the blink of an eye a horse jumped up and ran into the night snorting wildly.

"Calm the animals the best you can," the *Halfbreed* whispered to his young companion when he noticed how the excitement spread through the herd. The he crept with incredible agility in the direction of the robber, who had remained undecided in the kneeling position, apparently looking around for a direction that allowed him to flee most easily.

Sidney fulfilled the task to the best of his ability; his movements, however, must have awakened the suspicion of the Indian robber because he hadn't yet taken hold of the lead line of the horse closest to him when the black figure jumped to its feet and was ready to run away.

The *Halfbreed* jumped up at the same time. He dropped his gun to not be impeded in his pursuit, but at the same moment a shot rang out from the opposite direction and the fleeing robber rolled on the ground.

Joseph assumed he had been heavily wounded and first hurried to calm the horses before they might flee altogether; when he turned around, the hit Indian jump up with lightning speed and ran toward the creek where he disappeared like a shadow into its deep bed.

Joseph now avoided taking up a useless pursuit because it took all his might, and that of his companions who had hurried over, to calm the panicked animals. Lefèvre on the other hand didn't help until after he had loaded his gun (it had been him who had fired the shot) and made the strange cant of the panther¹⁹⁷ as a signal for the Omaha.

"*Sacré mille tonnerre!*" he exclaimed so loud that everyone could hear, "the wolves must have been fasting forever to make them attack the horses in camp; but great, I got at least one. Hello! Joe, go and calm Franziska, the child might just think we pass the time with shooting like young boys!"

Joseph on the other hand was already next to the wagon. As soon as he had noticed that the herd was settling down, he had nothing better to do than to whisper some words to Sidney and then to hurry over to the trembling Franziska. He managed to be convincing enough to make her last trace of fear and horror disappear, so that Franziska, in order to calm her father's worries in turn, easily fell into a conversation with him that explored how to best make light of the disruption, as Lefèvre termed it.

"I just wonder why our Omaha friends are not here," she said, looking around with a hint of concern.

"The Bear and his wife?"¹⁹⁸ Lefèvre asked laughing, "they are asleep on the bank, strengthening themselves with a healthy sleep for the next hike. Yes, my daughter, Wabash doesn't like to move unless there is a real emergency; as long as he is asleep, we can sleep as well." Everyone looked over to the designated spot; and

¹⁹⁷ *Panther*

¹⁹⁸ *der Bär und seine Bäarin*

indeed, the two figures wrapped in their blankets were just like they had been the night before. This seemed plausible to everyone except Sidney who was familiar with part of the danger. Nobody except Joseph and Lefèvre knew that one of the blankets had been artificially propped up by the Omaha's wife.

Half an hour later, quiet reigned once again in the camp. However, nobody had returned to sleep aside from Andree and his daughter. Instead, taking turns, the men patrolled the camp in pairs or held watch in front of the fire. The search for the escaped horse was for postponed good reason until the break of dawn.

When Lefèvre and Joseph sat by the fire, each one deep in thought, the Omaha suddenly joined them. The joyful expression the Indian's appearance caused proved sufficiently that they had been greatly worried about him. Lefèvre, who knew the Omaha's quiet ways, didn't hesitate to ask him about his newest adventures.

"The man who eats the buffalo hump," the Indian replied indifferently.

"What? The Pawnee medicine man?" Lefèvre and Joseph asked in unison.

The Indian nodded assent.

"Your eyes have not deceived you?" the *Halfbreed* continued. "Consider how far away from the Missouri we are, and it must be a really deep seated desire for revenge that must make a Pawnee cross the mountains to where death looms everywhere for him."

"If you trust your eyes more than my tongue, confirm it for yourself," Wabash replied while taking something from his belt and holding it into the light of the fire.

"In the name of everything that is holy," Lefèvre exclaimed when I saw the bloody trophy, "it's the Pawnee's scalp. This is the cleanest any man's skin has ever been pulled over his ears."¹⁹⁹

"Certainly, it's the Pawnee's scalp," the *Halfbreed* added. "I would have recognized it among thousands by the serrated swan's feather on his whirl. But Wabash, I thought you had given up this undignified custom for the old missionary?"

"Taking scalps does not give me pleasure anymore," the Omaha replied, throwing the not-yet-cold scalp on the ground in front of him with an expression that made it clear how much he disliked giving up his trophy. "Just took the thing for you; otherwise you would not have believed me."

"Fine Wabash," the *Halfbreed* replied. "Don't let anyone see the scalp, it would terrify them."

"My brother is wise," Wabash said, carefully picking up the scalp and shaking the sticky sand out of the hair. "My brother is very wise. The blue-eyed squaw wouldn't like looking at it, and she wouldn't shake my hand anymore. I will hide the scalp; I will sew it into my leggings to be safe. Nobody can see it there."

After the Indian had finished, Lefèvre burst out laughing in his usual manner. "Nobody can tell me that Wabash isn't clever!" he whispered to the *Halfbreed*.

"Wants to hide the scalp on his own body to make it disappear. Joe, my son, let him

¹⁹⁹ *so zierlich abgeschnitten als nur jemals einem Menschen die Haut über die Ohren gezogen wurde.* There were different ways of taking the scalp of enemies. Some involved simply making a square cut and forcefully ripping a strip of hair off the head. The method here is almost surgical. Here, the entire scalp was taken by making a semi circular cut above the ears and tearing all the skin of the head, something that required great force and precision.

have this pleasure. Whether he carries it along like this or not, he won't let anyone see it."

"Wabash has promised me and the missionary not to engage in this barbaric custom, and Wabash will keep his word. But if we let him have a single scalp, his wild passions will be reawakened. He will go on the warpath just to obtain these trophies and try to make up for lost time with renewed vigor what he missed out on for a couple of years."

The Indian had listened attentively, but when he heard the *Halfbreed* speak, he dug up a rock with his hand from the loose sand, securely tied the scalp to it, and then, swinging it a couple of times over his head in a circular manner, threw it into the river. A second later, when the water splashed, Joseph gave the Omaha his hand. "My brother is not only a brave warrior," he said amicably, "but he also worthy to shake the hand of the blue eyed girl;" and after that nobody mentioned the issue again.

After this preliminary matter the Omaha began to give his report on how he had managed to find the robbers and then kill the medicine man.

According to his story, he had followed the creek upstream to the cliffs after they had separated. Judging by the tracks they had seen by the edge of the valley, their pursuers must have been hidden there. Soon after he arrived at the cliffs, two men, who were talking in Pawnee language, had waded down the river not too far from him. He had immediately recognized the medicine man by his voice, but couldn't say who the other man was. He understood from their conversation that they

had brought their horses to the western edge of the valley and had now returned to shoot several of the company's horses to slow their progress down.

Neither the Omaha nor his companions knew whether the motive was in fact anything else but a desire for personal revenge, but everyone agreed that the medicine man had hatched the plan. The killing of the indispensable horses was of course a slow, but certain revenge, since he by himself lacked the means and thus would have been unable to do much else.

Wabash, who assumed with certainty that the robbers would return the same way they had left, had given the agreed upon warning call and then had climbed down into the river where he was going to ambush the two. After Lefèvre's shot was heard, he had moved back to the creek's bank, just in time to see one the fleeing men run through the stream a short distance away from him by the foot of the cliffs. Soon there after he had seen the second robber who was sprinting to exactly the spot where Wabash lay hidden, except for his head, which rose up from behind the bank.

Calmly, he had let him come close, so close that he could comfortably split his head with his sharp tomahawk; and that he hadn't missed, well, the two hunters knew that because they had seen irrefutable proof.

As Wabash reported, the medicine man had sustained a heavy, bleeding wound in the upper arm from being shot, and then he himself had managed to execute the blow from the tomahawk with such luck and precision that the man sunk to the ground without a sound after being hit. He was so astonished when he recognized the medicine man that he deemed it necessary to keep the scalp as proof.

The events that had occurred were clear now, and the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre felt relieved that they didn't have to fear the medicine man's revenge any longer, since his aim had apparently been to prepare their entire group's downfall.

"He blindly went to his own demise," the *Halfbreed* said with a hint of pity. "What was his reason to behave with hostility toward us at the Eau Qui Cours? He caused the brutal death of his son, which led him to experience unforgiving hatred toward us and to feel felt justified in seeking his revenge, but he became his own victim."

"The medicine man was a cunning traitor as long as he was alive," Lefèvre confirmed, "but I can't shed the suspicion that that jaundiced looking priest played a part in the whole affair and as a result bears some responsibility for the death of this man. But I would like to know who accompanied the medicine man all this time."

"Not a white man, but not a Pawnee either," the Omaha answered, "because he could only communicate with difficulty."

"Whoever it may be," Lefèvre said, "he will hardly dare to come back near us after having been convinced that we are not easy victims. Admittedly, we have lost the horse already, but this doesn't slow us down."

"But it will be difficult to keep the whole affair a secret, in particular in front of Robert and Sidney," the *Halfbreed* remarked.

"That's not necessary," replied Lefèvre, "on the contrary, the young people's vigilance will be doubled. We can continue to let Franziska and her father believe that

the horse was torn up by wolves, since, I think, by the time day breaks nothing but the skeleton will be left."

"As my name is Lefèvre," the trapper answered, "I heard the arrow penetrate the full side of the poor animal, as if it had hit a tight drum. Yes, yes, the Pawnees know how to use a bow."

"But not better than the Omaha!" Wabash complained because he didn't like hearing when another tribe was praised.

"Nobody comes close to you in warfare," Lefèvre replied laughing. "You don't have to get angry when I give the Pawnee credit for being handy with a bow. In any case, I regret that the detour I had to take kept me from arriving early enough to send the treacherous medicine man a bullet before he aimed for the poor horse."

Robert and Sydney now approached, and since the day had begun to break already, they stopped their watch, but stayed a while yet by the freshly fueled fire, until the first ray of the sun rose like a flame behind the eastern mountains and shot its warmth across the dewy wilderness.

When Franziska approached with a cheerful expression to help with the preparation of the food, and Andree lit his ever-present meerschaum pipe, Robert and Sidney had already been briefed of the dangers they might possibly encounter in the Ute Indians' territory. Last night's event had had no effect on their cheerful mood, but their entire countenance revealed that they didn't misunderstand their task and were prepared to brave the circumstances.

They mourned the dead horse, and tears welled up in the young girl's eyes when she saw a pack of wolves on the prairie not too far away. They were crowding around an amorphous object and tore at it. It was one of the horses that she had become used to seeing in front of the wagon since they had left Missouri and whose burden she had often tried to lighten with friendly words when her father used the whip. Feeling sad, she looked over, but her habits made her hurry in order to leave the valley in which, according to her, "an abominable crime had been committed by wild beasts."

"Calm down, my daughter," Lefèvre said, who couldn't help expressing his empathy for the sorrows of his darling and comforted her in his usual, rough manner. "Calm down, the poor horse shall be avenged. I will not spare powder and lead and shoot so many wolves that we can line the entire Missouri River. And," he continued with a sideways glance in the *Halfbreed's* direction, "I can assure you that the wolf that committed this crime against the horse has been punished."

Franziska smiled when she heard the old hunter's words and looked around to see the body of the terrible murderer.

"We have already taken care of him," Lefèvre continued, noticing the body language. "We wanted to spare you the sight of something so terrible and threw him into the creek; just ask Joseph and Wabash, they are my witnesses. I fired the first shot myself, and just look at the Omaha's tomahawk, how bloody it still is from the blow that split its head!" And the old hunter laughed so heartily that even the always-serious Andree began laughing.

Not without a hint of displeasure did the *Halfbreed* listen to Lefèvre describing the nightly scene and at the same time amuse himself at the expense of the young girl. But when—following the request—he looked at the tomahawk on whose sheath the bloody traces had dried, he realized that it wasn't a lack of sensitivity, but rather the opposite that had prompted Lefèvre to explain the implement that was bound to draw attention to itself during the course of the day. The Indian too understood the trappers hint because without moving as much as a muscle in his face, he pulled the bloody ax from his belt and threw it onto the sandy ground in front of him. He scrubbed it back and forth until the rays of the rising sun shone in the shiny surface as it were a mirror.

The small group departed later than usual on this day for the remainder of the journey. One of the Omaha's horses took the place of the dead one, and the Indian woman received a place in the wagon—a change that found Franziska's full approval. Then they moved on westward, across mountains and rivers, through valleys and canyons.

This first, serious accident had increased everyone's suspicion and worry about the future to a higher degree than the hunters wanted to admit to themselves. The consequence was not only a more intense vigilance at night, but also during the entire journey itself. Since the Pawnee's death the escaped bandit now had two horses at his disposal and could ride them alternately, hurrying far ahead of them on the Emigrant Trail. They could expect to see him come out of a canyon or from behind a cliff with a mob of Ute at any point in time in order to rob them or kill them. They

couldn't hope for help from other emigrant trains since the main bulk of them had remained many day's journeys behind them, or, equipped with double the horses, had moved too far ahead of them.

Solely relying on themselves and their own power, they took every precaution to increase their safety and at all times kept in such order that it would have been difficult for any possible enemy to come close to them undetected.

Days, weeks now passed in undisturbed quiet. Good fortune seemed to favor them; since only a few small herds had camped and pastured alongside the Emigrant Trail their horses only suffered lack of food only on rare occasions. Even in the most desolate, rocky deserts the hunters almost always managed to find a hidden spring, which sometimes was far from camp, yet always offered its riches to keep real want far away from the small caravan.

23.Salt Lake City

By the western base of the mighty mountain range that is known as the Wasatch Mountains is the holy Mormon City of Salt Lake. The lake itself, after which it was named, still lies half a day's journey to the west, and the city derives its water supply partially from the river Jordan, which connects the south-lying Ute Lake with the Great Salt Lake, and partially from the numerous springs and creeks that begin in the Wasatch Mountains and then flow into the Great Salt Lake as well.

Salt Lake City is still young, but inhabited by a people who—even though many accusations lodged against it are true—has the energy that is required to create

an inviting oasis in the middle of one of the most terrifying of the deserts that is so characteristic of this latitude.

The tired wanderer on his way to the Great Salt Lake drags himself through those regions day after day. His eye doesn't behold anything but arid, barren plains, naked hills, and serrated, steep mountains. The shady forest and the gurgling creek ornamented by nature become strange and almost unknown to him, and if he accidentally comes across a group of crippled black poplar trees,²⁰⁰ in whose vicinity a meager spring comes out of the sunburnt, gravelly ground, then he praises his good fortune and lustfully stretches himself out in the shade, perhaps dreaming of the paradisiacal lands that lay hundreds of miles behind him.

If he then finally approaches the city, which is ornamented by carefully maintained trees and groves and surrounded rather gracefully by expansive, cultivated fruit fields, then the contrast of the shimmering green oasis to the eternally yellowish-grey, endless desert has the effect of being twice as pleasurable for his eye and heart, and with delight he will greet the region that human industriousness and perseverance have managed to transform into a "diamond in the desert".

²⁰⁰ *Pappelweiden* here: *Populus Nigra*, a species of the cottonwood not native to the US. The black poplar tree is in fact native to Great Britain, where it is on the endangered trees list today.

This is how the holy Salt Lake City is situated. Separated from the rest of the world by vast spaces in between, the city is its own kingdom, just like the sect that inhabits it keeps to itself and apart from all other religions of the earth.²⁰¹

Despite the serious appearance, which the population has taken on due to its overly strict religious observances, fun and cheerfulness are not absent from the community. Such gaiety, for instance, could be witnessed when the prophet, the apostles, and the fathers of the city gathered together with their numerous wives and children to pass the time in innocent play and dancing.

It was on a Sunday afternoon when one of the boulevards that ran from the North to the South offered a sight to behold. The religious service, which for now was held in a shed that served as the church, was over and everyone had taken some refreshments at home. Since the shadows were already growing longer and the burning heat of the day had given way to a refreshing cool, every patriarch hurried to follow the friendly invitation by the prophet to walk over to the green space in front of his house in order to pass the rest of the day and the evening there. The street the prophet lived on came alive and from all the side streets came the most colorful groups of people, taking the shortest way to the gathering place.

A young, respectable-looking Mormon walked with his two wives, who tenderly held his arm and tried to compete with each other in their affection; after him, an older brother in the faith who preferred to offer none of his wives his arm because their

²⁰¹ Möllhausen uses the term *Sekte*, a term that had a neutral connotation in the 19th century. The term took on a pejorative meaning in German in the 1960s and is more appropriately translated as "cult" in modern texts.

number had already grown to sixteen, and, if he did not want to cause jealousy, he would have needed sixteen arms; there walked two friends, arm in arm, whose wives and children looked like an army and had walked ahead of them chattering joyfully; somewhere else, there was a young man with only one wife, who modestly walked along the walls of the houses, where he nevertheless attracted the attention of a group of younger and older girls, who, recognizing a potential husband in him, walked across the street to begin a conversation with him. There were single men, too, and others who wended their way deep in serious conversation.

There, the prophet waited for his guests, and he and each one of his twenty-two wives made the most sincere effort to fulfill their respective roles as host and hostesses.

After a short time, the gathering had grown significantly and talkativeness and cheerfulness seemed to have increased to the same degree because there wasn't a single person visible who was not engaged in conversation according to his or her inclinations. Of course, the children found it boring to be with the adults and immediately after having arrived, they left their parents and joined a crowd of their comrades who were romping around. They were received with loud applause and immediately absorbed into the circle of their peers.

No less cheerful, but not quite as noisy the area where the children played was the gathering in front of the prophet's house. Everyone laughed and joked, played games and redeemed pledges, sang and talked politics; family matters were discussed and new marriages arranged. It was as if everything, all the happiness, all the jokes,

had been saved for this one evening and were used on this particular night to make a great impression.

The prophet's wife number fourteen asked the eighth wife of one of the apostles when her spouse thought he might celebrate his twenty-first marriage; The apostle himself introduced his new bride to everyone, and to his twenty wives as well. She was an old spinster, who had only recently arrived from Sweden, where she had waited in vain for many years for a loving heart. She had recently converted, and then pressured the prophet with the order to find her a husband and at the same time open the gates to eternity for her. The spinster's gaze fell on a young, wealthy Mormon,^{202*} who in turn tried to hide in the crowd, fearing that he might have to be "sealed" to the Swedish woman by order of the prophet because he had only four wives. Some men stood around discussing where they might quarter the Mormon emigrants that were expected over the course of the summer, others discussed the California emigrants, who might purchase provisions and pack animals in deals that were advantageous to the Mormons. Somewhere else again, men talked about a punitive expedition against a treacherous Indian tribe, or about making improvements in town, but in any case, even though people held different opinions, everything was discussed in such an orderly manner that it became clear that the prophet had

²⁰² * *Ueber das Mormonenthum* vergl. Möllhausen's *Tagebuch einer Reise vom Mississippi nach den Küsten der Südsee*, pag.. 435.

* For more on the Mormons and their customs see Möllhausen's *Diary of a Trip along the Mississippi to the Gulf*. (Footnote from the original)

extraordinary powers because the highest religious and worldly powers lay in his hands, and he had the right to intercede in private and family matters at any time.

Among the bustle that night, there were three figures who only stood out because they didn't separate from one another, and once in a while—if no one was eavesdropping—spoke with each other. Everyone seemed to know them, even though the fashionable, fine clothes of two of them showed that they couldn't have been in Salt Lake City for long.

"Good evening, my friend Buschmark! Good evening, Harrison my friend!" it came from all sides when the trio leisurely pushed its way through a group of chattering women or joking men, "we hope to be able to greet you as brothers soon!"

"Certainly, my brothers and sisters!" Buschmark crowed with a sweet, intimate expression on his face. "Even though you don't hold me worthy of brotherhood yet, you will allow a prophet to call you by such a sweet name!"

"Certainly, certainly!" they answered laughing; and when the three had moved on, it echoed: "they are worth being baptized, they hold great promise for an important part in our community."

Buschmark silently chuckled when he heard such pleasantries because they seemed to be a guarantee for the execution of his plans. Harrison on the other hand didn't flinch and kept walking, looking as serious as if he had converted to Mormonism a long time ago and was by now at least an apostle. The third man, who was in a sense Buschmark and Harrison's leader, distinguished himself from his companions in more than one way.

He was a man of approximately thirty-six, tall and lean, and had a figure that seemed to be made to endure long-lasting deprivations with ease. In spite of the blue eyes and the plain blond hair—traits that often soften a rough look—his face showed a conspicuous expression brutality and hardness. A reddish, thin beard partially covered the thin lips of his large mouth, which made the two rows of ivory-like teeth even the more visible. Teeth he always showed— a habit that did not exactly contribute to making his face more appealing. He was dressed in a simple fashion, namely in a violet, large-plaid calico shirt that covered his torso. It was tied around his waist with a wide leather belt, which also held a pair of Mexican trousers or *Calzoneras*. He wore a common grey felt hat on his head, and on his feet he had Indian moccasins—a custom that was common in the City by the Great Salt Lake because there was a noticeable shortage of shoemakers.

But he must have known Harrison very well because when they intermittently whispered their most certainly unflattering remarks about their surroundings to each other, then it was as if they compared the old times to now and commemorated the past. Even Buschmark wasn't safe from their ridicule when he expressed his feigned or real pleasure about the way he was being treated. Of course, they didn't let him know that because his friendship was too important to them to dare rouse his suspicions in an unnecessary manner.

"Come now," said Buschmark's and Harrison's companion, who was known among his brethren in the faith as Joel, "come, let's take a seat on the fence. The sun

has gone down and the Ute Indians will be with us within the next half hour at the latest."

Both men followed their leader quietly across the wide road, where a fence made of strong boards separated the garden surrounding the house from the road. The sat down so that they could see their surroundings and nobody could approach them unnoticed.

Joel was first to speak. He turned to Buschmark and emphasized that he wouldn't give up the demands he had made earlier. "I repeat for the last time," he said, "that I will not take as much as a single step for your money if you are not coming along; not even if you double the offer. I don't see why you want to stay behind if Harrison has decided to come along. Or do you think the whole affair might go wrong and you might lose your life? Have no worries. It won't happen without a struggle, but I will make sure that my Ute friends show up in sufficient numbers to bring the business to its conclusion, even without our help."

Buschmark had moved around several times on the uncomfortable seat while Joel spoke. He was certain that he wasn't interested in an endeavor that might cost him his life; and when the thought of the pretty German girl clouded his mind, the image of the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre appeared at the same time, and he feared the two men more than anything in the world. He had no choice and had to make a decision if he didn't want to lose the opportunity to profit entirely; or, what was to him just as terrible, let Browns' and Harrison have all of it.

"Well then," he replied after thinking about what Joel had said, "I will come with you, I trust your promise to take along as many Indians as necessary in order to take care of the matter without placing us in danger. But don't forget that the girl is my exclusive property. You will receive the agreed upon sum for the *Halfbreed's* and the damned Frenchman's scalp. You may do as you please with the rest of the group's members."

"And do you think," Joel asked with a derisive smirk, "that the girl's family will be quiet about experiences like that? No, your honor, —I say that because I hope to greet you as a judge in our blessed town one day—leave that to the Ute. The fellows will receive their blankets and their whiskey, for which they have to fulfill their part of the commitment. If they want to acquire the company's equipment, they may do so, but they have to take care of anyone who is in their way first."

Buschmark nodded his head contentedly. Harrison, who had sat silently all this time on the other hand, now spoke.

"This won't cause a commotion in town?" he asked, "if we disappear so suddenly, and then later the news of a "massacre"²⁰³ make the rounds here?"

"Don't worry," the Mormon said, "regarding the news of a massacre. Emigrants being massacred by the Ute is nothing new in these regions, and that the slaughtered victims are always the "gentiles"²⁰⁴ or non-Mormon is pure coincidence," he added with his usual sardonic laugh. "The Indians have been charged with so many things, they can take the credit for this one, too. Incidentally, the emigrant massacre

²⁰³ The term appears in the original

²⁰⁴ The term appears in the original

will have no more significance than the death of a grasshopper, and even less so because we are only dealing with a bunch of stray Germans and the overly educated redskin. When we receive news of a "defraudation"²⁰⁵, we will gather a militia, of course chase the crooks into the mountains, and then return empty-handed." And once again, the Mormon laughed in his spiteful manner.

"What will people here say if we disappear for some time without notice?" he began again after a while.

"Ha, ha, ha, they will say that you deserve the Lord's blessing because even though you are only a prospective member of the only true faith, you already try to bring lost souls to the Lord's house. Yes, Buschmark, you will be surprised about the reception here when you return with your German darling and request to be baptized and married at once. But," he continued while wagging his finger at the happily grinning notary, "I advise you to also be "sealed"²⁰⁶ to one or two daughters of influential Mormons as well if you don't want all women here at the Salt Lake to be your enemy."

"Have no worries," replied Buschmark, who only thought of Franziska at this moment. Don't worry, I won't miss anything that will earn me the respect of my fellow citizens and has the potential to make my life pleasurable at the same time. But before I settle down here for good, I have to make a trip to California for reasons that

²⁰⁵ The term appears in the original

²⁰⁶ The German term *ansiegeln* is used in the original, but emphasized through quotation marks.

Harrison know and which bring him back to the United States as well. But the girl shall stay here while I am gone, that is under the supervision of the prophet."

"It is true," Harrison said now, "the journey is absolutely necessary, but our absence should only be only for half a year. I consider this trip as the last step that separates me from a happy, content life." He dropped his head onto his chest and fell into deep thought. Buschmark on the other hand became more talkative. He was enchanted by the possibilities that opened before and thought neither about his old companions in St. Louis nor about the crimes that would bring about his desired outcome.

On the green space in front of the prophet's house, people had in the meantime begun to light some lamps and lanterns, which made the nearby surroundings fade into a deep darkness. The three men naturally looked at the noisy, brightly lit-up group of people, and hence they didn't perceive how a black figure quietly approached them and then stood in front of them. Even when the figure uttered Joel's name and turned to him, he couldn't immediately make out who it was, but quietly asked: "Joshua, is that you?"

"I am Joshua," the figure answered approaching them.

"Sit down with us," Joel said, and moving to the side a bit motioned to the stranger to take a seat between Harrison and him.

Harrison and Buschmark tried to take a closer look at the man's face, but they could only discern that he was an Indian who had cloaked himself into his wool

blanket because he didn't want to be recognized. But after a few words it became obvious that the stranger was the Ute chief Joel had been expecting.

"Good time over there," Joshua began in broken English after having taken a seat on the fence, "good time, many woman, many man, many child: Good Mormon everywhere, Joshua good Mormon too, he baptize two time."

The Indian avoided talking about things he had come for, partly because he wanted Joel to believe that he didn't deem the robbery he was asked to commit as terribly important, but he also wanted to know more about the character of the Mormon's companions.

"Let the good Mormons be good Mormons, my friend," Joel said impatiently, "and don't praise your righteousness too much, even if had been baptized a hundred times, you would remain the greatest crook who ever shot an arrow between a white man's shoulders."

"Joshua never kill Mormon," the savage answered with pride, sitting up straight.

"If I pulled a hair from your scalp for every drop of Mormon blood you shed so cunningly, and for every horse and child you have stolen from the Mormons, you would be as bald as if a Blackfoot had taken your scalp!"

The Indian simply shrugged his shoulders when he heard this accusation, as if he wanted to indicate that he felt it wasn't worth his time to argue. Joel continued: "Whatever you brown-skinned scoundrel may have done, I don't care. One thing I

know about you is that you will never bother a Mormon if a gentile is there. But speak now, and let us know the success of your espionage."

"Joshua come from far, has dry tongue," the Indian replied rather than beginning his report.

"Yes, I kept you in mind," replied Joel, pulling out a bottle and handing it to the savage, "drink until your throat is on fire, but remember that this is the last drop of whiskey if you and your band aren't faithful and execute my orders in a timely manner."

Joshua two-handedly grabbed the bottle, which Joel used mainly as a reward to assure the indigenous people became his willing servants. After Joshua had taken a long draft from the bottle, he placed it in his lap, but held it tightly with both hands because he feared it might be taken from him again.

"Joshua much like whiskey," the Ute said finally, holding his nose to the bottle and smelling the fragrance of the firewater. "Joshua like whiskey, and do lots for whiskey; kill many white men and steal white woman!"

"That's good, Joshua," replied Joel, while he stopped the Indian who was about to lift the bottle back up to his mouth. "Fine, but don't drink until you have reported the success of your trip to us."

The Ute put the bottle down with hesitation, and after having looked in all directions, he began: "I be six day journey away from here, other side of Wasatch Mountains. Many Ute in camp there, twenty, thirty, hundred warrior, all listen to me. Potawatomi there, too —"

"The Potawatomi?" Buschmark and Harrison asked quickly and in unison.

"Potawatomi there, with them," the Ute repeated without letting himself be interrupted much in his story.

"Potawatomi and two horse; Potawatomi friend scalped—"

"Scalped? The medicine man scalped?" the two exclaimed in a concerned tone.

"Potawatomi friend scalped," the Ute repeated. "Potawatomi say very good, Pawnee eyes too big, mouth too big."

"He must have bludgeoned him himself," Joel interrupted indifferently. "Who knows if your Pawnee was trustworthy?"

"He was trustworthy," Harrison replied. "I have known the fellow for a long time, and he never deceived me, but it is a different question whether we can trust the Potawatomi *Halfbreed*."

"If it turns out that he has a proclivity for treason," the Mormon remarked, "one Potawatomi more or less won't matter in the end."

"Certainly not," Buschmark started, "the Potawatomi's life mustn't be jeopardized, I need it, and we need it under any circumstances!"

"It is true!" Harrison emphasized, "however ruthless the man may be, he may yet help us significantly with services that will have a positive influence on your pocketbook as well, and thus, Joel, make sure he stays alive; but, we have to watch him closely."

"All right, all right," the Mormon replied, laughing derisively. "I won't harm him, but let Joshua finish his report."

"Potawatomi friend kill white man horse and white man daughter," the Ute continued with his story, "and now everyone travel slow. Everyone come to narrow pass in Wasatch Mountain in eight day. Good opportunity for ambush. Potawatomi say and I say: Joel must make quick." With these words the Ute lifted the bottle back up to his mouth, as if he meant to signal that he nothing else to say, and drank until there wasn't a drop left.

"Well, what do you think about the news?" Joel asked his two companions, who had also listened attentively to the Indian's words.

"I think, we mustn't waste time," Harrison answered briefly and in a determined manner.

"I agree," Buschmark concurred, "but I wonder whether I should stay here another day and then follow you, in light of such a hasty departure."

"You come along," the Mormon interrupted him, "you come along, and we will leave the day after tomorrow in the early morning hours. Or would you rather follow and run the risk of being picked up by some roaming Ute Indians, be robbed, and potentially slaughtered? Consider that you are not known to be a Mormon yet, which makes it highly advisable for you to stay in my company, since I can vouch for you."

The last reason had the greatest effect on Buschmark, more than anything they had previously negotiated, and the cowardly notary declared without hesitation that he would be ready at a certain hour to depart with Joel and the Ute.

They discussed some other things pertaining to the trip, but Joshua no longer participated because the latter, after several vain attempts to regain his lost balance on the narrow seat, he first fell into the grass, and then into a deep sleep.

When everyone else saw that the congregation on the green plaza was preparing to return home, they rejoined the cheerful crowd to exchange a few words of goodbye with one or the other. At last, they met the prophet, whom they briefed on their planned journey, and who seemed extremely pleased and encouraged Buschmark to not give up his pursuit of the young German girl. Even Joel and Harrison received praise for their willingness to support Buschmark in his endeavor, because "heaven will reward you for it, my dear brothers and friends," he said, " if you save the soul of a young girl from eternal damnation and lead it into the holy circle of Mormon brotherhood, especially you, dear Buschmark, since you will place yourself into the holy number of Latter Day Saints through the bonds of marriage. But, go in peace; you have a good supporter in the faith in brother Joel in moments of danger. Trust him, he will guide you until your eyes are opened through baptism and you are able to see eternal salvation. Go in peace, and may the souls of those martyrs who died for our faith watch over you and protect you. Should you encounter obstacles on your way, face them with head-on. Worry about your own life, and don't spare the life of a gentile; if they die, it is to be taken as atonement for our brothers

and sisters who were decimated at Nauvoo.²⁰⁷ Now, God bless you, I hope to see you once more before you leave."

Then, the three companions said a brief goodbye. Joel's fanaticism had been stoked considerably by the prophet's words, but his stony, immobile features betrayed nothing of what was going on inside of him. Harrison too showed no expression aside from a slight, scornful smile. Buschmark's squinty eyes on the other hand showed glee about the future, which seemed to be turning out entirely according to his desires and wishes.

He, who otherwise watched his riches suspiciously and tried to increase them through legitimate and illegitimate means, and neither had feelings himself, nor recognized them in others, had become almost childish from the raw passion he felt for the German immigrant girl. The closer he came to his goal, the more he lost his usual cleverness and caution. He didn't realize that his two companions continued to whisper to each other.

Cheerfully he walked toward Joel's apartment where he and Harrison were staying. Next to the fence, across from the green plaza near the prophet's house, the Ute was snoring loudly from indulging in firewater

²⁰⁷ *Die Mormonenstadt Nauvoo in Illinois am Mississippi wurde im Jahre 1842 von der benachbarten Bevölkerung niedergebrannt; vgl. Möllhausen's Tagebuch einer Reise vom Mississippi 1. Aufl. Pag 439.* The Mormon enclave of Nauvoo in Illinois was burned in 1842 by the people living in the vicinity; see Möllhausen's *Tagebuch* p.435. (Footnote in the original)

24. The Nightly Revelry

On the foot of the eastern Wasatch Mountains, approximately seventy-five miles from Salt Lake City, the well-traveled Emigrant Trail splits into two main branches by the Bear River. One leads north, to Fort Hall and Oregon, while the other one continues westward and takes travelers to the Mormon capital. The Bear River itself is a lovely, crystal-clear mountain stream, which comes from the south, takes up numerous creeks from the mountains, and then in a wide arc flows northward before finally heading toward the south again and into the Great Salt Lake. At the point where the stream crosses the Emigrant Trail, the contours of innumerable fresh ash heaps and burnt-out fires became visible as far as the eye could see. The latter in particular were sometimes only recognizable by having left black marks on the ground and the spring floods and the sandstorms of late summer had oftentimes blurred their contours.

The spot is a favored place to camp for all the caravans traveling to California and the Salt Lake, and one might in fact claim that there is hardly a traveler who hasn't rested there at least for a couple hours. This was always the case for the stagecoach, which crossed those wild regions with unbelievable speed because it had double or triple the horses harnessed in front.

The conveniences the Bear River offered on its banks and in its immediate vicinity to arriving travelers who wished to camp there were are certainly insignificant compared to the ones by the streams east of the Rocky Mountains; but the river offered joyfully what the ill- favored geography had given it. When luscious

vegetation is mirrored in its clear waters, they couldn't appear more cheerful, couldn't hit the rocky banks more impetuously or dance across the round, slick pebbles more easily.

The stream contained fish as well— that is beautiful trout, so big and so beautiful,²⁰⁸ the Allegheny Mountains could not produce better ones, and so delicious as only ones that were fished with a rod from a stream can be.

However, the valley itself, which is at times expansive, other times narrow, depending on whether the rising mountains retreat or close in on it, had been rather neglected by nature. So many herds had decided to rest in it, had pastured, and tried to make do between the thorny cacti and foul smelling wormwood, only to feel inclined to settle down and spend several hours ruminating.

The valley's main attraction, aside from the river, were several randomly scattered willow thickets, but even they looked rather sickly, since any man or animal resting in the vicinity or just passing by, felt inclined to consume them in their entirety. The former almost always needed a flexible switch or hard piece of wood for some purpose and thus cut down the first best tree, while horses, mules, cows, and sheep ruthlessly ate the leaves and buds, pulled everything down, and broke off whatever they could reach with their outstretched necks and uplifted heads.

The emigrant rest station is marked by other things beside ash heaps and old fire pits. That is, innumerable, bleached white bones from animals that once served the resting migrants as food are visible in every direction. Many of the animals, yes,

²⁰⁸ This repetition occurs in the original

probably most of them, may have died of privation after having using every last bit of strength to get there, but which ones did, and which ones didn't, is hard to discern from the bones because one looks just as hollow-eyed as the next, whether they show their horns in threatening manner, or have rolled pitifully to the side, or even thanks to the mood of a roaming Indian stand on the tips of their horns that were willfully pushed into the soft sand. The air has bleached everything white, and the wolves have gnawed everything down to the bone and polished it—skulls, spines, ribs and legs, and once in a while a hoof or a cloven hoof that seemed to have been too hard even for a wolf's teeth, but showed ample traces of its teeth where the latter had slipped on the hard horn.

The bare, high mountains with their serrated, torn slopes, with their canyons and caves, with the hiding places of the wild beasts, and the just as wild Shoshone and Ute Indians tower over everything, and only once in a while does the eye catch a glimpse of a dark fir forest that decorates the foot of the mountains and interrupts the solitude of this rocky desert for some moments.

At times when no caravans bring life to the valley around the stream, the entire landscape is a sad mountain wasteland; its barrenness is in harmony with the lack of vegetation at the higher elevations and is by no means disturbed by the presence of a pair of big ravens or a pack of wolves; no, in fact it is heightened.

On the fourth day after the gathering in the Salt Lake City, when Buschmark and Harrison were already on their way to cross the Bear River in the company of the Ute and the Mormon, the aforementioned valley was a terrifying sight—one that was

so bloody and so horrifying that it made even the animals of the forest tremble and stay in the protective cover of the cedar forest or in the canyons. On the western bank stood four or five mule-drawn wagons, but not in the usual order they would have observed if they had camped for the night, rather they looked as if they had been randomly driven there. The wagons themselves showed that something unusual had occurred because aside from several having their shafts broken, one of them lay far from the others and was overturned. The canvas covers dangled loosely to the side, crates and boxes, and sacks and bundles were strewn everywhere after they had been torn open and robbed of their contents. A dozen or so mules had been shot dead, most of them still hitched to a wagon, and it became immediately obvious that disaster had struck one of the light trading caravans, which, equipped with the fastest, strongest mules, had gotten well ahead of every other caravan.

What gave the scene of robbery and destruction the most terrible air were the horribly mutilated bodies of six men who could be found next to their dead pack animals or under their wagons, where the bullets and the numerous arrows from a hidden enemy had hit them.

Nobody's scalp had been touched, but their bodies were full of arrows, which made it clear that Indian robbers had lain in ambush and jumped the innocent emigrants before they had even had time to draw their weapons.

It was a woeful sight to look at this well equipped expedition, which had just a couple hours ago traveled along cheerfully through the wilderness and now lay bloody, dead, and destroyed. Those poor people; they had traveled hundreds of miles

only to find their horrible end here, and while the wolves fought over their torn limbs, their families at home prayed for their well being, for their happy arrival in California, and their sound return.

Ravens and crows circled above the scene of the murder crowing hoarsely; hungry coyotes circled suspiciously. In fact, they could have torn into the bodies because life had long left them. The ruthless bandits had taken the mules, which had not died during the first attack with them to their canyon; less to use them for work, but more to eat them or use them to bargain with their Mormon friends.

If only a small, armed group had arrived on the evening of the day the bold attack had taken place, then it could have easily tracked and punished the bandits because the band of savages, drunk on whisky,²⁰⁹ had neither thought of concealing its tracks, nor taking any safety precautions at their hideout.

The new path that had been broken through the thicket by thirty or so mules and perhaps twice as many Ute Indians even led several miles through the valley by the river until the well known Medicine Mountain was just east of it.

²⁰⁹ In the following passage the terms whiskey, firewater, cognac, rum, etc., and the terms cask and barrel are used interchangeably. While they have fixed meaning today (some of them are trademarked), it may have been the case that Möllhausen wasn't familiar with the differences. Rum at least had long had a fixed nomenclature— rum distilleries were New England's most prosperous industry and George Washington ordered rum for his inauguration in 1789. Rum is made from sugar, while cognac is made from grapes. Firewater on the other hand— a term that appears throughout the text—is often substituted for moonshine (illegally produced, not aged, whiskey made from corn) today, while whiskey is derived from grains or fermented grain mash. The terms chosen in what follows are used to accurately reflect the original's changing terms or lack of definition, but also for the ease of the reader.

There, the path turned to the west, into the mountains and lead into the group of serrated mountains that carried the name Needle Rock due to their high peaks and steep slopes. These peaks, which are only accessible to the agile Indians, have many caves and canyons and seem to be made to serve as a safe hideout for bandits.

The bandits had gathered in a small valley that was formed by several connected canyons and protected against the outside world by sky-high rocks. Since only a narrow path torn out by raging mountain waters lead to the hideout, they felt safe. They couldn't be attacked from anywhere but through the path, and since they were able to disperse quickly to all sides like squirrels, they felt safe from unexpected attacks and indulged in the pleasures that were the result of the successful holdup.

Yes, it was a wonderful carousal that was celebrated in this remote corner; it reached its grand finale when the falling darkness was held at bay by the lighting of tallow candles and Artemisia shrubs, and the light made human beings, the rock walls, and animals, appear like red-hot iron, or as if the blood that had been shed in the morning had not only tinged the murderers' soul, but also their bodies.

The hungry, languishing animals either stood around sadly or looked for single blades of grass between the rocks. Sadder sights yet were the three or four that had been slaughtered. The cannibals pulled and cut the carcasses, and as if driven by madness from hunger ate the still- twitching meat in its uncooked state. There was no shortage of provisions because the caravan had carried sacks of flour, sugar, and corn, several smoked hams, tin cans with pickled meats, vegetables, fruit, and other delicacies, which now lay strewn about; but what were such delicacies in the eyes of

the savages when they laid eyes on mules that were alive? But even the lust for meat vanished when some of the most savage ones of the band managed to drive a hole into the bottom of half a dozen small barrels and the aroma of cognac spread among them.

As if they had been touched by electricity, seventy or eighty warriors jumped up, cudgels and knives in hand, and a terrible pushing and fighting over the little barrels ensued because everyone wanted to be the first to take a drink . Some of the stronger Indians managed to restore a certain order by handing out smaller quantities in bottles and tin cups, but this simply meant that there were now fights over those smaller quantities and an occasional effective use of weapons. Ear-piercing screams filled the air; the cudgel hit someone's shaggy skull hard, and inaudibly someone plunged a knife into warm flesh; and yet, even in their dying moments, the frantic men still dipped the fist into the cask to bring the numbing drink to their mouth in a cupped hand.

Away from the fighting and drinking mob, leaning against a rock, stood Louis the Potawatomi *Halfbreed*. The rifle rested in the crook of his left arm, while his right hand cradled a revolver—one of four he had taken as booty from the robbery and now carried in his belt. His face, which he had painted black, shone with delight and glee as he watched the melee in front of him. He too loved whiskey more than his life, but he stayed away from the spot where Indians were clubbing and stabbing each other because he had already managed to secure an untouched cask for himself. Now he

was only waiting for the moment when the last Ute might fall to the ground unconscious so that he could begin his own orgy undisturbed.

He was ready to defend his goods until he took his last breath, but that wasn't necessary because the Indians who loved it as much as he did became increasingly unable to start a dispute over his treasure.

The Potawatomi laughed about the scene, even though it would have caused anyone else horror; the Indians didn't seem like human beings, but like a pack of devil ready s to indulge in all sort of evil passions and to fight each other.

Not a single one of the Ute was in his usual naked condition because since they had come into possession of the articles of clothing that were originally destined for the market in California, everyone had put on as many garments on his calloused body as humanly possible; not in the manner in which civilized people would have done so, but rather in the order in which they had fallen into their hands, or according to which they deemed best. One wore a fashionable coat on naked skin, over it a vest, while a silky garment for ladies was wrapped loosely around his hips; the red flannel shirt became an apron and black trousers became a jacket—all kinds of garments, but none were worn according to the dictates of fashion. The shaggy, black-haired heads remained uncovered, and only once in a while did someone wear a black beaver cap or a richly embroidered lady's hat, under which the shifty black eyes then gleamed like fiery coals. When the effects of the cognac set in, the Ute started to feel confined in the unfamiliar garments they were not used to and began tearing off their bodies what previously they had taken great pains to put on.

One after the other they fell to the ground; some to bleed to death from wounds, others to wake up again to their miserable existence after lengthy intoxication. Whoever fell down stayed down, at least for a while. If someone looked up with a glazed look and tried to stand up, then it wasn't long until the effect of the whiskey overcame him again and he fell over again, seemingly devoid of willpower, and fixing his last glance on the cask.

The whiskey began to run out,²¹⁰ the heap of the unconscious grew, and the echo repeating the exclamations from the Indians became muted. Only two old, withered figures sat around the last cask and tried to take last remaining liquor from one another with threatening, but empty gestures. The Potawatomi laughed when he saw the struggle of the two last ones awake, he laughed loud and derisively, but didn't dare sneak off to his own cask yet, since he feared even the clouded gaze of the inebriated men.

Suddenly, the vessel fell from weak hands, the two struggling men fell backwards, their heads hit the ground, and they remained in this position while the last contents of the dropped cask ran all over the rocks and mixed with the cognac spilled earlier earlier and the pools of blood.

Once again, the Potawatomi laughed. He turned to pick up his hidden treasure, but he had only taken a few steps when a blue sheen fell on the rock face in front of him and lit it up. This made him pause. He looked back. Then, once more, he laughed out loud—so loud that the echo answered him uncannily.

²¹⁰ *Leerer wurde die Umgebung der betäubenden Quellen.* (To become devoid of)

The cognac had reached one of the burnt down fires and ignited itself, sending cheerful flames across the rocky surface as far as the it had been touched by the liquid or managed to catch and retain quantities of it.

The quick fire crept into all corners and crevices and only changed color when it found clothing soaked with whiskey, fueling its weak, blue sheen angrily into a high, red flame.²¹¹ But when it reached some of the naked, unconscious creatures and tried to lick the liquid from underneath their bodies, or perhaps the remnants of their garments, the men began to twist in agony without being able to escape the terrible torture. Soon, the moaning became screaming, as if they were in hell,²¹² and the unfortunate men began to roll over one another in confusion.²¹³ The Potawatomi saw this and laughed; he laughed when one of the burning creatures rose with the agility of a cat, climbed up the rock face, and plunged himself into the next best chasm; he laughed when the blue flames died and muffled moans coming from the darkness marked the spot where the gruesome spectacle had taken place.

"What a waste of rum!" Louis said, looking at his surroundings. "I could have had something to drink for several days and several nights. Oh well, but nobody shall bother me now. I am going to drink until there isn't a drop left." He took his rifle and carefully climbed up the rock face where he had hidden the cognac behind a protruding ledge when he was coming in. After several minutes he arrived at the hiding place. Opening the cask with more skill than any Ute ever could have done, he

²¹¹ The quality and purity of alcohol was often determined by the color of its flame: blue meant high quality or purity.

²¹² *wie in einem Höllenpfuhl*

²¹³ *übereinander und durcheinander*

took a long draft from it and sat down between the rocks so that he might not fall over, but yet able to lift the cask to his mouth from time to time. An hour later, Louis was also unconscious; he was in a deep sleep and didn't notice how the stolen mules walked past him along with his own horses. The poor creatures! No longer being watched over by merciless human beings, they had taken the trail that led them back, and, as they knew quite well, to the water. One after the other climbed down the stair-like trail. Each one paused a second when it reached the Potawatomi, sniffed his motionless figure for a second, and then walked on casually. The clip-clap of the shod hooves could still be heard for a while, and then silence fell on the pass and the secluded valley because the sighs and moans of the intoxicated men faded; a state of deep drunkenness had made their physical pain vanish.

When the eastern sky began to turn red, the sound of hooves came once again from the pass, but the horses were moving up the mountain this time. In the shadow of the overhanging rock ledge they looked like free roaming animals without an owner, but upon a closer look it became clear that each horse did in fact have a rider, but that they had simply dismounted and were leading their horses by the reins to ease their burden. From the curses and maledictions the first man uttered with every uncertain step, and from the muffled silence of the other three, it was clear that the mood among them was not the best.

Before the three lonely travelers even came to the spot where Louis was sleeping off his state of drunkenness, it had become day and the four wanderers could be recognized as the four men who had gathered in the Mormon capital. First, there

was Joel, his dark features facing the ground; Buschmark followed him; or rather, he followed Joel's horse. The fearful notary seemed to have not only lost his self-confidence, but also the trust in his Mormon friend because his eyes shifted from one side to the other, and if one of the horses snorted or stumbled, or even set a rock loose with its feet, which then tumbled downhill, he was so startled as if complete horror had taken a hold of him and tried to move closer to Joel, but wasn't able to because the latter's horse was between them.

Harrison followed in his usual brooding manner, but didn't make his anger over the Indians' misstep known through neither words, nor gestures. Even Joshua hid his feelings and probably silently contemplated exacting revenge on those who had not tempered the wild horde's avarice, but had even taken charge of an endeavor that had made the plan agreed upon with Joel so much more difficult, perhaps even impossible to carry out.

Suddenly, Joel stood still; he stood in front of the unconscious Louis who was still convulsively clutching the cask.

"Isn't this your Potawatomi?" he asked gnashing his teeth.

Buschmark and Harrison came forward, but were lost for words when they saw their comrade in such a state.

"Well," said Joel gloomily while pulling his revolver from his belt and cocking it, "a man like this is of little use to us; he should have at least stayed sober." The he held the gun to Louis's temple, but in the moment when he shot, Harrison struck his hand upward from below, and the bullet flew past the Potawatomi's head

without doing harm and hit the rocks. The echo thundered back a hundredfold; Louis lifted his head and stared at the Mormon with expressionless eyes, attempted to lift the cask to his lips once more, and then fell backwards unconscious again.

"Stupid beast!" Joel mumbled angrily and cocked the revolver again; and once more Harrison stepped in. "This man must remain alive," he said with a decisive tone, "this man must remain alive if we don't want to return without having accomplished anything. Maybe not everything is lost."

Joel looked at Buschmark who was still terrified and had not managed to regain his composure. Then he looked at Harrison. "For all I care, he shall live until Judgment Day," he grumbled, pushing the pistol back in his belt, "but he can't drink again." Having said this, he wrung the vessel from the Potawatomi's hands and placed it on a rock in a manner that its contents had to run out. In the meantime, he didn't continue until he was certain that the dry, rocky ground had absorbed the last drop and that Joshua, who coveted the alcohol, had no opportunity to become intoxicated as well.

After a few steps, he found the broken body of the Ute, who had jumped off the cliff in fear for his life. "Look over here, Joshua," he called to the Indian, "look at what this mad robbery has led to!" Joshua shrugged indifferently, Joel kicked the mutilated body out of the way, and then they continued their difficult hike.

When they finally turned from the pass into the small valley in which the sad spectacle had taken place just hours earlier, it was just light enough for them to be

able to see, and they immediately realized the consequences of the nightly debauchery.

The men shrunk back,²¹⁴ and even Joel stood paralyzed by the horrific sight. Several minutes passed before a strong curse gave away how deeply the bloody scene touched him.

"We have to do something," he then said to Harrison because he now ignored the cowardly Buschmark. "Let's be quick and try to see how many of these animals will wake up from their intoxication.

The men walked busily back and forth between the immobile bodies; here, they rolled someone onto his back, there they pushed spurs into a man's flank to see if they could discover signs of life in him. If they came across a cask in which there was still some of the intoxicating liquid, Joel and Harrison turned it upside down in spite of the Joshua's protestations, while Buschmark had crouched down, from exhaustion as he said, but really to avoid looking at the gruesome scene.

"Sixty seven," the Mormon called when they were done with their inspection, "sixty seven usable ones, eighteen dead or insane."²¹⁵ There are still enough men to execute our plan if we do it correctly and the group doesn't cross the Bear River while wait here for the great Ute to wake up."

"If Louis could only talk," Harrison said, "then we could get more precise information about the *Halfbreed*."

²¹⁴ *zurückbeben*

²¹⁵ *unzurechnungsfähig*

"And even if he talked like a prophet, I still wouldn't believe him," replied Joel. "But what we can accomplish in the meantime, we must do, and without hesitation. In the next eight hours those of the Ute who will wake up will be sober again, and although they will feel sore, they will be able to assist us. A five-hour march will take us back to the ford in the river; if your pretty emigrant girl hasn't reached the spot yet by then, the devil may come if she will not be the most devoted Mormon woman by the Salt Lake within the next three weeks. Joshua must at once turn around and find out what we need to know, and if not to today or tomorrow, he shall meet us at the appointed place."

Joshua nodded his head in agreement. — Even though he did not like to be separated from his companions, he must have understood the necessity because after he had received a modest ration of whiskey, he took his horse by the reins and slowly walked down the pass. The remaining men camped in a remote corner of the valley, from where they could see how the repulsive Indian creatures slowly shed the shackles of an animal-like drunken state.

25. The Traveler's Accident

Andree's small group had left the Fort Bridger area, the outpost for the fur trade, the previous day. They had camped by a spring in the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains and intended to ford the Bear River before nightfall in order to rest there until the next morning.

Until now, their journey had been blessed since no accident had happened since the horse's death, and even though the hunters did not relent their vigilance, there scarcely seemed to be a reason for it, since they had not come in contact with any human being aside from a few trappers they had met at the trading posts.²¹⁶ Even the tracks of the travelers who had preceded them were several days old, and since the bulk of the travelers were maybe a day's journey's behind them, and they couldn't discern their presence thus, they might have considered themselves masters of this inhospitable region, in which nothing but covered the infertile ground except sparse, sickly looking shrubs; only stray wolves and rabbits gave life to the desolate landscape.

The barren, desolate loneliness was nothing short of discouraging to their collective spirits, which had during the course of the journey become everything to each other and begun to exist like a family.²¹⁷ Their animals certainly suffered significantly, but this helped the travelers find more joy in easing their burden and trying to find green willow branches and nourishing grass for them.

Since they had entered the barren steppes, where they could see far in every direction, the scouting and tracking that had always kept them apart in the mountains

²¹⁶ *Ihre Reise war soweit glücklich von Statten gegangen, kein Unfall hatte sie seit dem Verlust des Pferdes betroffen, und wenn die Jäger in ihrer Wachsamkeit nicht nachließen, so schien doch kaum ein Grund für dieselbe [sic.?] vorhanden zu sein, indem sie, außer einigen Trappern auf den Handelsposten, in den letzten Tagen kein menschliches Wesen erblickten.*

²¹⁷ *Die öde, niederdrückende Einsamkeit wirkte unterdessen nichts weniger als entmuthigend auf die Gemüther, die sich im Laufe der Zeit gegenseitig Alles geworden, und gleichsam zu einer Familie zusammengewachsen waren.* This is an unusual expression in German. It may well be an instance where Möllhausen translated from the English.

had become unnecessary, and they were able to form a group around the wagon, which was regarded as the center by everyone. Lefèvre with his always happy mood made sure that the conversation was kept going during the day, and since he had visited these regions several times before and his remarkably clear memory helped him recognize every feature again, it was only natural that just as many experiences and adventures appeared in his memory, which he then told and described in his witty manner.

On the morning of the day Joel and his companions found the band of Ute Indians, the small company for the first time in fairly a while set foot in the mountains again.

They might have been traveling for about two hours when northwest of them the blue peak of a symmetrically shaped mountain appeared above a barren canyon. The distance made the peak appear as if it were cloaked in fog.

"That's Medicine Mountain," Lefèvre remarked when he saw it. "Medicine Mountain in its full glory, upon my life!"

"And why is it named Medicine Mountain?" asked Franziska, who loved starting a playful quarrel with the simple hunter. "Why isn't it named Pharmacist's Mountain?²¹⁸ Might that not be more appropriate?"

"Sapristi! Has any rational being ever heard of a Pharmacist's Mountain? Lefèvre asked in return. "No, my daughter, there are Medicine Mountains, Medicine Rivers, medicine wigwams and other medicine implements, but anything that

²¹⁸ *Apotheker Berg*

resembles a pharmacy doesn't exist in the wilderness. You must know my dear, argumentative daughter, that the word medicine means as much as magic to Indians. Even though I personally don't believe that any other spell exists except the one you cast with your blue eyes," and here he peered furtively at his friend Joseph, "I must admit the Indians appropriately named this mountain Medicine Mountain. The medicine men, yes, even the warriors of far away tribes, come to the dark caves and canyons of this mountain to strengthen their powers, which, by the way is nothing but hocus-pocus. They come to hold council, or find out about the future from dreams. I have been there myself several times in the company of the Oglala —"

"To dream about your future and strengthen your magic skills?" Franziska interrupted him jokingly.

"Sapristi! Child, you ask faster than I can answer," he replied laughingly. "I told you, I don't believe in ritual magic, but I accompanied my friend and companion because our route led us past it. We had planned to travel northward to the Columbia River to trap beavers and otters. It was more than ten years ago, but I remember it as if it were yesterday. I have even been to the stream you see in front of us; only back then we followed it up toward the mountain, while we now we travel the road that leads away from it, if I am not mistaken. A small creek, but it has steep banks, and fording it during the snowmelt is not without difficulty. But look at the Omaha turning and bending, he must have discovered some wild game in the water."

Indeed, Wabash who always traveled slightly ahead of the group since they had reached difficult terrain, stood on the creek's bank and appeared to have spotted

something on the opposite side's churned up bank, regarding it suspiciously. His movement caught the attention of the entire group. Everyone fell silent, and while the overly cautious Lefèvre brought everyone to a halt, Joseph hurried to the Omaha to find out what kind of danger they were facing. He knew the Indian too well and was certain that no small matter made him behave in such a manner.

He must have been one hundred cubits away from Wabash when the latter stuck out his left arm, signaling with his hand to avoid any sound. Immediately the *Halfbreed* dropped his horse's lead rope, jumped from the saddle, and a minute later stood next to the Omaha, who prompted him with the end of his gun to look upstream.

At the point at which the two men were looking, the creek turned several times and its muddy banks had several shrub-covered ledges that concealed each other and only allowed a partial view of the fissured depression.

Three turns downstream, right under the groundcover of thick roots, on the last quarter of the bank closest to the water was the object that had aroused the Omaha's attention and to which he now directed the *Halfbreed's* looks.

There, a small piece of blue cloth was visible behind a small ridge of soil, and the latter further showed that some dirt had recently been loosened from its top and had tumbled down. No other person would have been able to discern it since it was so insignificant, but the indigenous eye, or that of the Western hunter, could see something unusual.

The Omaha had already indicated through his behavior that the discovery was important enough to raise his deepest suspicion, which he immediately conveyed to the *Halfbreed*.

When the Omaha saw his companion by his side, he quickly whispered a few words to him; Joseph nodded in agreement, and almost in the same instant the slender warrior glided down the embankment. But only a few seconds later he reappeared on the other side, but he did not stand up; rather, he crept with an agility that only years of practice can bring to the spot where he believed the hidden danger to be.

Joseph had meanwhile not taken his eyes of the aforementioned spot, but now, as he saw the Omaha lying straight above it and ready to tackle the hidden man in case he turned out to be an enemy, he followed the creek upstream until he was able to discern the outline of fully dressed human being. A quick glance confirmed that they didn't have to worry about betrayal because it was no Indian who lay hidden here, but a white man covered in blood whose wide-open eyes regarded him with an expression of defiance and apathy.

He was utterly surprised when he saw the man and immediately called to the Omaha that he didn't have to hurry, which the latter answered with his customary *how*. When the wounded man perceived that immediately above him an Indian lay hidden, he broke into convulsive laughter and making a threatening movement with his hand toward the *Halfbreed*, he called out: "If you are part of the gang, finish your work now! You have taken everything I own, so you might as well take my life, so that I can curse you while I die."

"Easy friend, calm down," Joseph replied. "We haven't come to bother you, but to help you...if you let us."

A glimmer of hope appeared on the unfortunate man's countenance when he heard these words and he looked over to the *Halfbreed* while he lifted himself up. "Stranger," he called, "whoever you may be, I thank you for your comfort, but believe me when I tell you it were better if I lay bludgeoned with my comrades by the Bear River because the Ute have left me nothing but bare life, and that not even intentionally.

"Have courage," Joseph answered, "I am not alone and we will help you. Can you walk a short distance?"

"Yes, I can," the stranger said, "because aside from the numbing blow I received on my head, I was only injured on my arm and shoulder by arrows."

"Well then," Joseph said, "the Omaha will accompany you. We intend to rest at the ford where you will join us for a couple of hours. I will return to my company because there are some folks that need to be prepared for what you will tell us."

"Yes, yes, prepare yourselves," the traveler called after the *Halfbreed*, who was running back to the wagon, "prepare yourselves because hundreds of Ute are hiding in the mountain feeling audacious by the last robbery they committed so easily. They will not let you advance to Salt Lake without a fight!"

Joseph and Wabash's demeanor and the appearance of a stranger had made everyone in the wagon concerned, but when the *Halfbreed* hurried back to them and everyone could read in his features that he was trying to suppress unpleasant

impressions from the encounter by the creek, their worries gave way to an anxious tension that manifested itself in the questions that came from all sides.

"A lost traveler whom we need to help," Joseph said, walking toward the wagon and looking into Franziska's questioning eyes. "You hopefully agree to with it?"

"Certainly, yes," the girl answered warmly, "the wagon has already become so light that without a doubt another man can comfortably find a place in it; that is if my friend the commander has no objections."

Lefèvre, who long guessed the true circumstances, but wanted to preserve the girl's good mood, laughed out loud when he heard himself called commander. "Well then, my daughter," he called, "captain or commander, there is no difference. My next command shall be 'let's go!', and while I search for the best place to ford and interrogate the stranger a bit, you can follow slowly. You must admit, Monsieur Andree," he continued, turning to him, "that your daughter is your superior, and for the duration of my absence Franziska will be my deputy. Thus obedience! Robert and Sidney!" With these words he unhitched his horse and hurried by the *Halfbreed's* side to the ford, where Wabash had in the meantime arrived with the stranger. Before they even arrived at the designated spot, they agreed that since real danger was looming, they wouldn't keep anything secret anymore from the other members of the group. This was a good decision because as soon as Franziska and her father had any sense of danger, they typically considered it much more significant than it was, and they

thus were overly alarmed. If they precisely knew the situation however, Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* could expect them to keep their composure and even be able to help.

"Franziska has the heart of a warrior in her breast," Lefèvre said approvingly as they approached the ford. "She has the heart of a brave warrior, and I will let an Indian take my scalp if she won't let herself be guided by Joe like a child should anger arise. Yes, my son, Franziska has the heart of a warrior, but that doesn't prevent it from beating a little faster when a certain *Halfbreed* watches over her like a mother and trembles like a squaw when he considers that something might happen to her."

"If you are trying to say," Joseph replied, "that I am worried about the girl's wellbeing, I must ask you if that doesn't seem natural to you. Are you less worried, or does she thank you less sincerely for your attentiveness than she does me? I understand what you are trying to hint at, but I reject the suspicion you entertain against me because my hopes go no further than having a place in her memory. You must also consider that I am a *Halfbreed*, an Indian without rank or standing, the cast out, despised son of a cold hearted father, and that I wouldn't dare to burden other people with the taint surrounding my birth, to force upon or even offer them this curse, even if they might follow the more noble inclinations of their heart and tried to disregard this stain! Now, old friend, what you consider devotion and affection is in fact nothing but gratitude; gratitude for small favors that are too slight to mention."

The *Halfbreed* fell quiet and lowered his head. Apparently he was considering the things he had just spoken about and forgot about the danger that was still awaiting

them. Lefèvre on the other hand began to whistle a cheerful ditty, like someone who clearly knew the truth, but intentionally refused to discuss it.

Suddenly, Joseph sat up straight as if he had woken up from a dream.

"Lefèvre," he called, "we are talking about unimportant matters and seem to forget that the wolves might be playing with our bones tomorrow."

"Sacré mille tonerre," Lefèvre thundered, dropping his *Kantschuh*²¹⁹ on his patient horse, "believe me if the wolves play with our bones, they will have as many Ute skulls to play with as well as there are beads strung our friend Wabash's wampum. Yes, in the name of the Saint Napoleon and General Washington! It will take a large number of these Digger Indians and Ute to take our horses!"²²⁰ And as if he was preparing himself to fight, he cocked the rifle that lay across his saddle a few times.

"But the poor girl?" Joseph asked with a voice that gave away the emotional turmoil he felt. "What would be her fate?"

"Joe, my son, let me tell you something," the old hunter replied, scratching himself behind the ear with some embarrassment. "It's better not to think about it. The Ute have become rather brazen after their last success and it's not likely that they will let a small group like ours pass through the mountains without trouble. Staying here though and waiting for new emigrant trains to pass through would mean we might

²¹⁹ There is no English term for *Kantschu* or *Kantschuh*; instead the Russian term *Nagyka* or *Nagaika* is used. It is a short whip with a metal piece in the handle that was used by the Cossacks. It originates with the Nogai people of Central Asia. The metal knob at the end of the handle prevented the whip from sliding through the hand (today's riding crops have the same feature), but was also used to fight off wolves.

²²⁰ *wurzelfressenden Shoshone und Ute Halunken*

sacrifice all our animals. We have to be watchful and try to make it to the Great Salt Lake. Once we are there, there is little danger from the Indians and we can expect to see the goldmines in Sacramento within six weeks time."

This conversation had made the otherwise lighthearted trapper as serious as his young companion, but both used the time until the arrival of the wagon to obtain the last bits of information from the stranger and to advise him to not be explicit in describing the scenes of murder in front of the young girl.

The news of the Indian raid was received very differently from what the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre had expected. Driven by youthful enthusiasm, Robert and Sidney immediately set out to attach a large amount of munitions to their bodies in order to be prepared at all times as they said—even while they slept. Even old Andree silently checked his double-barreled shotgun, but not without sorrowfully looking at his daughter once in a while. She, on the other hand, moved by the stranger's sufferings, only had eyes and compassion for the men who showed themselves ready to shed the last drop of blood in her defense. She participated in the deliberations looking rather innocent and answered almost reproachfully when the men tried to diffuse her fears, telling them that she couldn't possibly feel any fear in the company of such men, thus expressing what she truly felt. Several times, she caught the *Halfbreed* looking at her with a certain emotion. She had a sense that he was afraid for her and she thanked him for his care and attention with her particularly sweet smile. She could not have guessed, though, that every time she blushed his blood coursed faster through his veins; she loved him without being aware of it, and when

his deep affection for her surfaced once in a while, she mistook it for an outpouring of goodness that came from the heart, something he showed to other people as well.

Only Lefèvre, the rugged desert hunter with the pure heart and the simple mind, noticed with a joy that bordered on delight how the two young people felt increasingly drawn to each other, and he felt pleasure when he thought of the future and indulged in fantasies that were as simple as his mind.

While everyone felt more or less upset by the stranger's story and his losses and expressed sympathy for the brutal death of his companions, Wabash sat apathetically by his wife's side on the riverbank and threw one small pebble after the other into the waters by his feet. Nevertheless, he didn't miss a word that was spoken in his proximity and thus didn't seem the least bit surprised when Lefèvre asked him to hurry the Bear River six miles away and to reconnoiter how far the same danger was awaiting them there. "We will spend the night here," he said to him, "and won't leave until you have returned. If you feel it's safe for us to follow you, indicate the direction for us with two columns of smoke; if you think it might be best for us to return to Fort Bridger, make it three columns of smoke."

After Lefèvre had finished, the Omaha took up his weapons, hung a piece of dried meat from his belt, and without taking leave of anyone, including his wife, he climbed into the creek where he was going to travel because the gurgling water made it possible to not leave any tracks.

Everyone felt more at ease after the Omaha had left because they knew they could trust his skills completely, and if there were enemies in the area, they wouldn't

remain undetected. No surprise attack was possible since they could see the surrounding area and the young people took turns guarding the bank of the recessed stream—the only place enemies might be able to hide—by walking up and down it.

The stranger, whose name was Smith, benefited the most from the rest because he was so weakened by the loss of blood and from hunger that he would have only been able to continue the journey laying in the back of the wagon. Luckily he had sustained only superficial injuries in the attack and there was not better medication for him than rest .

From his short reports the others could gather that he was a young merchant from Ohio, who had had liquidated all his assets and equipped an entire train with salable goods in order to make the trip to California. He had left from Independence, Missouri and had managed to complete the journey to where they were now in a relatively short amount of time and without incident. The sorrow over the loss of his fortune was heavy, but was overshadowed by the heartbreak he felt for the death of his traveling companions, among whom had been two of his close relatives. His survival was only due the fact that the horse he had been riding had been mortally wounded by a bullet during the first minutes of the attack and had fallen down with him. But before he had time to free himself from underneath the horse, he had been rendered unconscious by the blow of a club, and then he was mistaken for dead and nobody had paid further attention to him. When he regained consciousness the bandits had disappeared with the greatest part of his possessions, and he had managed to crawl to the spot where they had found him under cover of darkness. He had been

considering making his way to Fort Bridger after resting a few hours when the appearance of the *Halfbreed* interrupted his grim deliberations.

Smith argued strongly in favor of his return to Fort Bridger in order to undertake the journey through the mountains with some other caravans, but Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* most strongly opposed this idea since they didn't consider it impossible to reach the Salt Lake quickly and unmolested. "Our group doesn't offer enough to provoke the predaciousness of those wild savages," Joseph said, "and they will not want to trade this little for a large number of their dead comrades."

"And then," Lefèvre added, "we can turn our wagon into a fort; but if we flee to Fort Bridger, we won't gain enough time to even patch our balls."²²¹

"Let's wait for the Omaha's return before we decide anything," the *Halfbreed* said. "He will bring us reliable news about the fate of the bandits; and he is also a good reinforcement of our strength so that we should stay together and not separate longer than absolutely necessary."

Such was the resolution of their war council in which everyone, even the young girl, had participated.

Time passed in undisturbed peacefulness, the heat of the day gave way to a refreshing cool, and feeling a certain sense of security from the safety precautions that had been taken, the small group gathered on the banks of the creek where its members

²²¹ "Und dann," *fiel Lefèvre ein*, "können wir unseren Wagen in eine Festung verwandeln, während wir auf der Flucht nach Fort Bridger im Fall einer Verfolgung, nicht so viel Zeit gewinnen, um mit Ruhe ein Pflaster um die Kugel zu wickeln." Balls are the projectiles for muzzleloaders. They were filled with black powder and then patched.

engaged in their usual innocuous conversation and anxiously waited for the Omaha's return.

The *Halfbreed* was looking at the clear waters that were gaily dancing toward the Bear River and listened sympathetically to Franziska's words with which she was trying to lighten her father's cheerless mood. Suddenly, he gently nudged Lefèvre, who was sitting next to him, and pointed with a blade of grass he held between his fingers toward the creek at their feet. Lefèvre's look followed the direction, and then he noticeably winced when he saw the usually clear water slightly clouded by dissolving pieces of dirt. From the creek his gaze turned to northward, where they fell on the young, strong figure of the German forester, who slowly wandered upstream with his rifle in his arm and had already reached the first hill.

Once more, he looked at the murmuring waters that were still tinged yellow, which indicated that a considerable number of people or animals must have crossed upstream, or were approaching their camp in the creek's bed.

"Joe, how about if you took over watch from Robert now?" the trapper asked after giving it some thought. "He hasn't been up there for more than two hours, but he probably won't mind if you come now."

"Let the boy do his time," Andree said, "he is no better than the others, and I don't believe he will agree to an early switch."

"Franziska herself has given me the title 'Captain'," Lefèvre answered laughing, "and since a commander may not rescind his orders if he doesn't want to

embarrass himself, you will allow, my old friend, that I insist. What do you think Joe?"

"I think I'd like to stay here," he replied following the trappers lead, "but according to your strict order there is nothing I can do. Nothing can keep me here, and if Robert doesn't agree to an early relieve, he can stay with me."

"Calm down, father," Franziska said when she realized how carefully the Halfbreed was checking his weapons. "You see, you can't argue with them; but give my brother my regards," she called after the departing, "give him my regards and tell him that since I am Lieutenant he must stay with you or I will have to punish him."

Joseph waved cheerfully upon departing; he guessed Franziska's intention and felt thankful from the bottom of his heart for this gesture of goodwill; but even Lefèvre had not missed that fact that the two young people always sought to protect one another, and extending his hand to Franziska he proclaimed that she was the best daughter on earth, and he would rather let himself be scalped fifty times before anyone might hurt her.

The *Halfbreed* in the meantime quickened his pace along the bank, not taking his eyes of the water's surface, and he had already covered a significant part of the way when he saw the waters run clear and transparent over the colorful pebbles again. He no longer doubted that a band of the wild, rapacious Ute sought to waylay them and thus considered it his task to gain certainty, but do so in a manner that the enemies, who naturally had positioned a lookout on the closest rock outcropping to monitor the caravan's movements, wouldn't notice.

He caught up with Robert in the foothills when the latter was about to return. Without hesitation he stepped to his side and kept moving toward the camp in the quietest manner possible, while he informed him how he had found out that the Ute were close by. Robert looked embarrassed when the *Halfbreed* described how the water had been his spy and given away circumstances he should have noticed himself much earlier. "Don't let this be a reason to blame yourself," the *Halfbreed* comforted him with a smile, "because you must not forget that it makes a difference if one grows up in the city or the wilderness. Save your mental power for what lies ahead because I won't lie, the smallest mistake may be our downfall; likewise, the utmost caution and attention will help us reach the Salt Lake safe and sound."

The two young people walked a short distance along the creek, and when they reached approximately the midpoint between the hills and their camp, Joseph prompted his companion to sit down next to him on the creek bank. Robert followed the request and sat down, his feet dangling over the bank, while the *Halfbreed* let only part of his torso be visible from the depression in the ground. "Now listen carefully to my words," Joseph then began while he took off his hunting shirt, placing it on the bank in front of him. "The enemies we have identified must not sense that I am leaving you. This shirt with the hat on it looks a human body from the rocks. You have to play into the deception by continuing to make motions that look like you are engaged in conversation with me. A Pawnee or an Oglala would of course not fall for this ruse, but the Digger Indians of these regions are supposedly not endowed with brilliant minds. Stay here and remain calm; if I am not back by nightfall, wait only

until you think you can't be seen from the hills anymore, then go back to camp where your presence is probably desired."

He jumped into the creek bed, and after having waved at Robert once more, he disappeared behind the next ledge.

26. The Flight

Once Joseph had turned his back to the young forester, he suddenly felt as if he had shed all softer emotions and milder sentiments that tied him to civilized society and, like a panther, had turned his entire physical agility and mental powers to outwitting potential enemies. He didn't look back anymore, only ahead; and while he considered what the fate of the beloved girl might be should she fall into the hands of the merciless Ute, his mother's blood gained the upper hand and he became the resolute, cunning Indian warrior who set forth to destroy those who had awakened feelings of inexpiable revenge in his breast.

In his right hand he held the stick he usually used as a support when he shot his heavy rifle, and probing the creek with it with every step he took, he quietly hurried along his wet path. At each turn he halted for a moment to take a look into the next basin-like pool before entering it and carefully creeping toward the opening that was situated across the pool. He only rarely looked toward the bank since he feared to be recognized by the enemy's scouts in the hills and he deemed the immediate surrounding safe where no shrub or unevenness of the ground might have provided concealment for a traitor .

This way he was able to move fast; but since he had to continuously follow the turns that took him in an opposite direction at times, dusk had already begun to fall before he had reached the place between the two rocks. There, he became doubly cautious because the bank was very low in some places and the scouts could have conveniently looked at the surface of the water and notice him if he approached one of those open spaces too early. Thus, he decided to wait until it was completely dark so that he might begin his investigations once more. He easily climbed from the water to under the overhang from the bank, where he pressed himself tightly against the dirt wall so that the roots from the grass concealed his body, although somewhat poorly. He had only been in that position for a couple of minutes when he heard the sound of a falling rock, and shortly thereafter a boulder tumbled into the creek on the opposite side, which made the water splash into his hiding place. Smaller stones and pieces of rock followed, knocking and splashing, and then it was quiet again.

Joseph had pressed his ear firmly to the ground and was listening attentively to each sound that might indicate the presence of human beings. For some time, everything was quiet, but then he picked up a peculiar splashing sound from the water that was made by breaking waves hitting an object. The sound rose and fell in regular intervals, just like the sound someone would make wading in the creek; and soon he saw through the roots the shadow of a human figure that glided soundlessly in front of him and then stood still. It was still light enough to discern the figure's contours, and he immediately recognized the naked, lean Ute who seemed to be looking for something in the water. Several times he came so close that he could have grabbed his

shaggy hair, but then he always moved back into the direction of the opposite bank, where he bent down and felt for something among the wet rocks. He had apparently been attracted by the sound of the falling rocks and was now trying to discern from what side they had fallen.

A second rock tumbling into the creek a short distance behind him eliminated his doubts because the agitated water had not yet calmed when he placed a hand over his mouth and made some gargling noises that were answered from halfway up the mountain in the same manner. As soon as the savage in the creek heard the call he jumped up the bank and sat down in a manner that his feet dangled right in front of the *Halfbreed's* head. Several more rocks tumbled into the water before the second scout had approached close enough to have a conversation without raising his voice with the first one, who, holding bow and arrow on his lap, remained sitting in the same spot.

The Ute who had been climbing down from the hills finally appeared on the creek bank across, and seeing his companion on the other side, he quickly jumped into the creek, just as fast climbed back up right in front of the *Halfbreed*; he then sat down next to the one who had arrived first, and they both began a conversation in the most garrulous manner.

Joseph tried in vain to make out as much as a single word because the conversation was in a vernacular that he had never heard. He understood from the movements and gestures, though, that they were still waiting for another companion,

and that they indeed intended to raid the white people's camp on the bank of the creek.

Half an hour passed and darkness settled in the shadow of the hills. It became clear to the *Halfbreed* just how onerous and oppressive his defenseless hiding place was because he couldn't move a limb without immediately running the risk of being greeted with arrows; and yet, he felt the irresistible desire to act and save his friends from danger. The arrival of four more Ute relieved him from his confinement. They had come from the mountains as well and had chosen the creek bank as their walking path, but after the six warriors had held council for a while, they separated and two of them crept along the path toward the camp, while three took the return route, apparently to join the main band that had gone ahead, and the last Indian climbed up the hill in the East to watch over the white people's campfire.

As soon as Joseph believed the Ute to be far enough away, he left his hiding place, stepped into the creek, made some sharp movements to get the blood that had almost stopped circulating during his tenuous position flowing again, and then made set out to follow the single scout.

He was not on solid ground yet when he heard the short, broken buzzing of the locust from the other side of the creek.

He immediately threw himself down and looked across to where the sound had come from, but he couldn't discern anything in the black shadow; however, he once again heard the peculiar buzzing. His left hand quietly searched the grass and immediately brought a thin blade of grass to his mouth, from which he then skillfully

teased a long, ratcheting trill that could have fooled the locusts themselves. From the opposite creek bank came the answer, and in the blink of an eye Wabash, the tireless Omaha, was by his side.

"Many, many Ute in mountains," the Indian began without waiting for the *Halfbreed's* questions, thus indicating that he perceived the danger to be immediate. "Many Ute, but also three white men. Four times the number of fingers on your hand are lying in ambush by the Bear River, and just as many have passed through here to cut off our return route to Fort Bridger. Before the sun rises, both groups will meet by the wagon and take our horses. We have to escape, and escape quickly. I followed one of the gangs on a circuitous route through the mountains to here, and I was going to hurry back to camp when I saw you."

This was the Omaha's hasty report, and it caused the *Halfbreed* to tremble like he had never before. He quickly composed himself, recounted to Wabash what he had seen and gathered from where he had been, and ordered him to return to camp to prepare Lefèvre for the arrival of the savages, and perhaps cut off the two scouts' path in the creek bed and kill them. He expressed his intention to climb up the hill and dispose of the dangerous scout posted there. Then he was going to return at once. After the two men had ended their deliberations, the Omaha glided back into the creek bed, while Joseph began to climb up the rocks, which the Ute had climbed just a short while prior.

He intentionally avoided the side from which the small camp was visible because he feared to run into the scout who was on the lookout there at the moment.

After fifteen minutes of hard effort he finally found himself thirty feet from the summit of the hill, whose bare contours stood in clear contrast to the sky covered with stars.

He rested awhile and listened. Only the sound of wolves hunting in the distance reached his ears, and the chirping of the crickets that so densely populated the cracks in the rock. He kept his eyes firmly fixed on the hill's highest point, and moved inch by inch for a foot. Suddenly, a muted cracking that sounded like the breaking of twigs coming from above made him press tightly himself against the rock. He tried in vain to see in the darkness to recognize something. The peak remained as serious and immovable as if nobody had ever set foot on it. Finally, a dark object appeared in front of the bright star that outlined the contours of the peak; quickly it grew in size, and soon the *Halfbreed* recognized the figure of a man, who had apparently climbed up from the other side. Once again, the strange cracking could be heard, the figure bent down to place something on the ground, immediately stood up again, and disappeared the same way it had come. Joseph guessed that the scout was making preparations for a signal fire, so he could communicate each suspicious move in the camp to his comrades; he had to incapacitate the scout at any price.

Joseph used the time the Ute spent gathering firewood on the bare rock to approach the fireplace with a couple of skillful leaps. He hadn't covered half the distance yet when the Ute's head became visible again over the uppermost rock, and soon enough the whole figure stood there breaking and piling up new twigs.

He could have comfortably shot down the savage from his position, but a shot, like a fire, would have drawn attention from the numerous enemies who now most certainly kept their eyes trained on the particular spot.

Meanwhile, he no longer considered using his gun, but laid it aside as soon as the black figure had vanished, pulled his long knife from its sheath, and glided as soundlessly to the rock with the pile of twigs as a wild cat that was about to pounce on its prey. He had almost no time to conceal himself next to some rocks on the outcropping, when the figure reappeared on it and dropped a bundle of fragile twigs. The decisive moment had come; he gripped the knife firmly, and when the savage got on his knees and began breaking the thin wood, the *Halfbreed* shot forward with lightning speed,²²² and before the Ute had a chance to look for the cause of the noise, Joseph plunged his knife into his back under his shoulder blade with such force that the tip exited through the chest.

The mortally wounded man sank onto the pile of sticks without a sound. Joseph sighed because he believed he had now undertaken the most important step to save his friends because nobody could light the signal fire tonight. But when he pulled the knife from the lifeless body, he suddenly heard the suppressed gargling sounds from a second Indian who called for the dead man.

It hit him like lightning, and he suddenly understood why the one scout had always reappeared so quickly on the rock outcropping. He hadn't considered it in his anxious state of mind that two of them had been at work, and it frightened him to now

²²² *mit der Schnelligkeit eines Gedankens*

hear the voice of a second enemy who would discover his companion's death any minute now and carry the news to the entire tribe. He trembled and saw in his mind how the bloodthirsty enemies took over the camp, but his presence of mind did not leave him. Like he had watched it being done a short while before, he now knelt down, bent over the dead Indian, and without answering the mumbling Ute, but also without putting the knife aside, he broke and bent some sticks. The Indian had in the meantime come closer, continuing his way up, at times climbing between the craggy boulders. He was barefoot and only paid attention to the ground, trying to avoid thorns from the cactuses and sharp rocks that could injure him. He didn't look once to the place where he supposed his companion to be, and whose different figure he should now have noticed.

The *Halfbreed* felt so tense that he held his breath when he finally saw the Ute close. Since a death scream would be as ruinous as the Ute running away, he waited with his attack until the last moment.

Still talking in his ugly vernacular,²²³ the unsuspecting Ute stepped close to the outcropping and had already set foot on it, when he suddenly froze. Despite the darkness the changed form of his companion made him suspicious because he mechanically extended his hand in his direction as if he was going to touch him. He hadn't touched him yet, when the *Halfbreed's* took hold of his hair with his left fist and at the same time the knife's long blade cut his throat. A deep gargling sound came

²²³ *widerwärtige Mundart*

from the bandit's breast, but even that subsided when the *Halfbreed* plunged the knife into the Indian's bare chest twice.

As soon as Joseph saw the second enemy lifeless by his feet, he once more listened attentively, but everything stayed quiet, he only heard the howling of wolves hunting and the chirping of the crickets that so densely populated the cracks in the rock.²²⁴ In the plain below him he could see the faint glow of the burnt-down campfire where his friends engaged in trivial conversation, oblivious to the danger. He waited another moment in a contemplative stance on the bloody rock ledge, then, as if a ghost were haunting him, he jumped to his rifle, threw it over his shoulder, and hurried as fast as the treacherous path and the darkness allowed in the direction of the camp.

When he arrived there he found everyone exceedingly worried about his whereabouts; a worry Lefèvre had been fighting by praising the missing man's caution and expertise. Only when Joseph arrived and shook everyone's hand did the somber mood dissipate from the small group, and Franziska once more showed her amiable personality, which influenced everyone positively.

The Omaha had already briefed everyone about their predicament, and thus Lefèvre had begun preparations to organize their flight. Everyone approved since he had talked often of his travels in those regions and his knowledge of the place promised a successful endeavor.

²²⁴ The repetition occurs in the original.

The Omaha too had been lucky enough to be able to bludgeon the two Ute who had separated from one another close to the camp. Now, that the news of their departure wouldn't reach the different bands of Indians, the refugees had a window of approximately six hours to have a significant head start and to find a safe place—in fact a very safe place, as Lefèvre assured them—to take refuge in.

When Joseph arrived, they had just buried a large part of their belongings that would not be beneficial to them in their escape but on the contrary would be an obstacle to their urgent pace. The items were deep in the muddy creek bank, and the clues they had left by overturning the dirt had been made invisible by leading the horses to and from the water a number of times, so that even the most clever Ute wouldn't suspect a hidden treasure under the compacted dirt.

Since they hoped to be able to return after a couple of days, they left the wagon in its place. They could not take it anyway on the route that Lefèvre promised they were going to follow, and further, they had to conceal their flight until the last minute, which was only possible if the bandits who were approaching at night saw the canvas-covered wagon at daybreak.

"The Ute typically choose early dawn for their attacks," Lefèvre said while he busied himself with saddling and packing the horses. "Those dogs!" he continued laughing. "They will take us for late risers and be amazed when they find we have left the nest."

The trapper explained and talked in his usual quiet, encouraging manner without stopping his work or keeping his companions from working. Here he

tightened a cinch, there he helped load a bundle or pack on a horse's back, or he gave his young friend Sidney advice about how he would have to act in certain circumstances. This way the preparations went rather fast, in spite of the darkness, which could be lit up by a fire that might give away what was happening, so that barely one hour after the *Halfbreed* had arrived at camp and the waning moon rose behind the eastern mountains everything was declared ready to go.

Now a change came over Lefèvre. The lighthearted Canadian trapper suddenly became a serious, almost gloomy, leader, who no longer gave cheerful advice and teachings, but gave his orders with ruthless roughness and assured everyone through heavy curses that he would immediately resign his leadership if they didn't heed his orders in a timely manner.

"Let's go," he called while he slung his rifle over his shoulder, stepped into the creek, and turned upstream. "I repeat once more that you may not speak as much as one word if we don't want to be collectively scalped. This doesn't pertain to you, Franziska, my dear," he called back while the water gently splashed under his feet.

The company followed the hunter in the order they had agreed upon. Lefèvre in front, Smith on horseback after him; behind him rode Franziska on the calmest and most comfortable animal from the herd, which the *Halfbreed* lead by the reins just to be safe. After the girl came her father, likewise on horseback. He was followed by the Indian woman who lead the pack animals. Robert and Sidney concluded the train; like the Omaha they, too, walked, but he walked far ahead and away from the noise to be able to better use his keen senses.

The pack train moved like a silent shadow down the winding creek bed; even the animals were quiet as if they sensed the proximity of danger and only rarely snorted when a hungry coyote left the creek or raised his plaintive voice on the creek's bank. Franziska sat quietly in the uncomfortable saddle, her gaze sometimes resting on Joseph, who supervised the movements of her horse with the anxiousness of a mother, and sometimes turned to her father, who rode gloomily behind her.

Her heart was pained, but not because felt disheartened or doubted the success of her rescue; no, certainly not with the brave *Halfbreed* by her side and brave men around her. Rather, she thought of her father, who must have reproached himself bitterly because he considered himself the cause of his children's downfall. A deep sigh came from her breast, and in the same moment the *Halfbreed* stepped back from the horse's head to the cinch where he kept pace with the horse. "Don't despair, dear Franziska," he whispered with a gentle, friendly voice that stood in stark contrast to the latest events. "Don't despair, we are not in danger right now, and we only fled to escape future danger."

"Even though the danger scares me, it is not the cause of my sadness," Franziska replied just as quiet.

"But it is the thought of danger that makes you so gloomy; oh, Franziska, I know your noble heart, you are not worried about yourself. Cheer up and look toward the future; you will have many happy days with your loved one yet, or do you really believe Lefèvre would have chosen this path if he wasn't entirely sure? I don't know where he is leading us, but my faith in his knowledge of the place is great enough that

I don't ask him, but just follow him. I am more at ease now than I was two hours ago, I am not worried about your fate because why should I? It is my calling to spend my life in the wilderness, just like my friend Lefèvre, and I will likely see terrible scenes like the one today again some day. Why should I thus be worried about anything but you and your family!"

Franziska heard these words not without feeling painfully moved, and if Joseph could have seen her face at that moment, he would have seen tears that were slowly welling up in her eyes.

"But why, dear friend, do you want to choose a profession that only shows you life's darkest sides? Now that I know what awful predicaments one may find himself out here; now, where my father, brother and so many friends are only separated by hours from eternity—don't be frightened!" she whispered to the *Halfbreed* when he forcefully took her hand. "Don't be frightened to hear such words from me, they show you that I am calm and collected; but I beg you, if we are saved from this, please do not return to the wilderness, don't do it, for your sake, for the sake of your friends."

"Don't speak such sad words, dear Franziska," the *Halfbreed* said so quietly that only she could hear him; "and believe me when I assure you that Lefèvre, the Omaha, and I have found ways out of much more difficult situations. Become used to considering your rescue as certain. Even this time we will be successful in remaining alive and healthy and to overcome the looming threat. One day, you will look back and consider the present obstacles with a certain interest, and then you will find it

more plausible that a man wishes to return to where privation and danger give his existence a certain excitement. Just look at Lefèvre, his hair turned grey from such a life, and yet he wouldn't have chosen another profession at any price. Why should I not forget those things that make me fit for civilization in his company and be relatively happy and content? Believe me, it is for my sake that I wish to return there, and it is for the sake of a good, dear friend whom I can't leave. The other friends you mention, including you, will perhaps think of me fondly in their old age, and if I manage to believe that, it will be like a friendly glow on the path of life."

Franziska had listened attentively. She was completely aware of the fact that they were in danger, and even if it filled her with sadness to hear the young man talk this way, but yet there was so much in his behavior that inspired confidence that she wanted to listen to him for hours. She would have loved to answer him when he asked her to remember her fondly, but a simple "yes" seemed insufficient to express what she felt. She cried tears that came from her heart.

She did not notice that the *Halfbreed* had stepped next to her horse's head again and watched carefully over its pace. She didn't notice that the moonlight gave way to black shadows and craggy cliffs began to rise in front of them. She was too sad, felt too sorrowful.

Lefèvre on the other hand tirelessly followed the treacherous path and only stopped once in a while to listen carefully, but only to make haste afterward. Hour upon hour passed and midnight wasn't far when they reached the point where the

creek ran through a canyon framed by high cliffs. Lefèvre however paid no attention, but used the direction of the creek to find his way to the foot of Medicine Mountain.

A short distance behind the canyon Lefèvre halted. The Omaha had been expecting him and they had a brief conversation. Then, the train started moving again and everyone glanced at the Indian who was sitting on the bank motionless and let the train pass by. When Joseph was close to him, he whispered some Indian words, which he answered with a simple Indian *How*, and soon enough he was far behind them.

"We are not facing any danger here," the *Halfbreed* said to the young girl, stepping briefly to her side. "We have just crossed the path the Ute used to bypass us. Wabash will stay behind to keep an eye on the enemies and to bring us news of their movements."

"Thank God!" Franziska exclaimed; but the *Halfbreed* had moved back to the horses head. He had heard a subdued cry and didn't dare point out that the threat might follow them, would likely follow them because the Ute were no longer interested in just robbing their belongings, but also in avenging the death of their tribal members the Omaha and the *Halfbreed* had bludgeoned and whose bodies they were likely to find soon.

27. The Cave

When dawn came the refugees finally saw Medicine Mountain in front of them. The creek, in which only little water flowed, turned westward around the base of the mountain and showed Lefèvre that their path lay in the opposite direction.

The old hunter had aside from the meeting with Wabash had not spoken a single word, he had not even turned back to make sure that the members of the group were able to follow him on the difficult trail that was at times blocked by dislodged boulders, and in other spots had deep holes filled with water in place of the usual shallow stream.

From the creek's bank he now regarded with sympathy the exhausted beings, who tried to make their way up to him with great effort, and Sidney and Franziska in particular seemed to evoke his pity. However, he avoided showing his feelings too much and turning to the girl with cheerful laughter he said: "Quite the night ride, my daughter! Wait another two hours and you will have such comfortable quarters that you can't wish for more. I hope the endeavor wasn't too much for you!"

Franziska, who felt all eyes on her, especially her father's and the *Halfbreed's*, pulled herself together and forcing her pale features into a kind smile answered that the morning air was refreshing, and that along with the darkness her last concerns had vanished, and she could travel for many miles yet before exhaustion would overtake her.

"Well then, my daughter," Lefèvre said, "if you are not complaining about being tired, then Sidney and Robert might resent my question about their well being.

But let's rest some minutes, let the animals drink, and fill up the bottles, crocks, and waterskins with water because I shall let myself be hanged if we dare to come back here in the next forty-eight hours. Let's hurry then, boys!"

Everything happened as ordered, and half an hour later, when the sun rose behind the eastern mountains, Lefèvre once again moved into the lead and led them into the canyon that made a wide circle around the eastern base of Medicine Mountain.

Even though no water covered the ground here, the trail became more difficult and held more obstacles than it had during the night. From each side so many boulders and rubble had tumbled down into the canyon, and all the nooks and crannies were filled with thorn bushes and cactuses, that Lefèvre had to stop several times either to locate a passage for the horses, or to roll a boulder out of the way with the help from the others. After one hour they had only covered a short distance. Then, they found a rarely used, almost unrecognizable Indian trail that, after making a few turns, led out of the canyon and then slowly, in many zigzag lines, led up the slope of Medicine Mountain.

After the trail had reached a certain altitude, it went straight around the mountain, so that the refuges almost ended up on the northern side of the mountain, where nature had such a wild and barren appearance that they almost couldn't bear looking at it without feeling some anxiety. The mountains were craggy and barren on all sides; deep gorges and fissures tore through the mountain sides that were devoid of vegetation, and where two such rock formations intersected, heaps of stone were piled

up in the wildest chaos, as if it had been the playground for giant Cyclopes who, standing on the mountain tops, had fought each other with mighty boulders.

"A great terrain to play hide and seek in!" Lefèvre exclaimed cheerfully when he halted in a sharp turn under a protruding rock ledge to await the last of the train.

"But also beautiful to keep the entire Ute Nation at bay. Yes, dear Joseph, my old eyes and my old mind haven't failed me yet; we are at the same spot I was ten years ago. But dismount now, children, dismount. We can't take the animals along; they have to find shelter for themselves now, and ours is only a few steps from here."

He propped his rifle up against a rock, and waving at the *Halfbreed*, who had helped Franziska out of the saddle, he turned the sharp corner around the rock. Joseph followed him and was surprised when he suddenly found himself at the edge of a terrifying abyss, which was apparently the result of a rockslide.

The trail on which the group had traveled for so long led around the turn, but there it ended on a broad, solid rock ledge, which was big enough to offer accommodation to approximately forty people. The ledge had broken off and a ghastly vertical wall reached from its edge to the base of the mountain. The wall had numerous gaping openings in the form of caves and crevasses, and at the base of the mountain great accumulations of rock and debris covered the ground.

Where the ledge was connected to the mountain, another ledge arched forward at the height of six feet and covered the lower ledge. This way they formed a spacious cave, which could easily be defended by a few determined men against a superior enemy since it was only accessible from the two sides.

The entrance Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* used to reach the cave was very narrow and perhaps better suited for the light-footed mountain sheep than for human beings. The other side of the cave, where it had a larger opening, could only be reached via a detour, unless one wanted to use the narrow entrance and cross the cave to reach it. By the other entrance lay some colossal boulders that could not only be used as a parapet, but they also afforded people hiding in the cave a measure of protection. Additionally, the rocks that formed the cave had burst in every direction and a light breeze coming from the cracks in the rock showed that it had openings leading to the outside further up or on the sides of the ridge-like projection. While they were not big enough to let a human being pass, the tracks of wild cats, foxes, and small and large rodents were visible everywhere. They inhabited the cave and found ample opportunity to avoid one another by using all the cracks and fissures. However, most of them were entirely filled with small twigs, dried cactus leaves, and thorns that the diligent rodents had accumulated for the defense against predators and the winter cold.

On the outer rim of the ledge, teetering above the abyss stood an old, gnarly cedar whose roots had firmly taken hold in the small cracks. Its only nourishment came from the minimal amount of moisture that collected there after rain fell, and because they were almost entirely sealed off from the atmosphere, it evaporated only very slowly. The cracked plate that made up the ceiling, which looked like it might fall from the slightest tremor, was covered with a slight layer of soot; on the ledge were some spots that were burnt black, half-burnt pieces of wood, bones that were

bleached white, and skull of a mountain sheep decorated with its mammoth horns. Bundles of firewood showed that the cave was not only populated by animals, but that human beings inhabited it at times as well.

"A safe place of refuge," said Joseph when he looked around. "If we aren't forced to stay here for too long, we can hope to escape the Ute this time."

"We most certainly can," Lefèvre replied, feeling pleased with himself. "And if we were only half as powerful as we are, we would still be able to defend the two entrances against the entire Ute Nation; and the front, well, they would have to have wings to fly up here, because listen how deep it is," he said and kicked the horned skull, causing it roll off the ledge.

Without a sound the skull vanished and five seconds passed until the noise of the cracking bones reached their ears.

"It's for good reason this is called Medicine Mountain," Lefèvre said, who had once again assumed his cheerful, lighthearted personality. "Yes, yes, the mountain is full of medicine from top to bottom, that is caves. I know of more hidden ones, but I think this one will suffice, since the others may be hard to reach for Franziska.

Sapristi! A wonderful place to fight a little battle. *Sacré mille tonnerre!* Joe, let the Ute dogs come: I will position myself on this side, you take the other, and —"

"And Franziska?" interrupted the Halfbreed, who had become excited now as well.²²⁵

²²⁵ *der sich allmählig selbst in Feuer geredet hatte*

"Sacré tonnerre! Joe," replied Lefèvre, moving his felt hat around on his bushy hair with some embarrassment, "I mean if they come here. But let's hurry now and let's move everything in here. Those dogs may get here quicker than we think."

The two hunters now rejoined the others, who had taken the packs and saddles of the horses and were waiting for Lefèvre's further orders.

"Let the horses go," the trapper called when he stepped out into the open. "We can't take them into the cave, and whether they are shot here or taken by the Ute down by the water shouldn't matter to us. Our safety comes first, then the animals.

As soon as the animals felt their freedom, they turned their backs to the group and trotted down the path they had come up at a fast pace. Everyone looked after them for some time, as if they mourned their loss, and Franziska even had tears in her eyes, but she quickly composed herself when the men spryly began to bring their belongings to safety. She trembled while she followed the *Halfbreed*, who led her past the precipice with a steady hand, but when she stepped into the spacious cave, where a refreshing cool replaced the sun's heat that could already be felt outside, she regained her composure. She sat down on one of the old bundles of twigs and nodded encouragingly in her father's direction. He seemed to almost collapse under the burden of sorrow and worry.

The men were too busy with stowing away their equipment they had managed to save, making comfortable beds, and barricading the western exits with boulders to have taken the time to speak words of comfort to the young girl and her father. When they joined the two in the back of the cave after having completed their work, they

realized that Franziska hadn't been able to resist fatigue and had fallen asleep. Her father sat in front of her, his head on his knees, which he had pulled up to his chin, and a deep, exhausting sleep had let him forget his sad situation for a while. The faithful Indian woman held the girl's head in her lap; even she had reclined against the wall and was asleep. Her long black hair covered her face like a veil, and as if to heighten the contrast to this picture, she had buried her brown hands half way in her white friend's voluminous blonde curls.

This picture left an impression in the men's minds. They looked at the group with a mixture of wistfulness and tenderness. They walked without a sound and lowered their voices to a whisper, even though the latter had just a short while prior caused a singing echo in the enclosed space.

Lefèvre grabbed his friend Joseph's arm. Pulling him aside, Lefèvre began with a string of curses, and finished by saying: "Joe, my son, is it not an outrageous sin that our poor Franziska has to crawl around in these awful caves and gorges like a hunted swallow?"

"Yes, it is outrageous," the *Halfbreed* replied, squeezing the old hunter's hand, "but we can only defend her and die with her because under no circumstances must she fall into the hands of the barbaric Ute, even if she has to give her life."

"Calm down, son, we have a lot of time until that happens. In the name of St. Napoleon and the holy nation! Some of the dirty Ute dogs will have to take a lot of lead before they even get to see the corner of Franziska's dress."

"True, we can stay here for a while, but not longer than we have munitions and food supplies; how we are going to get out of this nest in the rocks, I have no idea."

"Joe, your opinion of the young girl colors everything much blacker than it is in reality. I still have hope to see my most important wish fulfilled. But let's persuade Sidney and the others to rest a few hours as well. Who knows when we will get the next chance."

Joseph seemed to ignore the first part of Lefèvre's speech, or at least he didn't answer, but he supported him in urging the young men to lie down and seek some much-needed sleep.

Soon, deep silence reigned in the cave and only the long, regular breaths of the resting travelers joined the chirping of the crickets that were hidden in the cool cracks of the rocks and the humming of the large, golden flies that flew back and forth like shiny sparks in the sunlight. Colorful lizards with long tails left their dark crevasses and stretched out on the ledge, as far as it was exposed to the sunlight's now almost vertical rays. They laid motionless as if they were made of stone, and only if a fly, attracted by the beautiful colors, landed on the scaly body of one or the other did its bright eyes become shinier and the lizard probably calculated the exact moment in which he might be able to make the wandering insect disappear from his head into his wide mouth with a quick movement.

Lefèvre held watch by the wide entrance and Joseph camped on the narrow trail next to the abyss, facing in the direction from which he expected the Omaha to

come. Hours went by, but no sleep came to the two hunters even though they too felt the exertion from the prior night, and quiet and the buzzing of the insect made them drowsy. Suddenly, the *Halfbreed* jerked up: a broad shadow had fallen on him. When he looked up, he saw a mighty Bald Eagle flying above him, making smaller and smaller circles in the air. The beautiful bird had likewise captured Lefèvre's attention, but he remained motionless and watched the movements of the king of the air with growing interest. The bird did not seem to notice, or at least pay no attention to, the two men. It held a rabbit in its claws and was no doubt about to return to his nest, which must have been close by.

He shot past the ledge with a characteristic roaring sound, so that Joseph felt the air the broad wings had displaced on his cheek. When he returned once more in a wide circle, he was already seven feet below the ledge.

The two hunters carefully stretched their heads above the abyss and looked into the depth. The eagle described a new circle, which was ten more feet below the last, and then, flying straight at the rock wall, it suddenly lifted its head and chest, beat its gigantic wings a few times, and then sat safely in a crippled, dried out cedar that was growing at the same height as the ledge in the barren rock.

The bird only remained in this position for a short while, then it expanded its wings halfway, and half jumping, half flying it disappeared in the cave in the rock wall. In the blink of an eye Lefèvre was by the *Halfbreed's* side, and pointing his hand above the precipice, he whispered to him: "Eagles don't like to nest in tight

spaces, it must have a spacious home down there. Walk down along the edge of the precipice and see if you can take a look. I will stay here in your place.

Joseph crept along the ledge until he was on solid ground, where he jumped up and did what Lefèvre had asked of him. He soon returned and reported that the cedar and the point where the eagle had disappeared was covered by rock hanging sideways that it was impossible to see with human eyes where the edge of the cave was.

"Good to know," the trapper said. The he went back to his post.

Joseph understood what the trapper meant because he gave him his hand and made a sign of agreement and then took up his old position.

None of those who were sleeping had been disturbed by the incident, even the usually watchful Indian woman had not moved, and the sad, secretive silence returned to the rocky desert.

Another hour went by and then the hunters heard the plaintive whimper of a cougar,²²⁶ and as if they had been shocked by electricity, both jumped up and gently slipped out into the open. They didn't speak, but when they were behind the corner in the rock that separated the cave from the precipice, the *Halfbreed* raced up to the next ledge, put both hands on his mouth and exactly imitated the call he had just heard. The howl of a coyote and right after the whimper of the cougar came as the answer, and the *Halfbreed* appeared to be satisfied because he descended much slower than he had climbed up and rejoined Lefèvre.

²²⁶ *Panther*

"Those dogs are tracking us, but they are still far behind us," he told the trapper, who motioned to return to the cave.

"Even better," the latter replied, "one or two hours of sleep will be good for us. Who knows when we will have a chance to sleep next once Ute dogs find us. Wabash has an advantage, since he can sleep with one eye open, and I let myself be hanged if he didn't sleep here and there, even in the presence of the enemy."

When the hunters stepped back into the cave, their looks fell on its inhabitants. All of them were still in a deep sleep. Only the Indian woman had been awakened by her husband's call because she had opened her big black eyes and looked at the two men questioningly, but without moving since that might have disturbed her white friend.

Lefèvre gave a sign that quickly put her at ease because as soon as she recognized it, she closed her eyes and went back to sleep. The hunters took their post again where they stayed until the Omaha made his presence known by a rock he had thrown into the precipice. Then he appeared from behind the corner.

Wabash recounted his latest adventures with a few words. His report put the hunters at ease because they were assured that the Ute were not likely to arrive before sunset, but would in any case wait with their first attack until nightfall.

Lefèvre and Joseph couldn't help but tremble when they heard how close their group had come to its demise the prior night because fifteen minutes after they had passed the Omaha on guard in the creek bed, approximately forty Ute had approached it, and once arrived, they had taken the way to the deserted camp. If they had delayed

their departure by only as much as half an hour, they would have fallen into enemy hands.

The Omaha had tracked the band of savages and then climbed a hill from which he monitored its movements. The break of dawn did indeed reveal the deserted camp to be populated with Indian robbers, whose separate units had come together at this spot.

A long time passed during which the Indians apparently held council with three white men, whom he couldn't recognize or describe because the distance had been too great. After much snooping around, the whole tribe finally descended into the creek to, no doubt, track the escapees. The Omaha himself had hurried ahead and the last thing he had seen was how the Ute had been misled by the freed horses' tracks and had gone in the wrong direction.

When Wabash concluded his report, Lefèvre joined Robert and Sidney, and nudging them gently he asked them to get up and take over watch. They jumped up to heed the request, and almost at the same time the other members of the group awoke and loudly proclaimed their joy at having the Omaha back in their midst.

Joseph then described their situation, and without feeding the anxieties that came up every now and then he managed to prepare everyone in his usual serious manner for the scenes they should expect, while he tried to emphasize that he was only speaking of potentially bloody scenes and that their personal safety was not at risk in the inaccessible hideout.

The energy everyone put into preparing the expected battle had an effect on Andree. He had been regarding his daughter with sorrowful looks, but when he realized how new courage and certain hope for success drove his companions, he embraced Franziska tenderly and assured her how he was happily going to pick up weapons once more in his old age and defend his daughter by his son's side. Then he joined the young men, who were busy rolling more boulders into the western opening and to fill it up with the exception of from several embrasures.

This arrangement denied an attacking enemy the possibility of sending projectiles into the cave because the only points of the rock face that were at an obtuse angle to the cave and formed the inaccessible precipice were too far away, and arrows shot off from there would have no effect when they reached the cave.

The points, however, could be reached by the hunters' rifle shots. Lefèvre explained all this as laboriously and persuasively as possible to Andree's daughter, so that she really shared his opinion that no one would have an accident, and that the Indians with the prospect of so little gain would after several failed attempts to take over the cave leave quickly. Her beautiful, resigned face showed a smile when the old hunter called her a brave she-bear and told her that the famous chief's daughter Pocahontas, who had once saved a Dutch officer from the warriors' flying tomahawks by risking her own life, only was a weak, little child in comparison to her.

After he had convinced himself that all possible safety measure had been taken and that no one was running short on bullets or powder, the remaining powder reserve was safe but accessible, he directed the Omaha to lie down on the ledge and

to shoot the two eagles with arrows as soon as they appeared. "Those poor animals, they might betray our hiding place," he murmured to himself, "in which case we will have to leave here and move downstairs. But no!" he continued, taking another look at the fortified exits, "they must be in league with the devil if those feeble minded Ute dogs actually manage to drive us out of here."

Several minutes later, Lefèvre had reclined in a cool corner and slept so soundly as if he were in some hotel in the busiest part of St. Louis or New York. Following Franziska's and Andree's encouragement, the Halfbreed, too, stretched out on a bed of brushwood, but the refreshing sleep didn't come to him. He felt anxious like never before, and with horror he considered how the tender being Franziska, who had more concern for her father than for her own self, might become witness to a wild, ferocious battle.

The sparse meal was prepared and eaten almost silently, the guards took turns, and when Lefèvre rose to stretch the last bit of sleep from his limbs, the sun went down behind the western mountains, and like a gentle fragrance the first shadows fell on the barren rock faces and the deserted canyons.

Only the Omaha had not been relieved and sat like a statue at the edge of the precipice. His feet dangled down into the abyss; his left fist and his bow rested on his knee, while the right held the feathered arrow with the bowstring. He had lowered his smoothly shaved head with its lone scalp curl, and the red tail of the Virginia white-

tailed deer onto his chest as if he were in deep thought.²²⁷ He looked into the gorge where the last of the two eagles was circling. He had already shot the first one several hours ago with an arrow as it was about to leave its nest, and the eagle had heavily wounded dropped into the depth. The proud bird flew over its companion's grave apprehensively and suspiciously. At first he sailed far away, then he flew close to the sheer face on his broad wings, but he stayed away from the cave where he suspected danger.

"It's better if I kill it with a bullet," Lefèvre said. "He will hardly venture within reach of your bow."

"Rifle is too loud," Wabash replied indifferently and without lifting his head.

"You are right, Omaha," the trapper replied, "but if the Ute are really chasing us, they will already know where we are. If they aren't tracking us, they are so far away that the echo won't carry. But it takes a sure shot, Wabash, because I have to shoot downward. It is better though if I kill the bird, as much as I don't like taking the poor animals life." He cocked his gun and laid down on the ledge next to the Indian to be able to use the edge of the rock as a stand for his gun.

All eyes were on the hunter who followed the movements of the majestic bird. Suddenly, he cocked his head, pressed his cheek against the stock of the rifle; he had noticed that the eagle was turning and was about to come closer. It wasn't in the line

²²⁷ The hairstyle was called *Ta-pa*: All the hair was cut but a small bunch over the forehead and a long thin lock at the back of the head to represent the head and tail of the deer.

of fire yet when the Omaha silently placed his hand on the barrel of the gun to prevent Lefèvre from firing.

Lefèvre remained motionless because he knew well that the Indian must have had a reason, and then he saw that he had raised his index finger and was pointing toward the east rim of the canyon.

His eyes followed the indicated direction, and the Omaha must have recognized something that had remained invisible to everyone else in the group, which was far back inside the cave and by its exits. He lifted the muzzle of his gun with one quick movement, and in the next instance the blast of a gunshot caused a hundredfold echo that made the cliffs quake and the sound reverberated in irregular vibrations through the far away canyons.

28. The Battle

As soon as the powder dust settled all eyes were on the eagle, which now turned around and, flapping his wings a couple of times, flew toward the opposite mountain chain. Even the Halfbreed believed that his friend, who was known to be one of the best hunters on the upper Missouri, had missed his intended target. He was about to make some jokes when a strange moaning prompted him to hurry back to the edge of the cave.

He came just in time to see an Indian who was tossing and turning on the ledge below and then slowly approached the abyss. He was holding on to a long

Missouri Rifle,²²⁸ and undoubtedly had been struck in the head by Lefèvre's bullet when he was about to take aim at the trapper or the Omaha.

Joseph did not make a sound since he was afraid to draw the young girls attention. When the dying man was teetering on the brink of the abyss, he seemed to regain consciousness because he dropped the gun and tried to hold on the slick rocks with his last bit of strength, but then fell, uttering a piercing cry, after his rifle, which had already hit the ground, discharging its load in the fall.

When the cry faded and Joseph looked around, a pale, deathly-afraid Franziska stood by his side. She had folded her hands and her eyes followed the lifeless body, which hit one crag after the other before finally disappearing into the depth, with an indescribable expression of distress and pity.

"This is not a sight for you, dear Franziska," he said gently, taking the young girls hand and leading her back into the cave. "Come along, the Omaha's wife shall keep you company; we men have to stay here if we don't want to give up hope of our escape."

"Here?" the young girl asked in a desperate voice. "Here where your life is in danger at all times? Let me share the danger with my father, my brother, with all of

²²⁸ Firearms were manufactured locally and carried the name of the locality where they were produced. However, the Missouri Rifle here is probably a Hawken rifle. The Hawken brothers made custom rifles in their St. Louis shop from 1815 to 1858 (but the shop continued to operate until 1915). The Hawken is also known as the plains rifle, buffalo gun, or fur trapper's gun. It was a muzzleloader, a type of gun that was then slowly being replaced by the breech-loader (such the Winchester rifle). Hawken's were known to have accuracy and long range. Francis Parkman is said to have killed a pronghorn with a Hawken from 204 paces, or 510 feet, away.

you, but don't ask me to sit in the corner and watch how you are exposed to the enemy's shots."

"You must, my daughter," Andree said. He was barely able to control his emotions. "You must because your presence will only interfere and draw the enemies' attention to us even more. Follow our friends' advice. They have shown time and time again that they have our best interest at heart."

"Yes, listen to them," said Lefèvre, who had in the meantime reloaded his rifle and made a strange gesture with his sleeve over his eyes. "Listen to them, they do mean well. I know you are as brave as an Indian chief, and I understand that you want to share the danger with us, but since there is no danger here, please do me the favor and go back inside because you are in the way here."

Now she let herself be lead to the interior of the cave, where she sat on a brush bed with the Indian woman. When Joseph had to leave her, she once more took his hand and squeezing it, she said: "Joseph, dearest friend, watch out for my poor father, over everyone, but watch out for yourself as well."

Joseph was deeply moved and felt too emotional to speak, but the warm pressure from his hand indicated that he understood. She looked after him with a certain measure of reassurance when he walked over to Lefèvre and began a conversation with him.

Despite the incident, Robert and Sidney were standing by the two exits and had until now not left their post for any length of time. Lefèvre called them back after a brief consultation with Joseph and the Omaha and ordered them to stand guard very

close to the sidewalls. Andree and Smith joined them and they all were instructed to keep an eye on the opposite side's exit and to not make use of their weapons until Lefèvre told them to.

Lefèvre and the Halfbreed went to the exit on the western side where they crouched down behind the parapet, while Wabash—gun in the left, tomahawk in the right, ready to strike—took his position behind the corner right by the dangerous trail.

Some time passed and everyone felt anxious. Dusk gave way to darkness. No one in the cave spoke a word, and it was completely silent outside as well; if it hadn't been for the cheerful crickets and grasshoppers, nature would have appeared extinct. In the back of their hideout, where the two women sat, it was already completely dark, and they could only discern objects if they held them in front of the eye against the background of the firmament. They had begun to feel hopeful the Ute might no longer attack that night, when suddenly the rattle of the rattlesnake could be heard from the spot where the Omaha stood.

Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed*, who were the only ones who understood the signal, looked over and prepared themselves to assist if needed, but it wasn't necessary because they could see the Indian's silhouette propping its gun against the rock, pulling its torso back, and holding the hand with the tomahawk high above its head. They didn't see an enemy however, no matter how much they strained their eyes in the darkness.

Joseph gently nudged Lefèvre and advised him to follow his example and place his ear on the ground for a while. Lefèvre had not been listening for a minute

when he gently moved the knife he usually carried on his backside tucked in his belt to the front and loosened it in its sheath. Joseph had meanwhile returned to the cave where he instructed the waiting companions to move to the middle of the cave and to lie there, weapons ready for use. After he had emphasized not to fire too early, and to only shoot one after the other to save ammunition, he went back to Lefèvre, who still lay motionless.

Minutes passed, long and tense minutes. It was so quiet on the ledge that a dropping leaf could be heard. They even exhaled the held breath so slowly that it could not be heard even in the immediate vicinity.

Suddenly, the quiet was interrupted by the cracking sound of the Omaha's tomahawk hitting the skull of a Ute, who had been creeping along the trail and wanted to peek around the corner.

The cracking was followed by a brief commotion, then everything was as quiet as it had been before; only from the depth echoed the sound of the falling body that Wabash had easily pushed into the abyss.

The echo in the depth hadn't subsided yet, when two shadowlike figures simultaneously slid across the parapet where Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* were on guard and advanced into the middle of the cave without resistance, while four more attackers—and behind them probably another dozen Indians who were about to follow their companions—became visible across the parapet.

"Now!" Lefèvre yelled, while he jumped up like lightning and stabbed the first with his long knife. "Now, boys," he repeated and plunged the knife between

another one's shoulder blades. The Indian fell to his knees. "Let them have it, boys," he continued, unloading his rifle into the mob and then cheerfully swinging it around his head.

The *Halfbreed* wasted no time either; the treacherous attack had brought his Indian blood to a boil. Holding the knife in his left fist ready to strike, and swinging the sharp tomahawk with his other with great agility, he and Lefèvre transformed the parapet into an unconquerable fortification. He had also fired his rifle and then tossed it aside as being useless because he had no time to reload. Since the Ute moved in in packs, and the ones in the lead always forcefully pushed to the parapet, the hunters would not have been able to hold out for long if the attackers hadn't been limited to a small area and thus were limited in the use of their bow and arrow.

The Ute had apparently believed that they would be able to surprise the escapees with the first attack and to massacre them because otherwise the first four would never have entered the cave with a for their tribe uncharacteristic defiance of death. Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* on the other hand had only let them enter because they sought to reduce the number of enemies, and because they knew that the Indians were heading for their doom.

Indeed, they had not reached the middle of the cave yet, when Lefèvre's "Let them have it" came and the bullets of the hidden shooters hit them. The fourth, who saw his escape route blocked but didn't notice the Omaha lurking in the shadows, then tried to escape on the narrow trail during the melee, but only reached the corner where a kick from the Omaha sent him into the precipice.

His death cry was bloodcurdling when he fell into the void; even more awful was the howl of rage from the tribe when they noticed death and perdition around them without having advanced as much as an inch. Gathering their strength once more, they tried once again to storm the parapet.

Lefèvre fully recognized the danger in which they were because the sustained loss had transformed the savages' exasperation into a blind, animal-like fury, which was more than a substitute for any lack of individual rage. "Bring the loaded guns!" he called with a voice that drowned out the howling of the attackers. Robert, Sidney, Andree, and Smith came quickly, placing the muzzles of their guns in the openings between the boulders. "Let them have it!" the old hunter's command came, while he followed the *Halfbreed's* example and jumped back to reload his own rifle. The shots fired into the black mass of the advancing enemy found an easy target despite the darkness because the Indians were unable to retreat on the narrow and crowded trail.

Their death rattle and howl for blood filled the night, and showers of arrows with sharp stone tips hit the cliffs, but the trapper's voice was louder than everything; he was enraptured by the desire to fight and fired on his companions in his characteristic way, spicing up his commands and orders with various jokes.

"Let them have it, children!" he called. "Genuine lead from the Galena Mine! Sacré tonnerre! Sidney, my boy, don't stay too low, you might blow their legs in half! Nicely done, Joe! Even your grandfather Petalesharo never executed a better blow with the tomahawk. Watch out, friend!" he yelled at a Ute warrior who jumped on the parapet in front of him—or, more precisely, was pushed up. When the Ute pulled the

feathered arrow to his ear, Lefèvre yelled: "Watch out friend so you don't fall down!" And as soon as the last word had crossed his lips, the shot from his rifle blew the Ute's head in two, and he, jumping up, fell headfirst into the abyss. "Have a good trip," Lefèvre called after him, pushing more lead into the muzzle, "and don't forget to come back. Watch them run! Hurrah, children! Wish them a speedy return!"²²⁹

After the Ute had realized the futility of their endeavor and had lost a large number of their own, they really began to withdraw quickly, and when bullets followed them behind the rocks, the last ones disappeared like shadows between the rocks moans and groans of the remaining wounded pierced the eerie silence that had fallen after the last shot.

During the whole battle, which had lasted barely half an hour, the Omaha had not left his post. He knew that that the spies behind the corner had been hearing and that a number of enemies would slide into the cave from the narrow trail as soon as they knew he was gone. He stood seemingly impassive when Lefèvre walked over to him, wiping the sweat from his forehead, and addressed him with a few words in the Omaha language. Wabash stepped aside, Lefèvre took his spot, and the Indian then moved over to the other side, which was being guarded closely by the other men. There, he whispered something to the *Halfbreed*, who signaled his agreement and then turned around. A moment later, the Omaha was on the outside of the parapet, where he became invisible against the background of the rocks. A short while later, the dull thud of a body hitting the ground startled the sentinels, who were not used to

²²⁹ *gebt ihnen noch einen Brief mit und wünscht ihnen eine schnelle Heimkehr!*

such scenes. "It's nothing," the Halfbreed said, "Wabash is tossing the bodies over the ledge to save us from a distressing sight. It will be bad enough when the sunlight falls onto the coagulated blood on the rock here."

Again and again the eerie sound came from the depth; several times it was preceded by a short scream or painful whimper. It came from the wounded, who received a last favor. The men listened and shuddered. Franziska crouched in a far corner of the cave and the terrible sounds didn't reach her. Her heart was filled with gratitude for a benevolent destiny when she heard from her father that not one member of the group had been injured during the short battle, and that the enemies had likely retreated.

She musingly looked at the entrance of the cave, which seemed to be covered with a deep blue, richly embroidered carpet. The stars twinkled in a friendly way as if they wanted to comfort her, and the far away mountains looked quiet and peaceful. The rising moon shed its soft light on them, and as it rose higher and higher, its blue illumination kept gliding deeper and deeper down the mountainsides.

She could not see the moon itself, but the background, in front of which the black figures of the men moved to and fro, became lighter and lighter and the stars faded on the illuminated firmament. She recognized the *Halfbreed's* tall and slender silhouette, walking from side to side, discussing matters with Lefèvre, giving orders here, encouragement there. She recognized the old hunter, too, who stood calmly leaning on his rifle by the cedar next to the precipice. The Omaha cowered next to

him, and both watched the ledge since it was the only place from which treachery might still come.

The Indian woman sat by Franziska's feet, her father by her side, but nobody said a word, and even from the cave's exit there only came murmuring voices once in a while. She thought of her far away home with tears in her eyes. Was this reality, or was it a bad dream? No, it was no delusion; her father sat next to her, she felt his breath since she could not see him in the dark and was not allowed to light a fire on the ledge so as not to become a target for the enemy. Oh, it was sad. It weighed on the sorrowful daughter's heart like a ton of bricks. Despite the comforting words of her father, who probably needed comfort more than she did, dark premonitions came to her mind, and under the influence of these emotions she cried hot tears. Franziska cried silently; she cried herself to sleep like a small child, into a deep sleep from exhaustion. Her father and the Indian woman watched over her, and the men avoided approaching her with great care since they didn't want to disturb their darling.

The night passed peacefully, but when the eastern sky turned red, the hunters doubled their vigilance, so that not even a squirrel could have approached them undetected. "I know the Ute dogs," Lefèvre declared, advising the young people not to take their eyes off the exits. "I know them. They usually choose dawn for their attacks, but if they haven't shown themselves by the time the sun is up, we can assume that we won't be bothered all day. Then they have either retreated completely, what I seriously doubt, or they have chosen to ambush us at another spot, where they will wait until we leave this comfortable place, or, what is the most likely, they will

repeat their attack at night and simply want to make some preparations throughout the day. But, *Sacré mille tonnerre!* Let them come, we will give them a warm welcome!"

"It was in the early morning hours when they attacked my train and destroyed it," Smith added gloomily.

"Whether in the morning or at night, it doesn't matter," replied Lefèvre, "but at least you can take comfort in the fact that a number of the handsome scoundrels are at the bottom of the abyss, and if I am not mistaken, the number will rise significantly over the next three days. What do you think, Wabash?"

"The Ute will return," the Indian replied. "The Ute have lost many men and want blood. They are not far, not even ten steps from here."

"Hell! Not even ten steps?" Lefèvre asked harshly.

"Here, around the corner!" the Omaha replied indifferently, while he pointed with the thumb of his right hand over his shoulder toward the narrow trail in the rocks that Robert guarded.

The young forester heard the Indian, and not little surprised that the enemy was so close to him he prepared to carefully sneak around the corner and convince himself of the truth, when Lefèvre told him laughingly not to take another step if he wanted to remain alive. "Leave the scouting to the Omaha, who is used to doing it," he continued because he had noticed a bit of displeasure on the young man's face. "Believe me, I, too, let Wabash handle this task for me and don't feel ashamed to admit that he is much more skilled in it—just look how daintily he does it."

Indeed, the Omaha followed the trapper's indirect request; but, before he passed him and entered the trail, he laid down all weapons except his knife and tomahawk. Then he hurried over to the luggage, from which he took a wool blanket. So equipped, and holding the tomahawk and the blanket far away from his body, he then sidled along the treacherous trail, pressing his right shoulder against the rocks. He then pushed the blanket, which he had skillfully hung over the head of the tomahawk so that it resembled a human figure, halfway around the corner with great caution. As soon as he had done that the tomahawk and the blanket were torn from his hand by the force with which two arrows penetrated the thick folds and buried themselves there.

The Omaha seemed to have expected this because without paying further attention to the hidden enemy, he took his trophy to Joseph and Lefèvre, with whom he tried to determine from which direction the arrows had come and where the enemies scouts were.

"Feeble-minded fellows, that's for sure," the trapper philosophized, while he broke the dainty stone tips from the shafts, turning the tips in his hand and looking at them. "Very feeble-minded, in any case. St. Napoleon! A Pawnee or an Oglala would not have shot his arrows so recklessly, isn't that right Wabash?"

But before the Omaha could answer, the sound of gunfire sounded from the ledge in the canyon, which the hunters had ceased watching for a second, and at the same time a bullet hit the rock behind them, so that weathered pieces of rock broke off the solid wall and flew all around.

"Sacré tonnerre!" called Lefèvre, whose left cheek had been torn open by a splinter of rock. "That was a white man's bullet!"

All eyes were immediately on the ledge, but they could only see a puff of smoke in front of it. It almost seemed too lazy to disappear because there was no wind.

"Didn't I tell you," the old hunter thundered, "that we can't let our guard down for one minute? Yes, now we are looking over to where the scoundrel is lying in hiding, and I will let myself be roasted over fire alive if he, who reminded us of our duty, is not a Mormon. Haha, here we are, chatting like old squaws and letting ourselves be killed, one after the other. But Sapristi, that has never happened to me in my entire life," he continued, wiping the blood of his cheek with his sleeve. "I was injured after the bullet had already flown past!"

"It grazed me coming in," the *Halfbreed* said and he pushed his hair aside on his temple and showed a blue stripe on his skin where the bullet had razed his hair down to the roots.

"Damn close, son," Lefèvre remarked, taking a quick look at it. "It's nothing," he then called into the cave, "my gun accidentally went off, but nobody is hurt!" As soon as he had convinced himself that the posts were properly guarded and no similar attack was to be feared, he stuffed his little clay pipe with such pleasure that revealed how much the old hunter had missed the beloved narcotic herb, which he hadn't been able to use even once all night.

The quiet that now settled made everyone forget the incident that could have ended badly. It had served however to make it clear that the enemy surrounded them, and that their every move was watched, as far as the topography allowed it.

Franziska was no longer allowed in the front part of the cave. Her father and the other men insisted, and since she was able to stand upright everywhere, even in the most remote corner, she could see the lovely blue sky, and eventually one or the other man always came over to cheer her up, this request could not be deemed unreasonable. Of course, if she had been able to follow her heart, she would have shared the danger with the men. She was composed, yes, there even was a certain gleam of courage in her eyes, and when her father explained how brave her brother and young Sidney had been, she engaged in all kinds of busywork that had been given to her with good intentions.

A small fire fed by twigs burnt before her, and since the men could only take refreshments once in a while and one after the other, she had no time to ponder her predicament, and she was almost surprised when she noticed that night was falling over the doleful landscape and that her little empire was turning dark.

The day had passed in peaceful quiet for the men as well, and only once they saw two figures climbing around on the rocky slopes looking for wormwood, thin branches, and tufts of grass.

Lefèvre looked concerned when he saw it, and Wabash and the *Halfbreed*, too, guessed the enemy's intention, but all avoided voicing their concerns in order to avoid giving rise to new fears. Perhaps even more so because the piling up of

flammable matter in front of the exits would not only keep the enemy out, but also prevent them from leaving if their route was blocked by smoke and fire. They could still fire many shots at the attackers before they would be able to light a fire by the parapet.

At nightfall the men separated so that the Omaha was once more guarding the narrow trail, while the others were immediately behind the parapet or at least close to it in order to take turns with loading and firing their weapons and thus to defend the only place from which they expected real danger to come from.

The darkness intensified, but no enemy showed himself; yes, it was so silent and bleak as if the inhabitants of the cave were the only people in this deserted wasteland, but even they remained so calm and listened so intently that any passing wanderer would never have suspected their presence. But wanderers stayed far from these regions where men only ventured armed, to face each other.

Several times the men thought they heard muted steps above them; they were almost silent and the sound faded quickly, as if they had been from a wolf or a wild cat. The men had no doubt though that the Ute were gathered up there to plan the decisive strike.

It may have been an hour after nightfall when the *Halfbreed* suddenly jumped up from his prone position, and after he had whispered some words to Lefèvre, he hurried into the cave. A rat had prompted him to do so, and now he investigated the cracks and fissures that he had determined during the daylight hours to be inhabited by rodents. A cool breeze came from the first, but when he came to one of the main

ducts in the rock, he believed that he smelled the foul odor of burning wormwood being carried to him through the penetrating airstream. He pressed his ear against the opening and listened. The smell of burning brush became stronger, he heard muted crackling of twigs and leaves, and in the next second he felt the soft hair of a quadruped brush his cheek. He felt his way toward another duct, and here, too, suffocating smoke greeted him, and at the same moment he heard Franziska's voice asking him to accompany her to the cave's opening since she felt lightheaded and had heavy feeling in her chest and numerous rats and mice kept crawling over her.

He tended to the young girl with some friendly and encouraging words; he saw their doom in his mind, and great sorrow filled his heart, and yet he tried to make her believe with a calm and steady voice that the smoke smell, which came from a fire the Ute had made, only accidentally penetrated the cave and would soon disappear again. She had no inkling of the dire situation. He carefully led her to the edge of the rock ledge, asked her to sit down, and left her in the care of the Indian woman

29. The Eagle's Nest

As soon as Joseph felt that the girl was temporarily safe, he hurried over to Lefèvre, who had by now also noticed the burning smell and had likewise hurried to meet him.

"Those treasonous dogs!" he hissed furiously between his teeth, "they want to suffocate us because there is hardly enough material in the ducts in the rock to roast

us. Sacré tonnerre! I am ashamed that we are being smoked out like raccoons. Those cowardly dogs—"

"Is there no rescue possible?" Joseph interrupted the trapper who was about to make his anger known through a string of curses and imprecations. "We have the eagle's nest!"

"Yes, we do, and we can even manage to make our way there, but it won't be very helpful unless we find provisions for six months there.

"We can leave no stone unturned," the *Halfbreed* replied in an urgent manner, "because look at the young girl, she is almost unconscious from the sharp smell."

"Yes, yes, the poor girl! Lefèvre replied with a trembling voice, "we have to try at least. Those cowardly dogs, they will not have collected all those stinking, green wormwood branches in vain. They were afraid that the column of smoke might be seen in Fort Bridger during the day and thus waited with the execution of the satanic plan until nightfall. But now hurry; the smoke begins to be unbearable. Robert shall relieve the Omaha, but other than that nobody shall leave their post. Bring the lead ropes, I hope the tree will hold us if we use it to descend!" He assumed a prone position next to the old cedar and carefully inspected the roots that were branching out into every direction and penetrated the cracks and crevices of the rock deeply.

The refugees' predicament had taken a terrible turn because thick clouds of smoke came from the numerous ducts in which the Ute kept piling new green branches that generated clouds of smoke. The flames thundered like an air furnace,

hitting the ground where they found more combustible fuel in all the little crevices that had been filled with it by all the little rodents since the beginning of time.

Since there was no wind at all, the smoke settled not only in the cave, but also in its immediate surroundings. This made the night appear even darker and they had to move with extreme caution because the abyss was no longer visible and a wrong step might have been one past the edge of the rock ledge.

Certainly there was no immediate danger of a Ute attack for the same reason, and the hard-pressed travelers could thus collect themselves and gather their strength for an escape attempt, but their predicament became more dangerous by the minute, and what had to happen must have been executed with the greatest speed, if they did not all want to find their grave on the ledge.

Everyone followed Lefèvre's orders exactly and promptly; Joseph and the Omaha came with the lead ropes, likewise assumed a prone position by the cedar, and a minute later four long ropes that had been fastened with loops around the gnarly trunk hung over the precipice far past the eagle's nest.

Franziska sat close to the busy men, resigned to her fate; she no longer believed herself able to escape. In the meantime, the atmosphere had been darkened so much by the night and the smoke that she was not able to discern the actual purpose of the endeavor, but when she saw the *Halfbreed's* silhouette hovering above the precipice, unspeakable terror choked her,²³⁰ and she hid her face in the Indian woman's breast to avoid the looking at the scenes surrounding her.

²³⁰ *namenloser Schrecken schnürte ihr die Brust zusammen*

In the next moment Andree and Robert knelt by her side and tried to comfort the suffering girl with loving words; as soon as Lefèvre noticed their intention, he bounded over to them with youthful agility and prompted the two men with harsh words to bring a saddle and food supplies before anything else. "Keep your voice down," he whispered to the girl, "try to refrain from coughing and choking if you don't want to hamper our last chance of saving ourselves. You will find relief pretty soon, but now trust us unconditionally!"

The three family members trusted the trapper and immediately calmed down and followed his command. When he one again knelt by the cedar, the saddle and supplies were already there, and father and son had once more disappeared into the cave to fetch new supplies.

Lefèvre and the Omaha had stuck their heads over the precipice and fixed their looks on the *Halfbreed*, who was hovering above the terrifying abyss. The sinking smoke, which rolled of the ledge in thick clouds, made it difficult to see him at times, but then he always reappeared for seconds and the recognized his shadowlike figure, which inched down the ropes. Finally, Joseph found himself level with the eagle's nest, and Lefèvre eyes almost burst from their sockets when he was trying to discern if Joseph was able to gain a foothold on the edge of the rock. Another cloud of smoke rolled over him. Lefèvre felt his heart tremble when he noticed a moving and creaking in the ropes that were tied around the cedar. Again and again the ropes creaked on the dry wood, and deeper and deeper did Lefèvre lower his head to see the *Halfbreed's* fate. Finally, the smoke lifted a bit away from the rock

wall, and trembling with sorrow and anticipation he saw how Joseph had started to swing on the rope, and first hit the wall with his feet, then flew backwards and disappeared for a moment.

"That's good, my son," Lefèvre whispered in his excitement, as if the *Halfbreed* were able to hear his words; because the enemy was close, he couldn't raise his voice. "That's good, my son. Sapristi! A great push, one more, and the Ute will look for us for a while yet!"

The *Halfbreed* now hit the wall with his full weight, his knees buckled, and once more he used all his strength and catapulted himself out into the smoke.

"If the ropes tore!" Lefèvre spoke to himself. In the same instance the *Halfbreed* reappeared, and letting the ropes glide through his hands, he shot deep into the opening in the rock.

"Hurrah!" the trapper yelled with a subdued voice, while he pressed his fingernails deeply into the naked upper arm of the Omaha, who lying next to him, so that he winced in pain.

"Quick, the saddle!"

He pulled up two ropes that he felt were not held by Joseph and attached one on each side of the saddle, so that it hung upside down and made a reasonably good seat. The *Halfbreed* had meanwhile affixed the other two lines around a boulder, and Lefèvre now hurried to attach the saddle with the ropes by using the stirrup leathers so that the rope ran through them, and the saddle would glide up and down easily this way.

"We are ready!" he cheerfully muttered, even though the coughs caused by the smoke made him choke. "Wabash, hurry and bring your squaw. She has to demonstrate the feat to the girl."

The Indian woman came over slowly because Franziska was leaning on her arm heavily. She gently sat the half-unconscious woman down by the cedar, and positioned her in such a way that she would be able to observe what was happening. After she had patted her head encouragingly, she sat in the saddle that was held in the ropes by Lefèvre, the Omaha, Andree, and his son. Fearless, she let herself be pushed out above the precipice, and she showed no sign of concern or spoke or word of worry when the saddle was slowly lowered with her.

"Your turn, my daughter," Lefèvre said in the softest tone he could with his naturally rough voice. "Just close your eyes and let us do the rest."

"I am not afraid," Franziska replied composed, jumping up and moving toward the saddle.

"Slowly, slowly, my daughter!" admonished Lefèvre, who had noticed that the girl had lost her strength from the exposure to the suffocating smoke and was stumbling toward the precipice.

Luckily, Andree did not notice the events, since would have cried out in horror. He had turned his face away, and only when Lefèvre had pushed the girl into the seat and had tightened a cinch around her arms and the ropes, did he eventually turn around and took up the lead ropes with shaking hands.

Franziska reached the eagle's nest where Joseph received her, without incident, and the saddle was soon up by the cedar again.

Old Andree was the next to lowered down; he hadn't reached the place of refuge yet, when Smith and Sidney hurried over and sank to the ground by the cedar. For a moment Lefèvre thought the Ute had decided to attack, but a second look assured him the it was only the smoke had become too much to bear for the two, since it accumulated mostly by the exit and had almost suffocated them.

"Hold your noses over the precipice!" he called to the choking men. "There is fresh air down there. What terrific smoke that is," he continued in his strangely frivolous way, "terrific smoke! One hundred marksmen would protect us as well as this against those bloodthirsty dogs. Now, bring water and food!" he commanded when he saw the saddle in front of him once more. "Sacré tonnerre! I want to know where those naked dogs got the fuel to make so much smoke," and first cursing, then encouraging or wiping tears from his eyes, he supported the Omaha, who was busy attaching the items to the ropes.

After a load of food and water had been sent down, it was first Sidney's and then Smith's turn to make the dangerous trip, while Robert, who faithfully supported the old hunter and the Indian, kept fetching supplies and implements from the inside of the cave until the flames shot up at him from the ducts where rotten twigs and beds from the animals smoldered like foul smelling peat.

As soon as he had brought anything over, Lefèvre and Wabash immediately sent it down, and when he declared that it was impossible to save more of their belongings, Lefèvre cut him off and told him to take a seat on the saddle.

Robert hesitated and expressed the wish to be the last person to leave the ledge. But if he had never been treated roughly by the trapper, he experienced it now, when the hunter proclaimed that he would rather see everyone in the entire world be hanged before he, in his function as leader and captain of the journey, let another one enter the happy hunting grounds before him. "Just think I were captain of a ship," he growled at the now compliant Robert, "you would find it quite normal that I insisted on my will, so now go and hold on to the tight ropes, or you will get too heavy for us."

"The smoke is clearing," the silent Wabash remarked as he pulled the empty seat up again.

"Yes, by God, it's disappearing," Lefèvre agreed. "The flames have taken to the dry branches now and in a couple of minutes those dogs to look for our dead bodies. Sapristi! They will think we flew away because they will never consider that we made it to the eagle's nest down below. The ropes and clues have to disappear." He took the saddle of the ropes, threw it into the abyss, and tying the two ropes together into one, he placed it over the trunk of the cedar, so that both ends hung down evenly. When he finished, the Omaha came with some dry wood and a torch, which he placed at the foot of the tree.

"Not too much, not too much," Lefèvre warned, "Just enough to burn the bark, not the entire tree because if those dogs figure out where we are hiding, they only have to cut down the cedar to make us starve to death down there. That would be funny, tonnerre! Pay attention Wabash, hurry up and descend and then untie one of the ropes down there while four of you take a hold the other and pull me in, wait, take my rifle, it will be in my way."

Wabash did exactly as told, and tied the rifle to his own weapons, which he was carrying on his back. Taking up the ropes with both hands, he swung himself over the edge and slid down into the eagle's nest with the agility of a squirrel.

As soon as Lefèvre felt one of the ropes become slack, he pulled it up to himself and tied his body securely to it under his arms, while he tied the other end to the rope that was still around trunk of the tree, which he now untied as well. After he made certain the rope holding him was held firmly by his friends, he mounted the cedar's trunk, which was now hanging over the cliff, pushed as much burning brush to it as was required to burn away the knotty bark that the ropes had been grinding against, took hold of the rope that ran loosely across the tree, bent sideways, and slowly descended.

The rope certainly tore the calloused flesh of his hands, but a pair of pliers could not have gripped more firmly than his fists gripped the rope, and he reached the height of the eagle's nest safely. There, his friends were ready and watched his every move attentively, and when he came to the point where he only descended an inch at

a time, they pulled the rope around his shoulders so gently and skillfully that he entered the black opening of the cave standing on his feet.

As soon as he felt the ground under his feet and had regained his balance, he turned around, let go of one end of the rope, and quickly pulled the other until it fell of the tree entirely, dropped, and hit the rock with a clapping sound.

"No trace of us must remain," he said quietly, while he pulled the rope into the eagle's nest completely and then held it up to his nose. "St. Washington!" he exclaimed in a triumphant manner. "Wabash, the rope is singed, the bark of the cedar must be burnt away, and even the slyest Ute would be unable to track us now."

Now, that he no longer doubted the safety of their hiding place, he began to inspect the walls of the cave in his usual busy manner to become acquainted with his surroundings.

The cave was less spacious as the one above, but since it led into the rock wall, turned at a right angle, and only ended after a few steps, the refugees were able to hide so completely that they were undetectable even from the remotest cliffs of the precipice. The *Halfbreed* had already realized this and led Franziska to the eagle's brush nest in the most distant corner. He had plunged its inhabitants, four cranky, almost full-grown birds who tried to bite, into the abyss, albeit not without some effort. Old Andree, the Indian woman, and Smith, who still suffered from his wounds, were with the young girl and had managed to move the items they had been able to rescue there as well. Everyone else had taken a seat in the front of the cave and was intently listening to every sound to draw conclusions about the enemy's activity.

Smoke still billowed into the precipice and made it impossible for them to see anything, but they concluded from the crackling sounds in their former hiding place and from the crimson glow that appeared at times in the smoke that the flames had taken hold of the brush and everything flammable would soon be consumed by flames.

The fear for their lives seemed to have more or less vanished because Franziska, who had recovered from the suffocating effects of the smoke, talked in a quiet and composed manner with her father and the suffering stranger, while the young people paid attention the trapper's strange musings and often laughed about the comical ideas he whispered.

"I call this a pleasure trip,"²³¹ he said after having lit his clay pipe, "yes, indeed, a pleasure trip; but how we will be able to leave here, that's an entirely different question. We don't have to think about it for another four to five days because if we use it moderately, the water will last. But I want to see the expression on the dogs' faces when they realize that we are not there, and they look for us in the precipice. They will think that we were desperate to escape the smoke and dove headlong into the abyss; where actually only the blessed eagle family and a dozen of those dirty Digger Indians have found a home. What do you think, Wabash, my friend, what will the Omaha say when we recount our feats?"

²³¹ *eine Lustreise* the term today is often used to refer to travels of a sexual nature (sextourism). The appropriate term is *Vergnügungsreise*, but both translate as pleasure trip.

"Many Ute lie down there," Wabash replied, who recognized an allusion to the boastfulness of his race, "but there are by far not enough, the entire Nation should be down there."

"That's right," Lefèvre answered laughing, "stacked like a staircase so we can walk out of this forsaken cave. Yes, Wabash, you are not only a great warrior, but also wise in council and —"

A terrible bang and a pale sheen that lit up the swirling clouds of smoke by the entrance of the eagle's nest made the trapper fall silent.

"Sidney, where is the powder keg?" he hissed through his teeth.

He hadn't completed the sentence yet, when a violent crash coming from above them could be heard and shook the cliffs around them in their foundation. Small rocks were shaken loose from the sides and the ceiling of the eagle's nest and rolled onto the terrified refugees. Outside, a large black shadow appeared in front of the opening, and seconds later a thunderous roar came from the canyon where a part of the upper layer of rocks, dead bodies, and boulders had hit the ground, crushing the bodies. A heap of rubble followed, rattling into the abyss, and when the last rock had already fallen, hollow thunder could still be heard echoing in the canyons and crevasses, as if the echo would never stop. Then it was quiet, so quiet that the soundless flight of the roused great horned owl might have been heard. Only far up above, the uncanny howling of the Ute gripped by terrible panic and the moaning and sighing of dying men sounded like ghosts.

It took a long time before the refugees regained consciousness enough to communicate with one another, and when Lefèvre turned to address the *Halfbreed*, the latter was returning from the cave, where he had hurried at the moment the trembling began.

"No one is injured," he said quietly looking out of the opening where the smoke had spread. The moon lit up the wild landscape.²³² "Nobody is injured, but they are mute with fear."

"Good, good," Lefèvre, who had regained his composure, replied. "The fear will disappear; as long as nobody is injured. I was afraid myself, maybe for the first time in my life, but then again, who the hell²³³ can stay calm when the mountains unexpectedly start to dance? It's a pity about the powder keg that Sidney, the rascal, blew up on the spur of the spur of the moment."

"You are right to blame me," Sidney said with a voice that showed how much he blamed himself. "Yes, I alone am responsible for this disaster. I put the keg in a crevice right under the ceiling for safety reasons, and then I was overcome by smoke so that I forgot to take it along, or at least roll it into the precipice. "

"Sapristi, don't complain so loudly, my son," the good-natured hunter comforted him, "or Franziska might hear it and God knows what she will think. It may have been the best thing that could happen to us; tonnerre! How the Ute will have flown off the ledge! And if the cedar wasn't blown away with its roots, then we

²³² *indem er aus der Öffnung schaute wo der Rauch sich verteilt hatte und der Mond die wilde Landschaft beleuchtete.*

²³³ *zum Teufel*

have to thank you for our rescue later. Of course, it would have been inconvenient if the powder had caught fire fifteen minutes earlier," he continued after he had sucked the smoke from his pipe into his lungs leisurely and blown out through his nose—"St. Napoleon, we would have been flattened like a tortilla." The old hunter laughed, although silently, but with a geniality that could only come from a happy, carefree mind; but it also showed how happy he was about the turn of events.

"The rock ceiling must have collapsed entirely," the *Halfbreed* said musingly, "and since it was already cracked, it only took a little jolt to loosen the broken ends from their grooves."

"A jolt of twelve pounds of powder," Lefèvre added, "because that's how much was left in the keg. How lucky that we filled our powder horns beforehand, even though I really don't think that we will have to fire another shot at those naked dogs."

"It would be nice if the Ute retreated after this terrible defeat they just suffered and gave us opportunity to move on to California with our company," the *Halfbreed* remarked, "because a longer stay in these circumstances here will wear on the strength of such a tender being such as Andree's daughter. Yes, Lefèvre, it makes me gloomy to think about the long, difficult way we still have ahead of us because it will be hard to replace the horses we have lost."

"Don't think that way," Smith now could be heard. "Even though I lost my train, I don't think I have lost my good credit with the head of the trading post in Fort Bridger. Fort Bridger must hence be our next destination, and if I am able to help you

out in any way, you can be sure that I feel blessed to at least have been able to pay a small portion of my debt to you."

"Spoken like a gentleman," Lefèvre replied. He took Smith's hand and pressed it with a vise grip. "You speak like a true gentleman, and I have always considered you one during our brief stay together. Your offer will not be rejected by anyone in our company, which means we will accept everything with gratitude; but let's not talk about debt and payment, we are in the wilderness and anyone who wouldn't have assisted an unlucky traveler deserves to be hanged. You would do a kind thing if you went to Franziska with Joseph and told her that we will yet be able to complete the journey to California in the most comfortable manner. Tell her as well that it is not a problem to leave this god-forsaken eagle's nest, and that the Ute all have gone to the devil. I myself don't quite know yet how our new pleasure trip is going to happen, but the news will comfort the girl and she can fall asleep. It will be good medicine for old Andree as well, and since we don't need to put up a guard here, we can all sleep and snore to make the rock shake."

The restrained *Halfbreed* felt in his heart what the honest trapper had just said, and it was a welcome task for him to retreat to the cave's interior with Smith.

Lefèvre, the Omaha, and the young people lay down where they had been sitting. The trapper still talked with his companions for a while in a whisper. Little by little, his words came slower, the little pipe fell from his teeth, and then the regular breaths indicated a healthy sleep. His companions soon followed his example; they had had a difficult day, and the tension from the latest events soon gave way to great

fatigue. In the back of the cave however, activity continued for a while. Nobody laughed, but nobody complained either, but everyone felt their spirits lifted when the *Halfbreed* described scenes from his life in colorful language, which he had developed through long interaction with the natives, and vividly embellished his descriptions of his youth, the green prairie, or those of the mysterious forests. Outside was the terrifying and barren rock desert; the quiet night and its faithful companion, the moon, had dressed barren landscape in its finest, but even they were not able to change its rigidity; the crickets helped a bit and chirped the native songs with all their might, and in the canyons sometimes gathered charming California quails that had been disturbed in their sleep by a predator, but the uncanny great horned owl laughed on the steep slopes, and deep in the abyss the wolves fought over the bloody remains of bludgeoned human beings.

The moaning of the injured had long since ceased, and the murmuring voices in the cave had fallen silent. Andree and Smith had long before fallen asleep, and when a comforting slumber finally came to the young girl, the *Halfbreed* carefully walked to the exit of the cave. He stood there for a while with his arms crossed and regarded the dark abyss. He was too deep in thought to hear the howling of the wolves or the cry of the owl. Tears of melancholy and hope came to his eyes, and with a deep sigh, as if he wanted to fight all his impulses and feelings, he reclined by the side of his old teacher and fell asleep.

30. The Trade

At daybreak, the men were up and moving again. The *Halfbreed*, Lefèvre, and Wabash had positioned themselves by the opening of the cave so that their eyes were level with the precipice and they were able to see the immediate surroundings very clearly. They certainly could not see very far, since on both side the rock walls spread out at an acute angle and framed the precipice. Since they had descended by twenty feet, its upper edge was now high above them, and since the rock plate that formed the roof of their place of refuge protruded outward into the canyon along the entire length of the cave, they had no view of the adjacent portions of the canyon and had to look as far as eighty cubits to see some of the protrusions. They, however, were situated in a way that they could easily be observed from the eagle's nest, while the looks from any scout there would fall down at an angle onto the cave. The only noticable part was a slight dip in the rock, but it wasn't visible enough to make anyone suspect that a number of people were hiding there.

Farther down, such sights repeated themselves more often yes, entire stretches of overhanging edges became visible, but with the increased distance the chance of discovery decreased, since anyone scouting from there would only have been able to discover them with a telescope.²³⁴

The mighty chasm opened right in front of the hunters, slowly expanding in size. Its fissured and broken rim was decorated with fantastic shapes, and it

²³⁴ *mit bewaffneten Augen*. The term refers to an aid to vision; it was likely a telescope or a pair of binoculars. Scopes were not placed on rifles until the Civil War, but even then optics continued to evolve until the Zeiss prism lens became standard in 1890.

descended in degrees until it met the craggy chain of mountains on the opposite side. The hunters observed all this as the night gave way to the day. Everyone could easily grasp that they had to take the greatest care to be quiet because the Ute, once they dared to venture near the broken ledge again, would continue to swarm everywhere, and it might only take on careless word to draw the attention of one roaming Indian or someone listening with his ear on the rock.

The hunters now regarded the small, crippled cedar in front of them, which had served as a access point for the eagles, with heightened interest. The tumbling rocks had only barely hit it, since it was situated below the protruding ledge. Only one boulder had hit the branch that stuck out the farthest and splintered it up to the roots in the rock, after which the tree, which was now thanks to the splitting endowed with sufficient springiness, bounced back into its old position.

"If only the tree above isn't broken off," Lefèvre whispered to the *Halfbreed*, while he pointed to a small branch, which had apparently fallen from above and become stuck on the eagles' cedar.

Instead of answering, the *Halfbreed* took a quick glance at the different points that were already lit up by the morning sun and where scouts might appear at every moment, and after he had assured himself of the safety of his surroundings, he slid out onto the cedar, so that his entire body rested stretched-out on it. He gently turned his head to look up, but as soon as he saw that from the tree above only a stump remained, he made a backwards motion because he had simultaneously seen the legs

of an Indian clad in leggings and moccasins. The latter sat on the protruding ledge above them, letting his feet dangle down, swinging them back and forth inattentively.

Having arrived back in his old spot, the *Halfbreed* placed his hand on his mouth, urging absolute silence; the gesture was communicated into the remote corners of the cave. Almost at the same time he heard Lefèvre, who was lying next to him, grind his teeth and watched him direct his glance upward with an expression of fierce rage. He looked around and didn't believe his eyes when he saw a surviving eagle approach in wide circles.

There was no doubt that the orphaned bird, which was looking for its kin, would draw the enemies' attention to the aerie, and the realization that they couldn't chase the treasonous bird away had awakened the trapper's fierceness.

Finally, when the eagle shot past the cave, flapping its wings nervously, Lefèvre seemed to have made a decision. He placed his hands on the *Halfbreed's* and the Omaha's shoulders and indicated that they should follow him into the cave.

This maneuver allowed the eagle a view of the cave up to the bend when it flew past. Then Lefèvre poured approximately a thimble full of powder onto the rock ledge in front of him, lit a small fuse, which he attached at the tip of knife. He quickly knelt down again, keeping his eyes on the opening of the cave and holding the fuse two inches from the powder.

After a short break, the eagle continued its flight toward the cave, coming so close this time that he touched the hanging branches of the lonely cedar with its wings. As soon as its beautiful white head and its dark breast appeared from behind

the protective rock wall, the trapper lowered his hand and the lit powder sparked fiercely.

The eagle, which tried to penetrate its former home with its eyes, literally rolled over in the air when it saw the blinding light, and after it had rebalanced its body by making some noisy flapping sounds with its wings, it sailed off majestically, without moving a limb, in a straight line toward the opposite mountains. The hunters could hear derisive laughter from above. It came from the Indian sentinel, who had seen the eagle being startled, but held himself for the cause. Lefèvre, too, chuckled quietly, perhaps about the Ute's mistaken belief, but also about the result such a simple trick had brought. Without concern he looked at the ceiling, where the powder dust settled on the rock as a thin layer, and then he was lying by the precipice once again with his two companions and kept eyes on the various rock ledges.

But the hunters were not going to have any peace. Not an hour had passed yet, when the Omaha moved slightly and directed the hunters' attention to the next visible ledge, above which the upper parts of three grey felt hats appeared. They alternated between remaining still and moving forward slowly.

"In the name of everything holy, white men!" whispered Lefèvre, who couldn't contain his rancor and clenched his rifle convulsively. "If it wasn't for Franziska, I would send a bullet through one or the other's head."

The hats now approached the edge, the brims became slowly visible, and the listening hunters slid back farther and farther.

Suddenly, the *Halfbreed* blanched, and taking Lefèvre's hand and pressing it fiercely, he whispered to him: "Harrison! Buschmark!" Lefèvre had retreated so far that the three figures had moved from his field of vision, but when he heard the *Halfbreed*, he jumped like a scalded cat.²³⁵

"Move back, move back!" he called to the *Halfbreed* with a low voice, "because if they find us, we are doomed. If you stole a she-wolf's pups, she would have more pity than this jaundiced priest and the crooked notary. By God, I will see both of them at the end of my rifle when the time comes. Yes, yes, I suspected it when we were by the *Eau Qui Cours*, the slick priest is behind everything.

Joseph nodded in agreement and retreated even deeper into the cave, so that he only had room to watch the two baneful men.

In the meantime, they had stepped all the way out onto the rim of the ledge and sought to estimate the depth of the precipice. As usual, Harrison exhibited his gloomy, seemingly apathetic demeanor, while Buschmark was gesticulating wildly with his hands and seemed to be the only one engaged in the conversation because even the third man, Joel the Mormon, whom the *Halfbreed* didn't recognize, paid little attention to the chatty notary. After they had remained on the ledge a short while and were about to move on, a fourth figure joined them. Joseph was only able to see part of him, but immediately recognized a half-Indian belonging to one of the semi-civilized tribes like the Menominee or the Potawatomi.

²³⁵ *Wie von der Tarantel gestochen*

The group once more remained on the ledge a short while and engaged in what was an apparently important conversation for all, after which the Mormon and the Potawatomi left and quickly walked down the ledge, while Buschmark and Harrison followed slowly. They, too, soon disappeared behind the rock wall, and then it was silent again everywhere.

The friends who had hidden in the background of the cave could guess from the hunters' behavior that something strange was happening, and they avoided instinctively to talk with one another with loud voices; this however did not prevent them from moving closer in order to learn the full extent of the danger. Everyone looked at the *Halfbreed* with an expression of concern, and even Franziska had dared to leave her dark corner, from which nobody kept her because no immediate danger was discernable, but also because everyone was sincerely happy that the frightened girl had an opportunity to see the blue sky and the colorful rock bathed in golden sunshine.²³⁶

Suddenly, everyone watched how the Halfbreed slid his body forward slightly, brought his head to the rock wall, and listened intently. After a couple of minutes he motioned backwards with his hand and asked Lefèvre and the Omaha over to his side, but at the same he warned the remaining friends with no uncertain gestures to make no noise by making a careless move.

Soon the friends heard voices that without a doubt came from people who stood on the broken ledge above and were talking to one another. It was impossible to

²³⁶ There are instances where Möllhausen seems to struggle with his prose. This was a long paratactic sentence in the original.

understand what they were discussing due to the sound being absorbed doubly.²³⁷ By the glances the hunters exchanged, the friends could gather that it was a matter of the greatest importance.

The listeners could hear every word clearly, and the conversation initially only involved three men, that is the Indian sentinel, the newly arrived Mormon, and the Potawatomi half breed.

"Hallo, Joshua, where are your Ute right now?" asked Joel, who could easily be recognized by his sophisticated manner of speaking.

"Half went to hell," the Ute chief replied. "The other went to the water where they wait for Joshua. Another blow like this and Joshua has no more warriors."

"Even better," the voice of the Potawatomi could now be heard, "if Joshua is alone, he can drink the whiskey alone."

"Lot of whiskey for me, lot for Ute," Joshua exclaimed, "lot of whiskey for Ute alive, two times whiskey for Ute dead, every Ute dead two bottles whiskey, all bottles for Joshua!"

"Be patient old scoundrel!" Joel replied. "You shall drink whiskey until blue flames rise from your treacherous throat, but in exchange half of the stolen horses will go to me. And remember: one word from you or your people about the events and you will have had the last drop of firewater ever, and as even tough the Salt Lake Valley is sparsely populated with trees, there are enough to hang every single one of you from a special tree!"

²³⁷ *doppelte Schallbrechung*

"I not afraid," replied Joshua, laughing in his particular, unmelodious way. "I catch Ute in mountain, I catch antelope in prairie! Ha,ha,ha! You not afraid either! Joshua not tell anyone, Joshua still make many deals with Joel!"

"The devil is your friend," the Mormon growled, " you haven't done any deals with me, your red-skinned scoundrel, but with two who are coming over there!"

"Both pay Joel, and Joel pay Joshua," replied the incorrigible Ute, "and Joshua do what he paid for. Everyone dead now! Everyone under this rock, Joshua very clever, very clever!"

"Yes, as clever as a donkey!" Louis the Potawatomi derisively interrupted. "They would have shot a lot more Ute of the rocks if they hadn't accidentally blown themselves up. They were a lot dumber than I believed! They have a nice warm cover indeed, but they must be so flat that one could make sandals out of them." Here, the scoundrel fell into a laughter, which echoed from the rocks in such a satanic manner that old Lefèvre shivered thinking what might happen if they fell in the hands of this ruthless bandit.

When the laughter ceased, there was some movement on the ledge. The hunters listened closely,²³⁸ but they could only hear the murmuring of several men without coming to a conclusion what the conversation was about.

"Well then," a voice that was unmistakably Harrison's exclaimed, "Louis and Joel can return and meet us at the foot of Medicine Mountain with the horses."

²³⁸ *verschärften ihre Aufmerksamkeit*

"Don't stay too long!" Louis replied. "Unless you want to walk back to the water!"

"In God's name, don't take the horses along!" Buschmark crowed. "I am so tired that my feet can hardly carry me. How am I supposed to reach the creek?"

"Calm down, noble Sir," Joel comforted him with an amicable voice, "it's much easier downhill than uphill; well then, goodbye!"

Once more some brief, noisy movement could be heard, and then hunters listened in vain for some time for any sign of life from the remaining men above them.

"They are buried under this rock," Harrison finally interrupted the silence. "It seems like we have reached our goal, and all we need to do is claim our reward."

"I would have taken significantly less if only the girl could have remained alive," Buschmark interrupted Harrison.

"Leave the prude where she is," replied Harrison. "At least, better under the rocks than being a victim of your capriciousness. *Der Halfbreed* is out of the way; I have had my revenge on the trio, and I only regret that the smith's son had to pay for the others."

"For all I care, another ten thousand smith's sons could have died, if I only could have had the girl; you didn't know her, dear Harrison, she was a jewel."

"Well, fetch the precious jewel from under the rock!" the usually composed Harrison said. "A jewel never loses its value. By the way, we haven't come here and remained behind to discuss such things. In my opinion, it is good that you have gotten

rid of the sensitive beauty that tempted you into impulsive acts and would have continued to do so. But let's sit down; you have never sat on a more beautiful bench."

The short silence that now followed prompted the two hunters to briefly look up, and they saw that the two scoundrels had sat down in the same way the Indian had sat just a short time before. They could now understand more clearly and waited impatiently for conversation to start. Harrison was the first to speak: "I have kept you here, Buschmark, my friend," he began, "to make a proposal that will pay off for you. That is, I will sell you my share of the reward for the matter we execute jointly, and much cheaper than you might expect. In order to circumvent any suspicion, I want to let you know that I intend to end my relationship with vengeful priest Antonio. I know the advantages a messenger of certain news will have, and you will not find my price of twenty five thousand dollars in gold for my complete resignation from the entire matter too high."

"Twenty five thousand dollars?" Buschmark asked with a hint of terror. "Twenty five thousand dollars? And where am I supposed to obtain that amount here in the wilderness?"

"And yet, you haven't left a cent to which you could lay claim in St. Louis," replied Harrison.

"That is true, but am I supposed to carry money, no matter how little, if not in promissory notes?"

"A promissory note for twenty five thousand dollars for San Francisco will do; it is thus up to you whether we separate by the Salt Lake, or we undertake the last

step together; a very simple step. The latter is most beneficial for my circumstances, but I confess to you that I will be glad to see my reward decrease if you promise that you report to Señor Antonio that I had an accident and have gone missing."

A longer silence followed and the listeners suspected that Buschmark considered the suggestions, which he apparently found enticing.

"I am not rejecting your offer," Buschmark's voice could finally be heard, "but you have to wait with the execution of the plan until we return to the Salt Lake because that is where I deposited my documents."

"Let me tell you something, honorable friend," replied Harrison, whose voice had suddenly taken on a biting, sarcastic tone, "to begin with, do me a favor and don't speak to me as if your agreement meant you were doing me a favor, after all, you have the greater advantage. Further, noble friend, don't try to make me believe that your papers and documents are not hidden on your body. If I believed you weren't carrying them with you, I wouldn't know you well; you wouldn't separate from your riches for one minute. No, no, dear friend, you must believe me to be dim-witted. Rest assured, my offer is only good for as long as we sit here. Once we have left our victims' tombstone, I am and will remain the participant in the success that must be the outcome of our joint endeavor in a few months."

Once more, there was a brief silence. The sly notary considered how he would have to behave with the cunning Harrison. He mistrusted him and tried in vain to guess his secret plans.

Lefèvre used the silence to nudge Joseph, and when the latter turned his face, Lefèvre pointed upward. The *Halfbreed* nodded, slid his body onto the trunk of the cedar, and then positioned himself on his back in such a manner that he could see the two men's feet.

"I have no doubt," Buschmark said after a while, "that it will bring me advantages if I undertake what is left to do by myself. But you will also have to admit that a bad outcome is still a possibility. Louis, on whom a large part of the endeavor depends, might betray us!"

"Treat him properly," Harrison quickly said, "and always show him the whiskey bottle and some dollars to gamble with. Then you will have a willing participant."

"But still, now that I consider taking over the full responsibility for everything, the conclusion of the matter seems like an enormous task to me."

"Well then, let's finish together then," it echoed from above, while the *Halfbreed* noticed that Harrison's feet were pulled upward.

"Just a minute," Buschmark exclaimed, "hear me out!"

The feet were lowered once more, and the notary continued, clearing his throat a number of times to give the impression that he was in fact serious. He continued: "Considering my risk, I ask that now you take half of the sum—which I just so happen to carry with me—and the rest in four weeks after our arrival in Sacramento. Do you agree?"

"Well, I agree," Harrison agreed without further consideration, while it dawned on him that his fast consent must be cause for new suspicions. He fell back into a calm and comforting tone of voice and added: "That is if you provide enough security. But let's hurry, we are in sinister surroundings and I don't trust one of those Ute scoundrels, not even the ones who lie there lifeless roasting in the sun. Do as you wish, I agree with everything."

"Yes, an uncanny environment," Buschmark replied more quietly because his fear had been awakened by Harrison's calculating words. "Let me just give you the money for which you will provide me with a receipt some time today. The we can make haste."

Harrison didn't answer, but Joseph realized by the movement Buschmark made with his feet that he was looking for something in his pockets.

"A very heavy briefcase for someone who deposited his papers by the Salt Lake," Harrison remarked deridingly.

"Just some documents of no use. They have no monetary value," replied Buschmark.

"Yet apparently valuable enough that you carry them everywhere with you," replied Harrison. "Let's see your briefcase, it must be made from watertight material. Don't be a fool, old friend," he continued, "you don't think that I will open it?"

Suddenly, the listening *Halfbreed* winced, a movement that nobody in the cave missed. He had noticed that Harrison's feet had been pulled up with lightning speed and that Buschmark then bent over so far, with outstretched arms, that he

looked him straight in the eyes. At the same moment the unlucky notary screamed in panic, which made the inhabitants' of the cave blood curdle. Even the coldblooded Lefèvre was shaking.

Franziska had sunk to her knees and kept looking at the *Halfbreed* with mute terror. With one quick move the *Halfbreed* slid from the trunk of the cedar back into the cave. He still had a hold on the tree's trunk, when a shapeless figure flew past the eagle's nest, and in the next moment, the panicked Buschmark, now fearing his own death, hit the cedar's crown and became stuck among the branches.

All this happened in seconds, and so fast that the refugees had no time to collect their thoughts. Only when Buschmark had taken hold of a branch with his left hand, while grabbing at a broken-off branch with his right, and screamed one piercing shriek after the other, did the hunters remember that their entire party was exposed to the looks of the man dangling over the chasm, and that, even though he was dying, he might still expose them to Harrison.

The *Halfbreed* jumped up with lightning speed, hurried over to the trembling Franziska, and prompted her to withdraw to the back of the cave with her father and the Indian woman.

So far, the doomed notary had not seen the refugees because his eyes, which were protruding out of their sockets, were trained straight up on Harrison, who stood at the edge of the precipice and gloomy, as if he were astonished by his own deed.

"Harrison," screamed Bushmark with a choking voice, "Harrison! Save me! Take whatever you want, but save my life! I will be your servant, your slave, just

save me! Harrison, Harrison, I am slipping, am—slip—ping! Help!" and when he had uttered the last word, his left hand, which had supported his weight, slipped from the cedar's branch, but he managed to take a hold of the branch he convulsively held on to with the right hand. The branch quickly bent under the weight. Since the edge of the rock on which the cedar stood was situated slightly higher than the cave, which dropped down on its inside, and the branch came to rest partially on the edge, Buschmark dangled approximately half a foot below the rock ledge and was able to see the upper part of the cave if he looked up.

This happened at the precise moment when the *Halfbreed* led the young girl around the corner and everyone was still looking at the doomed man. Buschmark recognized every single one of them by their features; he even saw Franziska's paleness as she disappeared behind the corner like a shadow. As if he was shrinking back from a supernatural apparition, he fell quiet and almost let go of the branch, but in the next moment he realized the terrible truth, and with a voice that had become an unintelligible death rattle, he begged those whom he had wanted to see destroyed for help.

His face with its blood rimmed eyes had taken on an ash grey color, the veins in his temples were ready to burst, and above him fluttered the few strands of hair he typically combed over his bald head. A terrible picture: There he clung and begged for mercy. "Franziska, save me!" he called. "Joseph, save me! I will make you rich, I will make you happy! Don't let me perish before your eyes! Have mercy! Have mercy! My hands are becoming weaker!" And as if he were at the end of a teeter-

totter beam, the unlucky man bounced up and down on the branch with every attempt to gain a better hold.

"Wabash, he will give us away," Lefèvre whispered to the Omaha, who was lying next to him. "Harrison, that scoundrel, will have even more reason to send the Ute back after us. Where are your arrows?"

The Omaha didn't answer, but he had understood the trapper because he got on his knees, readied pulled the bowstring into the groove and took up his quiver, from which he gently pulled a hunting arrow with a long iron tip.

Buschmark saw what the Indian was doing and guessed his intention, and began with a piercing howl, calling the young girls name, begging for pity and mercy.

Indeed, Franziska's empathy had been awakened as soon as he saw the pursuer, but she the *Halfbreed's* words had helped her restrain herself as much as the confusion she felt. But when she heard the doomed man's cries for help, she fell to her knees in front of the *Halfbreed*, and placing her hands in his, she begged him to help the distraught man.

"If you care about my conscience and my inner peace," she said, "don't let him perish without making an attempt to save him."

"It is too late," the *Halfbreed* replied. "it is too late, his rescue will mean certain doom for your father, your brother, and for all of us; leave him to his fate, he has enough blood on his conscience."

"Save him!" the frightened girl begged again. "In the name of my love for you, save him!"

Joseph stayed only for another second with his beloved creature, who in the face of another human being's suffering, yes, the enemy, forgot the danger they were in. Composing himself he hurried past his companions, who cowered on the ground with their faces turned away because they didn't dare to watch the terrible scene. Without a sound he moved past Lefèvre and the Omaha, and just when the latter was pulling the feathered arrow back to his ear, Joseph reached over his shoulder, took the deathly shaft as it was about to fly off, and just as quickly he took the Omaha's bow.

"Save! Save!" Buschmark shrieked, who noticed what was happening. His hands clenched the green branches as if in rigor mortis, and they had turned dark blue from the overexertion. "Save me! Don't let them murder me, I don't want to perish, Joseph, Franziska! Mercy! Have pity!" His voice died.

Joseph though threw himself on the ground now and was about to crawl out onto the tree trunk to save the notary in earnest, when he suddenly felt strong hands pull him back into the cave, and a second later Lefèvre pinned him down by kneeling on his neck.

"Fool!" the old hunter whispered into his friend's ear, seething with anger. The *Halfbreed*, in a somewhat unfortunate position, tried in vain to rid himself of the trapper's weight. "It's not for our sake, and our old bones can bleach in the sun here just as well as elsewhere, but Sacrrrr tonnerre! You want Franziska to fall into the hands of those wretched creatures?"

The *Halfbreed* didn't hear his friend because in his ears only the young girl's words echoed, and with all his might he attempted to rise, which he certainly would have been able to do from any other position.

Buschmark in the meantime filled the air with his terrible shrieking for help and thus made it impossible for Franziska, who was hiding in the back of the cave, as well as Harrison to hear the two men struggle. Sidney and Robert, who were watching the fight in confusion, understood Lefèvre's intention when he turned his head toward them and motioned for them to be silent.

Wabash, dispossessed of his weapons, looked around in amazement, but as soon as he saw Lefèvre kneeling on the *Halfbreed*, and watched the latter struggle, he was able to understand what was happening. Thus, he hurried to settle the dispute in the simplest manner possible. With lightning speed he drew the knife from his belt, extending his hand with the knife to where the branch—or more precisely the splintered part of the trunk—that bent under Buschmark's weight rested on the rock ledge, and then aimed exactly for the spot where the wood had the greatest tension. Then he quietly pulled the knife from left to right across the branch, then a sharp cracking could be heard and Buschmark dropped down half a foot, while the root end splintered and sprung forcefully like a spring into the grove of the trunk.

Buschmark's screaming was horrible now. For a while he had hoped to be rescued by the *Halfbreed* and had not noticed what the Omaha was doing, but now his fate was sealed and the echo tauntingly repeated the names of the young girl and the *Halfbreed* he kept calling.

Once more the brown hand with the sharp knife moved across the branch, once more a large, smooth splinter hit the trunk, and again Buschmark dropped another foot. When the blade hit the wood for the third time then, a loud cracking could be heard, and the branch to which the gasping notary was clinging with his last strength, bent until it was close to the rock wall. Fiber after fiber of the wood broke, and at last only the strong, sap-rich bark held the two parts together. It didn't tear however, but, following the laws of gravity, began to slowly peel away from the trunk.

"God in heaven! God in heaven!" Buschmark moaned, his crazed, glassy look focused on the narrow strip of bark, which became smaller and smaller across the ledge. "God in heaven! Harrison!" he screamed when he felt the bark tear away. "Godda—!" it came from his raspy throat; the pointy strip of bark whistled through the air like a whip, the doomed man screamed such a long and piercing scream, which in turn was hair-raisingly answered by the echo so that it might have been mistaken for Satan's laughter in hell.

Wabash had calmly observed how the bark kept peeling back more and more. When it finally had stripped away entirely, he stuck his head over the precipice and look after the falling Buschmark.

The doomed man had probably fallen about half way when his screams fell silent. His head had been smashed entirely on a protruding jagged rock; even in death he did not let go of the branch, and when the lifeless body hit the sharp, craggy rocks, the green cedar branch fell on him as if it had pity and wanted to cover him.

Now, Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* stepped into the opening of the eagle's aerie, and both looked down with terror. They didn't notice that the whole group, including Franziska, had gathered behind them. They knew, the Omaha had prevented great danger, but yet the corrupt notary's gruesome end had made a deep impression on them.

A large rock that rolled down from the upper ledge had brought them back to reality, and when they listened, they heard ugly, uncanny laughter from Harrison.²³⁹ "A tombstone for you!" he said. "I thank you because I am a rich man now! You called Franziska and Joseph in vain; they were already under these rocks, where your own lust for murder put them to bed. They couldn't help you. But I am a rich and independent man, and Antonio has no power over me any more."

Once more something fell from above; it was the briefcase Harrison had taken from his companion before he deceitfully pushed him over the edge, and which he now, after having emptied it of its contents, tossed after its owner.

Soon the hunters realized that the fading sound of footsteps indicated that Harrison was leaving. When the had faded away completely, the *Halfbreed* went over to the young girl, who was trembling and pale from the latest events, and heavily leaned on her father's arm.

"I wasn't able to save him. It wasn't in my power," he said with a sad tone in his voice, while he looked deep into her large, beautiful eyes.

²³⁹ *Lachen, welches Harrison dem Felsblock nachsandte.*

"I know," replied Franziska, and shy like never before, she gave him her hand without pulling it away again.

"And how is our situation?" Andree asked now. He looked at the Halfbreed with an anxious expression.

"Our situation?" Lefèvre, who now joined them, asked in return. "Our situation? Sapristi! It is great. It is as good as never before. Those dogs think we were turned into parchment under the rock and they took off quickly. "Yes, yes," he laughed cheerfully, "chance is a wonderful thing. Who would have thought that the powder Sidney forgot up there would explode; but it happened to our benefit. Now all we have to do is leave this blessed nest and return to Fort Bridger as quickly as possible."

Nobody doubted that they no longer had to fear an Indian attack, but the thought of the dangerous journey weighed heavily on all of them; only Lefèvre, Wabash, and his wife exhibited their usual demeanor because they were completely convinced of the undertaking's successful outcome.

31. To California

They made no attempts that day to leave the eagle's nest because on the one hand the hunters feared that some stray, blood-thirsty Ute might still be roaming around, but on the other hand they also wanted to give everyone the opportunity to quiet their minds from the latest unsettling events and to become refreshed by some undisturbed sleep. Nobody mentioned the events themselves in

conversation, yes, they even avoided to bring up the horrible memories because it was obvious to everyone how much Franziska suffered when she thought of the events, even though the joy over their anticipated escape had an effect on her spirit.

The awful events had been too much for the young girl, who had up until then always lived in great peace, had been surrounded by love and compassion, and was used to treating everyone else with love and compassion. She had experienced what she had not believed to be possible, and her conscience was burdened because—even though it had been in defense of their lives—numerous lives had been lost.

The *Halfbreed* too suffered. He felt Franziska's anguish because since she had expressed her love for him, she had become even more precious to him, but he didn't dare, not even with the smallest hint, to remind her of the words that had made her feel so anguished. He felt the deepest emotion when he saw how she sat in front of them and believed in their escape with such confidence. He would wanted to speak with her, to cheer her up, to chase away the terrible images that must have been in her mind, and to talk with her like he used to, but he wasn't able to collect his thoughts, and a voice on the inside kept repeating over and over: "On my love for you!"

And if she really loved him, could he, a homeless, nameless stranger, a half-Indian on top of that, dare to feed that love further? Would it be right and noble to tie her destiny to his? He felt deep pain when he thought of it. — And yet, she belonged to those who cherished every human being, regardless of color, as the image of god, and would not be led astray by the execrable prejudices of an entire nation. Like a drowning man who will not give up the hope of rescue, the *Halfbreed's* soul clung to

this last thought, and he contemplated his lovely companion who sat in front of him with devotion.

As he looked at the young girl, Lefèvre and Andree looked at him in turn. Both men guessed what was happening in the young man's breast, but each one of them formed different ideas. Andree indescribable comfort when he knew his child in the care of such a diligent protector, who not only followed his noble heart and helped his fellow men, but who was also attached to the young girl with love and devotion. Aside from that, he considered nothing else, and how could he have in light of the situation they were still in?

Lefèvre on the other hand thought of nothing but the realization of this favorite plans. Why should he worry about the eagle's nest, pleasure trips, or the journey to California? They had no choice in these matters. They had to overcome these obstacles. But uniting the two young people, well, that kept his mind busy, and would have engaged anyone who might have believed otherwise in a fierce argument. And what would have been more pleasant for the old trapper who was alone in the world?

He had watched the *Halfbreed* grow up, had been his teacher in many ways, and had over time grown so fond of him as if he were his own son. Now, suddenly fate had suddenly led him to cross paths with a young girl who had been gifted by nature, and who not only did not shut him out of her heart, but also had a place in his heart. It was thus only natural that the old man thought of an honest union of those he felt so tenderly attached to. He hadn't seen or heard of such unions too often in his

lifetime, and he would have rather let himself be scalped a thousand times than be tied down for life, but in this case he behaved so tenderly as if he had vast experience in such matters.

That is to say, he was the first who noticed the budding affection of the two young people, but kept the secret to himself. He feared that the *Halfbreed* would detach himself in order not to upset the young girl and to transfer the imagined mark that burdened his name and origin to her. He was quiet until he believed the mutual affection to have developed far enough so that a separation was no longer possible, and only then he spoke to his young friend, but in such a manner that the latter might mistake his words for jokes, and yet was prompted to consider them.

Naturally, the company found itself in a situation in the eagle's nest that lent itself little to discuss the secret matters of the heart; the *Halfbreed* would have even considered it a sin to speak to the girl about his feelings in such a situation, even if had had enough courage and confidence; but Lefèvre thought differently.

Now, that the danger had passed, the latter felt so content as if he inhabited a room in the "Planters' House" in St. Louis, an inn that was in his opinion the archetype of comfort. He cheerfully smoked his pipe and with a clever expression on his face watched the two young people who sat across from each other silently, and it seemed as if he had trouble comprehending that two people who had so much to say to each other were unable to find words.

"Sacré tonnerre!" he exclaimed several times, so that everyone looked at him. However, he didn't utter the sentence that was supposed to precede the exclamation,

namely the observation that the "simple children only need to open their mouths and talk to each other." After he had observed them long enough, he grew impatient and went over to the entrance of the cave, where Robert, Sidney, Smith, and the Indian couple sat together in silence.

Early the next morning, as soon as it was light enough, the men went to work to connect the eagle's nest to the upper ledge. It was a difficult task because the cedar they had used as an anchor to descend had been broken off almost entirely by the falling rock, and it took all of the Omaha's skill to swing the lasso's loop across it. After several failed attempts from the bottom cedar's gnarly trunk, where he was kept balanced and safe from falling by ropes his companions held, he managed it. Each unsuccessful attempt that Wabash made was followed by a string of Lefèvre's curses, while the other members of the expedition watched the lasso with an anxiety as if it meant life or death. The lasso shot up from the Omaha's skilled hand, and then fell back down after a few seconds.

Finally, it stuck. The Indian looked up, shook the dangling end several times, tugged gently until the loop had tightened itself around the stump, then looked at everyone in the cave with a self-satisfied expression, and finally was unanimously rewarded with cheers.

"Too premature, too premature!" interrupted Lefèvre, who at this time was no longer able to hide the joy he felt when he looked at the rope. "It's too premature! We can't cheer before we know the rope is safe. Everyone over here!" he continued, falling into his commanding voice and handing the fastened lasso to the men. "Pull

now, as if you meant to pull down the mountain, one—two—three—hurrah! The rope holds! Let's get to work now, children!"

A moment later Wabash hung from the rope and pulled his body up in rhythmic movements, putting one hand above the other on the slippery rope, until he swung himself onto the ledge above.

Luckily the force of the explosion had blasted off a large piece of the ledge that had been protruding over the ground of the cave. It had fallen into the precipice and now the laboring men had enough room to move freely and receive the people and goods that were hoisted up on the rope. Leaving the eagle's nest was thus a much quicker affair than anyone had thought, and the certainty of their escape gave those who suffered from fear of heights at least a feeling of increased safety.

Joseph was second to climb up. As soon as he and the Omaha had tied the ropes around several nearby boulders for safety and had fastened the running loops around the taut ropes, the hoisting up began in the same manner they had managed to descend, except that instead of a saddle they used a branch from the cedar below.

Approximately two hours after starting their work, they congratulated each other on their escape. They had lost almost all of their belongings, and they still had to make the long, arduous journey by foot to Fort Bridger, and they didn't know how far anyone there might go to help them, or whether they would lend a helping hand so that they could complete the trip. But when they shook hands, looked each other in the eyes, and only saw joy in each other's hearts, they suddenly felt incredibly wealthy despite having only a few material things left, and with tears of gratitude they

looked heavenward to the one who had watched over them faithfully, and who seemed to speak to them through the bright light of the rising sun, the lovely blue firmament, the colossal mountains, and the sparse grasses and plants that decorated them; he seemed to smile and reveal his power.

Yes, with delight they greeted the sun again. Even though they had been able to watch the light of the life-giving celestial body, they had not been able to see it since its view had always been blocked by grey masses of rocks.

A number of vultures, ravens, and crows flew over the quiet grave of the hot battle. Franziska watched their flight and was sad, but the *Halfbreed* drew her attention away from the birds that had been attracted by the smell of decomposing bodies, and he pointed to a bald eagle in the distance, which sat as if in mourning.

"The poor animal!" Franziska said with a pained expression. "It is mourning its family."

"In the name of St. Washington!" said Lefèvre, who had heard Franziska's words. "I would give my rifle if I were able to give it its kin back. Unfortunately, we couldn't help it—it was either the animal dies or we die. But we have along way to go yet, children, don't take more than you can carry comfortably, and let's go!"

To the degree in which the group of friends distanced itself from the place of horror, its mood changed. Soon, everyone had cheerful tone once more, which also helped them shoulder the burdens and conquer obstacles they faced almost hourly.

Their path did not lead them back to the creek, instead Lefèvre lead them directly eastward to Fort Bridger after they had arrived at the foot of Medicine

Mountain. This not only saved them from a considerable detour, but also from another encounter with the Ute. Soon, they reached a hidden spring where they rested and were able to fill their field bottle with water, and when they stopped not far from the Emigrant Trail on the evening of the second day after their departure, they recognized the chain of hills behind which their destination, Fort Bridger, was hidden.

The hunters had reason to ponder the strange encounter with Buschmark and Harrison. They realized that they had orchestrated the entire pursuit, and that they were driven by a cause that would bring them significant advantages. Just how the two scoundrels had met, and why they had expressed such great pleasure when they thought the entire group was buried underneath the rocks, well, that they could not comprehend. Even less did they understand the bargain they had witnessed, and which they believed to be the result of obscure, unknown motives.

The catalyst for the pursuit seemed to have been a deep-seated feeling for revenge, a feeling that seemed to trump even those of the Indians in its intensity.

The friendly reception they experienced in the Fort Bridger in the meantime, quickly made those deliberations fade into the background; even more so when they discovered that their horses and a large part of Smith's mules had arrived there.

In their fervor to reach them, the Ute must not have guarded the herd sufficiently, and the animals had— perhaps due to instinct, perhaps due to memories of better pastures they had grazed on— taken the way to Fort Bridger, where they had been stopped and added temporarily to the herd of the trading company.

Now in possession of several animals that were absolutely necessary, especially since Smith now considered himself part of the group, they had no difficulty to equip themselves further in Fort Bridger, and on the fourth day after their arrival they bade the commander of the post goodbye to continue their journey to California.

In the spot where their prior journey had been interrupted, they rested to dig up the implements they had buried in the earth. They found them intact, but the wagon itself had been smashed to pieces and used for firewood by emigrants who now had surpassed them. Even by the Bear River, where Smith's train had found his doom, they only saw fragments of the wagon and crates, from which every passerby seemed to have taken what he needed at that moment.

They did not pass through the Salt Lake city itself, but rather they took the direction which lead around it to the north shortly before reaching it. After some moderate marches they once again found themselves in the inhospitable deserts that are so characteristic for those latitudes.

Harrison, Louis, and several Mormons, who were undertaking a business trip to San Francisco, were already crossing the Sierra Nevada at this time. Harrison had only remained in the Salt Lake city for one day. Since he had robbed Buschmark, he was now able to part with Joel entirely, and since the proximity of a potential confidant of his crime made him feel uneasy, he didn't stay any longer than needed with the Mormons, and considered it a stroke of good luck to have arrived early enough to join the small Mormon train that was bound for California.

Everyone had a good mount , and they covered the distance through the terrible sand and rock desert with such speed, that only the terrain of the California Mountains forced them to slow their pace.

Harrison had once again turned gloomy and silent, which affected his Potawatomi companion. He too now counted on a considerable change in his circumstances, but knew that any significant advantages would only occur due to Harrison's intervention. This made him feel a certain dread, and he allowed Harrison to exert an amount of power over him like he had never permitted another human being before.

Harrison's hopes for the success of his endeavor thus turned to certainty, and many times, when he considered himself to be unobserved, a satanic joy came over his pale countenance. In these moments he considered the future, which seemed golden to him, the long hoped for independence, and of the new part of his life that was about to begin. He never looked back; he tried to draw an impenetrable curtain between the past and the future.

End of Book Three

32. In California

After the Emigrant Trail cuts through the Sierra Nevada, the mighty mountain chain that dissects California in its entire length, its western slopes descend toward the Pacific Ocean and into an expansive valley, which likewise runs from the northern

border of the state all the way to the South and is separated from the ocean by the coastal mountains.

The San Joaquin River and the Sacramento River divide and richly irrigate this long stretch of land. The first carries the waters from the mountains of the southern part to the North, while the Sacramento, which originates in the North, flows in the direction of the San Joaquin. Before reaching the San Francisco Bay, the two rivers briefly turn westward, run parallel to one another, then join in their confluence by the San Pablo Bay, cross the latter and then enter the San Francisco Bay in order to flow into the Pacific.

There are no other areas on earth that have been blessed by nature as much as the valleys of those beautiful streams. Not only inexhaustible mineral riches characterize them, but also the unlimited fertility of the soil, which revealed itself in luscious grasses and herbs here, sky-high conifers there, and beautiful, heavily-laden fruit trees elsewhere.

And incomparable climate increased these advantages, and even the most spoiled onlooker cannot get enough of the landscape where wide-open, velvety prairies and somber snow-capped mountains, light-green, round hills and secretive forests alternate in such a picturesque manner.

Even though, a few years ago only a few lonely ranches and innumerable cattle herds indicated the presence of civilized human beings in these regions, nowadays one can easily travel from city to city, from settlement to settlement, and

hear the shrill whistle of the rushing locomotive in the pure air,²⁴⁰ or the mighty steamship that moans and carries its cargo upstream against the current.

Situated by the river of the same name, Sacramento is one of the major cities in the interior of California. Since it is easily accessible via waterway from San Francisco, it is a storage yard for that promising port city, and since the most significant traffic is routed in every possible direction from there, Sacramento's growth has naturally surpassed that of its sister cities, even those that are much older.

Further, the Emigrant Trail runs through it, additionally increasing its significance. Most people who set foot on California's soil after long months of wandering in the wilderness only consider themselves to have arrived after having been to Sacramento, from where they then strike out for the different mines, driven by their various inclinations or motives.

Even though Sacramento is well laid out, and thus has official city limits, it is difficult to recognize them because not all the areas that belong to the town have buildings yet, and many surrounding areas have so many farms, inns and stores that it is impossible to identify the difference between the suburbs and the country. Such establishments line the Emigrant Trail in particular, and immigrants are from time to time able to enjoy their benefits, comforts, and pleasures long before the city comes into view.

Along the American River, a small river that originates in the Sierra Nevada and flows into the Sacramento River by Sacramento, there also lie numerous small

²⁴⁰ Möllhausen was of course part of the expedition that made the railroad to California possible. For more in depth analysis on the motif of the railroad see Marx.

settlements and farms, which likely were established because one of the main routes into the gold country runs in this direction.

Approximately twelve miles from Sacramento, where the trail forks at the foot of the Sierra Nevada, is a group of houses that by now has probably grown into a town, but back then could only lay claim to being a station. A two-storied house with white-painted wood siding stood in the middle, and written on its front side in gigantic letters was the inviting name Hotel "Miners' Rest" because all the gold prospectors, whether they were coming from or going to the mines, felt obligated to rest in the Hotel "Miners' Rest" long enough to drink at least a glass of whiskey.

The advantages the inn enjoyed due to its fortunate location were reflected in its interior, which had not only single rooms that were tolerably comfortable, but also ones that were downright luxurious; nobody would have expected that here on the frontier.

Roughly two months after the events described in the previous chapter, that is, when autumn had already begun to powerfully fade the colors of the vegetation and the hint of fog in the cloudless sky hinted at the coming winter, two Negroes sat on a simple bench in front of the inn. With delight they exposed their bony figures to the warm rays of the afternoon sun while they looked at the majestic peaks of Sierra Nevada every now and then, on whose slopes the blinding color of the snow was inching lower.

But neither snow nor sunshine kept them from chatting with a vivaciousness that is so characteristic for their race; a vivaciousness that stood in stark contrast to

their wrinkled faces and the grey wool on their heads. They commemorated their warm home, the sunny Louisiana, and if they drifted off to other topics, they always came back to their favorite subject, which provided them with inexhaustible material for telling each other news.

"Oh, Washington!" sighed the more sentimental of the two (finding any other differentiating characteristic between the two would have been difficult). "Oh, Washington, my dear boy, I have to tell you a big secret."

"Tell me, Sambo, my boy!" replied the man addressed, while he took on a protective look²⁴¹ because he felt flattered.

"Washington, my boy, listen carefully, these may be the last words that I, your old friend, speak to you!"— A sigh came from the breast of the complaining Negro. — "Washington!" he then exclaimed forcefully, taking his companion by the shoulder, "I will die soon!"—

"Brother, you are just talking!"—

"I am telling you, I will die of homesickness if we don't return to New Orleans soon."

"And what will Miss Snowball say if you die?" Miss Snowball, Sambo's wife, the mother and grandmother of a whole generation prided herself immensely that she was still referred to as Miss at the age of sixty-eight.

²⁴¹ *Protektormiene*

"Miss Snowball? My one and only beloved girl? " Sambo asked in return.

"Well, I think that once she hears that I have passed on, she will just lay herself down, won't eat, won't drink, and simply die."

"Who will work your garden and wave the flies, mosquitoes, and wasps away for Massa?" Washington asked deeply moved.

"Hundreds of Negroes on the plantation," Sambo replied with resignation.

"Who will play the fiddle like you when I play the guitar for dances, Jackson the tambourine, and Achilles the bone rattle?"

"Let anyone who wants to play the fiddle!" Sambo growled. " I am telling you, I want to die!"

"Who will teach your grandchildren, who are as pretty as polished mahogany, all ten thousand Negro songs? "Uncle Ned," "Coon on the Fence," "Creation of the World," "Paradise," "Miss Lucy," and most importantly "Susanna"?"²⁴²

"I don't want to sing anymore, I want to die!"—

"And if Miss Snowball makes buckwheat pancakes, boils sweet corn, and makes pumpkin pies? Who is supposed to eat it all? You know best that on the entire plantation there is nobody who could help."

"By George!"²⁴³ Washington, you are right, Miss Snowball is a famous woman! You should have seen her about a hundred years ago, when she was young!

²⁴² The lyrics for the three songs that follow below are taken from the original, where the English appears in a footnote. The first song is of unknown origin, the second one is "Carry Me back to Ole Virginy," and the last of the three is "Swanee Ribber" (or "Old Folks at Home"). The latter two songs would eventually become famous in minstrel performances.

Oh, Washington, she was the most beautiful black girl on this side of the Alleghany Mountains," and he sang:

Eyes as black as winter night

Lips as red as cherry bright

When Sambo repeated the last verse in a fast rhythm several times, Washington's eyes lit up with delight. He didn't dare to sing along because the well-known words sounded too sweet in his ears, but he kept the beat with his bony knuckles on his thick knees, so that it sounded as if both were made of wood.

When Sambo finished, Washington began to sing, but Sambo fell in, and swaying their grey heads back and forth and looking at each other with longing glances, they repeated over and over:

Now I am weak and feeble,

I can't work anymore

O carry me back to old Virgini'

To old Virgini' shore!

"Let me tell you something, Washington," Sambo, who had all of a sudden abandoned all sentimental thoughts of dying, said, "it's mighty strange, yes, mighty strange that our Massa has recovered here so well."

"Certainly strange, old horse,"²⁴⁴ Washington agreed, "he runs around like a possum during a full moon."

"Yes, yes, now he eats more in one day than he used to in six weeks!"

²⁴³ *Bei Gorge!*

²⁴⁴ *altes Pferd*

"I agree; and no longer looks pale and yellow."

"And jokes around with us poor niggers."²⁴⁵

"And once in a while thinks of Miss Snowball."

"And all the black people."

"Yes, and talks of traveling home for Christmas."

"And my fiddle-playing."

"But, Sambo, I think Massa has changed lately, changed mightily."

"Mightily, Gen'ral Wash', he is no longer so funny."

"Yes, right, Capt'n Sambo, he looks as sad as a raccoon that lost its tail."

"And I know why, he made a mistake."

"Do you mean he was mistaken?"

"No matter what, I mean he thought to find a true Indian gentleman in his son, but found a no good —"

"A good-for-nothing, is that what you mean?"

"Yes!" Sambo exclaimed, and both men laughed until tears down over their black cheeks.

"Poor Massa!" Sambo finally said in a sad voice.

"Poor Massa!" replied Washington in the same manner. "He was looking forward to meeting his son, and now he has to be ashamed. Oh, Sambo, my heart aches to think of it! Poor Massa, he says nothing, but he is very sad about the Halfbreed!"

²⁴⁵ The term appears in the original.

"Washington, do you know what? I don't believe he is his son because he doesn't love his father and gambles away all his money."

"And is never at home at night." Washington added.

"But he must be his son, Massa Harrison said so, and Massa Harrison doesn't lie because he is a man of religion, and he is a pious man, and he always wears a black robe."

"And preaches love and forgiveness, and says to poor Massa: The Halfbreed has a good heart, is only a bit uncivilized, but he will improve and bring his father honor, but his father must have patience with him."

"Poor Massa Harrison can be wrong though because Massa Joseph doesn't have a good heart if he doesn't respect his father and drinks and gambles."

"And can't read or write, but Massa Harrison wants to teach him; I think it's a piece of work to teach young Massa Joseph anything."

"Maybe not," Sambo said musingly, "because Massa Harrison and young Massa Joseph love each other a lot; they take long walks alone, and Massa Harrison teaches good lessons because afterwards young Massa Joseph sits with his father for hours and talks his head off."

"You are right, old horse, Massa Harrison is a pious man, but I want to tell you the truth, I still don't like him."

"I don't like him either because I have never seen him laugh."

"True, true, he always looks really serious, and looks at the ground in front of him, and never has a kind word for a poor nigger."

"And has a terrible look in his eyes when he talks to Massa."

"That's not so terrible because all godly men have a terrible look; but I still hate him because since he has arrived with the Halfbreed Massa is always sad."

"Let me tell you something, Washington, I wish we had never gone to California."

"No, Sambo, the journey to California was good for Massa's health, but I wish Harrison had never come with young Massa Joseph."

"True, true," replied Sambo musingly, "but is it not a mighty surprise that Louisiana is so warm and the snow is still on the mountains here? What a terrible sight!"

"Yes, what a complete surprise."

"I already considered that the sun shines more in Louisiana because there are more niggers."

"Fool, that's silly. The sun is, as you know, a big mountain of fire, and the closer we are to it, the hotter it is, and farther away it is cold. I think we are now far away from it."

"Probably. I believe that the climate in Panama will be better than in New Orleans."

"Of course, it has to be because Panama is much closer to the sun, and therefore it must be hotter."

"You know, Washington, even though Massa Joseph gives us a lot of money all the time, I still don't like him. He often acts more uncivilized than a nigger straight from Africa."

"And it's not his money, but Massa's; if he continues, Massa is going to be a poor man."

"If Massa Joseph were a gentleman, we were already on the way home to New Orleans."

"Oh, but the awful sea-sickness! I feel ill just thinking about it."

"And the terrible storms!"

"And the water!"

"And no land!"

"And the big whales! Oh, Sambo, Sambo, it is horrible!"

"And what will Miss Snowball and all the black folks think when I tell them about the journey!"

"And how the pancakes will taste!" as if the hopes for such golden times had fired up his sentimental feelings, Sambo began to sing with his melodic voice:

One little hut among the brushes

Once did I love;

Still when it to my mem'ry rushes

No matter where I rove.

Washington listened attentively, and when Sambo had sung the last verse, he began to sing along taking over the second part and in a slow beat they sang the chorus several times:

All this world I'm sad and dreary

Everywhere I roam,

Still longing for the old plantation,

And for the old folks at home.

The two grey-haired slaves were so engrossed in their widely popular Negro song that they did not notice the two men who stepped out the front door and stood not far from them.

Anyone who might have seen Newfort, the planter, before his departure in New Orleans and had seen him now, would have had a difficult time recognizing him because his appearance had changed so much. Of course, he was still the lean man from earlier days, but sickly pallor had given way to a healthy color, while the dull eyes had taken on a clear and livelier expression. His posture, however, had changed most significantly because only a cane, on which he leaned ever so slightly, indicated that his strength had not returned entirely and that he perhaps might still feel some slight discomfort while walking.

It became obvious that the journey had helped his body, which had slowly become ill and ailing due to the lack of exercise and the heavy and sweet-laden diet that was so prevalent in many houses in the South.

The two faithful old slaves, by the way, were not mistaken when they believed they had discovered a certain sadness in their master; as the latter stood and regarded the two singers, who with their simple song kindled memories of days past and his lonely home, it was difficult to discern from his downcast look that he was actually happy to have recovered from his illness.

Harrison stood close to him, and even here his usual calmness and seriousness had not left him. Nothing in his demeanor showed the dislike and fear he felt in regard to the Potawatomi's behavior, who at first had almost been his slave on the journey, but then, immediately after their arrival in California, began to shed the shackles and thus only allowed him an insignificant degree of influence, which threatened to destroy all his plans.

Following Newfort's wishes and his invitation, Harrison had moved into the Hotel "Miners' Rest" too. He shared his room with Louis because, he said, he wanted to be able to guide him and teach him to the best of his ability, which meant in reality that he wanted to watch over him and use him for his purposes.

For reasons of health, Newfort himself had preferred this location to city life, and after he had met his supposed son, he was twice as content to be here because he needed time to think and come to a conclusion about the future.

Since he was used to being guided by other people— first by his wife, and then by Browns—, he was unable to resist the cunning Harrison for long and listened to his indirect advice willingly, since it seemingly came from a man whose religious position alone dictated promoting a reunion of father and son to the best of his ability.

Newfort hoped that the existing intimacy between Harrison and the young half-Indian might be a blessing for the uncivilized young man; thus he kept hesitating to begin his return journey. He had attached himself so firmly to the long nourished hope that he might be able to regard a decent human being as his son and natural heir that it was a struggle for him to separate himself from the son he had just rediscovered and keep him at a distance; perhaps even more so because this son's drastically changed situation—a carefree life of abundance—was certain to accelerate his moral doom.

Under the circumstances, the planter's mood was subdued, and this became obvious even in his tone of his voice when he addressed the Negroes after they had finished singing.

"Hopefully, we will be home again for Christmas," he said referring to the last verse of their song.

As soon as they heard their master's voice, the two Negroes looked around, but showed none of the usual, animal-like servility; rather, with an openness that indicated that despite their low position they considered themselves members of the family, they answered in unison with a gesture of agreement.

"Oh, Massa," Washington began, "it is much too cold here; do you see the snow on the mountains?"

"Yes, take a look at the snow on the mountains; and Louisiana is so warm," Sambo added.

"You probably miss Miss Snowball?" Newfort asked Sambo.

"Certainly, certainly!" the two black men answered at the same time, while they fell into resounding laughter.

Newfort laughed, too. His face had a friendly expression, while Harrison kept a straight face, yet seemingly regarded the two cheerful Negroes with compassion.

Without talking to his servants any further, Newfort turned toward the little creek, on whose charming banks he usually managed to revitalize himself. Harrison stepped to his side, but the Negroes, who had guessed his intention, took up their hats from the bench and pressed them on their woolly heads, and then followed at an appropriate distance.

The two men walked side by side for some time. Each one appeared to be in deep thought, and only when the sound of the creek could be heard did Newfort begin to speak.

"Do you believe me," he began, "that each day I feel less and less inclined to take Joseph back to the plantation with me?"

"Certainly, there must be traits in him that you dislike," Harrison replied sympathetically, "but you mustn't forget that he is your own flesh and blood. Aside from your duties as a Christian and as a father, you must remember with kindness that by fully recognizing the young man, who is a good human being deep down, you will certainly save him from doom.

"I don't want to leave him destitute," Newfort said warmly. "I will provide him with the means to have a worry-free future, but to take him with me in the condition he is in would mean paying a terrible price for the sins of my youth. I

wouldn't be able to look at him without reproaching myself bitterly. Once he stops his foolishness and decides to lead a serious life, then my door will be open to him.

However, I fear that it may be too late; ten or twelve years ago it might have been early enough, but unfortunate circumstances kept him from me. I suspected it for a while because he struck the Negro in front of my door. But the good news about him, which kept reaching me from everywhere, made me lenient, and I hoped to find in him a support for my old days. My hopes were premature, but I will be happy if I can at least secure him a future that is in harmony with his inclinations and his unfortunately neglected education, and if I am then able to hear good things about him, I will reconsider. By the way, Joseph shows so little affection for me that I am not sure if it is for the best if he lives with me, or if he will be able to adapt to the new circumstances.

"Be lenient with him," said Harrison, who felt his goal slip further and further away. "Joseph has the seed to do good in him, which should give him the right to be recognized by his father as a son. We mustn't forget that he is still young and that the blood of the wild Indian race runs in his veins. Believe me, his education hasn't been neglected as much as you may think and he deserves the praise you have heard about him. He regards himself as a fearless, independent hunter who had to earn his daily bread under dangerous conditions and endure many privations, who has now suddenly come into money; he could not have imagined that in his wildest phantasies because a few hundred dollars are already an extraordinary amount in his eyes. Forgive me my frankness, but your blameworthy generosity has led him to believe

that the funds at his disposal are inexhaustible. It is thus only natural that he in his youthful foolishness enjoys a multitude of frivolous entertainment to which—here I have to defend him—others seem to endlessly entice him. I am not defending his conduct, on the contrary, I criticize him strongly as you have witnessed on several occasions—and not without success—, but I believe that I we are to transform him into a decent fellow human being, we must hold the reins loosely. Then he will go down the path he has currently chosen for only a short while longer, will in time feel dislike for it, and will return with a sincere, overflowing heart into your arms. My unforgettable friend Buschmark, who was taken from us too early by a terrible fate and who knew Joseph's character so well, called out to me while dying. He extended his hand and said: "Watch over Joseph, be careful in his guidance, and you will be able to make the man out of him that his former benefactor, the missionary, wished him to be."

Harrison fell silent, a deep sigh came from his breast, and his thoughts were apparently with the "unforgettable" friend Buschmark.

Newfort was quiet as well, but Harrison's word echoed in him and kindled conflicting disparate feelings to life.

"You may be right, I sincerely hope you are," he finally said after a while. "For the past three weeks, or since you have arrived, I have tried to see more noble inclinations in mind, but it is in vain. I admit that I may be shortsighted and expect too much from someone who has grown up under adverse circumstances; and yet, I can't decide to leave for New Orleans with him at once. For instance, why haven't I

seen him for two days? But enough of that, I can't continue it, and I will tell you now what I have preliminarily decided. I will remain here until December first, which is another five weeks. I will wait and see what success my wishes and your well-meant teaching have. If Joseph shows any signs of filial affection for me by then, which I may hope, so that I will be able to execute my plans without having to regret anything later, I will introduce him on the plantation as my son. If no change for the better has occurred by then, he will stay under your guidance here in California. Try to mend his ways. You have stated that you would watch over him, and if you then find it appropriate to lead him to me, then don't hesitate one second. You will find sufficient funds to cover your stay in the state bank, but the money will only go to you. If after one year—God forbid—you feel that your efforts have failed—"

"Don't say anything else, no more," Harrison interrupted the planter. "It is not fatherly, not Christian to assume this as long as we are justified to hope for the best. However, don't doubt that I will faithfully and dutifully watch over your son if you are forced to travel home alone. Likewise, I don't doubt that I will be able to bring him to you after a short while, and that he will be your pride and joy."

While they were engaged in the conversation, they had reached the point where the busy road met the small, winding creek, and now they turned and walked back to the hotel. They were silent and only sporadically noticed the people they encountered. The Negroes followed, chatting cheerfully, and their subdued laughter and snicker gave away the fact that they were thinking of home.

33. Hell

In a young city, uneven, unpaved streets are often flanked by big, stately buildings, small weatherboard houses, heavy log cabins, and tent-like shacks. This was the case in Sacramento as well where the tent shacks, which were transported away in pieces, reconstructed, and taken down again to make room, gave way to bigger building much quicker than anywhere else.

Palace or shack, tent or cabin, all were equally busy and gave testimony to the proximity of the main traffic routes and the boom from the goldmines.

If one walks through the busy streets of Sacramento during the day, it becomes obvious that one of the most magnificent houses seems to be excluded from the busy traffic, and it would almost look vacant if the windows weren't wide open; every once in a while a figure with a tired face glided past one of them and here moved tables and chairs around, there swept half-smoked cigarettes and torn playing cards out of the rooms with a broom and dustpan.

At night, when the stores were closed and the windows and doors of the houses were darkened, the house came alive, and such lively commotion sounded from it that it seemed as if the gayest festivities were taking place.

At that hour, the late-night walker or the merchant returning home from work will hear the music of a well-manned orchestra, music that invites him with its harmonious melodies to step into the brightly lit parlor.

However, the domestically minded citizen who knows the house's reputation passes by and will at most glance with pity at the shadowy figures that are gliding

along the walls and disappearing furtively into the wide open door, or perhaps at the dull window panes behind which tobacco smoke dims the sheen of numerous lights. The music is not enticing him since he knows why it strikes up.

The stranger who may have followed the sometimes cheerful, at other times soulful sounds, and whose heart might have been touched by hearing a melody from home, will step without hesitation through the portal that is open to everyone. He expects a concert in the festively lit house and hopes to spend a couple of pleasant hours by giving his attention to the select, well-performed music.

Resounding chords fill the parlor; he fears to intrude and modestly stops at the door to the inside, which is blocked by a crowd of men. He holds his breath so as not miss a single sound of the symphony he hasn't heard for so long, and enjoys the others' devoted attention, which is only once in a while interrupted by unintelligible shouts.

The piece's final chords are fading away and no applause is heard, but the shouts continue here and there, and soon murmuring can be heard from a group of three or four, but it falls silent quickly.

The members of the orchestra begin to tune their instruments, and the stranger pushes forward to the front.

Nobody pays any attention to him; once in a while the transfixed but apathetic glance of a bearded gold prospector or a pale, sickly dandy falls on him, perhaps because he has come too close to them, but no waiter or doorman shows to ask for ticket or money.

Finally, he has come far enough to where he can take a look around while leaning on the armrest of a heavy chair. He is taken aback. He can't believe what he sees because six rows of green tables line the entire length of the hall. Minted eagle coins, pouches with gold dust, and small and large nuggets of the precious metal are sparkling on them. In between stand the scales, roll the dice, and cards fly; and where there are empty seats, there lie loaded revolvers and sharp bowie knives like guards watching over treasures.

The weapons are lifeless and stiff, and the gold is lifeless and stiff, yet neither remains in place. The gold is perpetually in motion; it is pushed here and there, sometimes with a shaky hand, other times with a steady one. And when a fist appears with knife or when it covers the handle of a pistol, then everyone in the vicinity falls immediately quiet for a few seconds. The fist is retracted, the loaded dice keep rolling, and imperceptibly the newly marked deck of cards is stacked.

So much is on the tables! One look is enough to take it all in. But those crowding around the tables are a different matter. It is chaos of the most diverse people and physiognomies, which are resembling one another only in their dedication to the all-consuming passion, their irresistible lust for the shiny metal.

The success of many years' work vanishes as quickly as the easily won loot of robberies. Tears of remorse and desperation well up in the eyes of the cheated youngster who was about to begin his journey home and had only stepped inside to listen to the charming melodies, but then couldn't resist the shiny gold. Rage, hate, and revenge shine in the eyes of the old gambler who has found his match here, and

brutal indifference is in the faces of the petty thieves and bold robbers, who will refill the pockets emptied at the gambling table at someone else's expense.

The bankers and the croupiers keep their eyes fixed on the cards or dice. They do not care where the money comes from, whether from the leather pouch of a rugged-looking miner, or from the embroidered purse of a rich merchant; from the savings of an overindulged, misdirected favorite son, or from the principal's cashbox which had been opened with a false key. —Gold is gold, whether it is dampened with sweat, or red from violently shed blood. The dice roll cheerfully, the cards are flying quickly, the conductor gives his signal, and a magnum opus sounds from the orchestra.

What playful musicians! They are playing the chorale from *Les Huguenots*.

The stranger's blood runs cold, the music has lost its charm for him, he backs out of the parlor, and when he feels the fresh night air, he sighs deeply. "This was hell I entered," he murmurs, and hastening his pace, he hurries down the long street. —

On the evening of the day when Newfort and Harrison discussed the Halfbreed's future and Newfort had come to a decision about his alleged son, the latter was feeling quite happy in the above-described hell, and he alternately devoted his attention to whiskey and gambling. He had arrived early enough to secure himself a seat at the end of the table, and he sat with a small group that stood out from the rest because of its peculiar make up.

In front of an oval table covered in green felt a no longer young lady was enthroned on an elevated chair so that she was able to guard the immediate proximity

with her hands. She was the center of the party because she was the bank's owner; but even if this hadn't been the case, she would have earned the distinction of being described as the "center of attention" because of her appearance.

It was impossible to discover anything charming in her because even though she wasn't past the first half of her life, only her large, dark eyes told the story of her past beauty; they, however, had something repulsive about them from the blue eye shadow and the uncanny, glistening look with which she watched the cards and all the hands at once. The lady's torso, which towered high above the table, was dressed in ample folds of expensive silk, so that it was not possible to discern her physical shape. The thin neck, which stuck out from the collarbones, and the head with its haggard face on the same neck, were an indication that the bank's owner's body was like that of a mummy, except that life still inhabited it. Heavy, expensive jewelry covered her arms up to the elbows, rings with sparkling stones each finger. Long, golden chains were wrapped around her neck multiple times and dropped down to her waist. White and red makeup covered the gaunt cheeks and the protruding chin, and artificial braids and flowers were wrapped around her head like a turban. Despite all of this she was still ugly, so that nobody would try to imagine her as a sixteen-year-old girl, which is in fact something one might be inclined to do with older and even old women who have pretty eyes or a dainty little mouth.

On each side sat her croupiers, namely a fragile, pale little man and a man with colossal limbs. Both were most fashionably and meticulously dressed, but they didn't wear jewelry like their mistress. They seemed to have mastered their business

quite well, and the younger one exhibited an extraordinary agility when he took hold of someone's gold, slipping a double eagle or an invisible nugget into his wide sleeve every so often, where it was held fast in a pouch that was open toward the top.

Any of Miss Sally's old regulars, or any of the *Hungry Belly's* patrons, would have recognized the two men as the twins. It is doubtful, however, if they would have appreciated being recognized because now they had different names and, since they had lost Miss Sally's entire fortune, led regular lives as croupiers behind the gambling table, for which they were rewarded by their mistress, known as "Señora," only with a regular monthly salary and the title of "Compagnons," that is, aside from the little gratifications they took on their own.

The gamblers crowded around the trio in several rows. The first one was seated, while others stood close together and handed or received money over the shoulders of the men in front of them.

Straight across from the Señora sat Louis, the Potawatomi *Halfbreed*. Three cards were in front of him; each one was covered with a twenty-dollar coin. He had already significantly imbibed whiskey, yet not to the degree that he would have been unable to pay attention to the game. His person—which due to Newfort's generosity sported a brand new suit—looked not unpleasant in contrast to the other gamblers who crowded behind him.

The music played, the Señora pulled the cards from the deck. One of Louis's cards lost and he pushed the money across, and then stuck his hand in his pocket to pull out more gold pieces. "Goddamn!" he suddenly exclaimed when he discovered

that he had nothing except a few silver coins. He took back the empty card, and then another "Goddamn" could be heard when the second card went bust.

Nobody paid any attention to his exclamations. Louis placed his hand on the lost money and appeared to push it over to the Señora, but then withdrew it just as quickly.

The move was clever, but not clever enough to deceive the Señora because she immediately dropped her cards and took up the revolver that was next to her, cocked the hammer, and holding the barrel to the Halfbreed's face, she said with a polite voice: "Give me the twenty dollars, if you don't mind, sir."

"I have no money for you, damn witch!" Louis exclaimed with feigned indignation, while he quietly slid his right hand under the table.

"Give me the money!" the Señora repeated with a louder voice. "Give me the money, you brown scoundrel!"

The gamblers who had been standing in the Halfbreed's proximity moved and waited for the argument to come to an end.

"The money!" the Señora screamed. She closed her left eye, while her right one was lined up with the pistol's sight and Louis's forehead.

"Here it is!" Louis yelled. In the blink of an eye he ducked and reached across the table with both arms. His move was so precisely aimed and executed that it was difficult to follow, and before any of the surrounding men could have guessed his intention, the Señora's revolver flew out the window, and the screaming lady laid her hand on her chin. Blood dripped through her fingers, and the moment she took her

hand away from her face, a long laceration, which the Potawatomi had inflicted with his knife, became visible.

"Quiet, quiet!" it came from everywhere. "Quiet!" the twins called, too, who, by the way, seemed little inclined to come to their mistress's assistance.

"Hand me a revolver!" the bleeding woman screamed raging in her fury. "Give me a revolver!" she repeated when she noticed that nobody was obliging.

"Here is one!" Louis finally replied, holding the barrel of his own gun up to her head. "I am telling, you damn witch, if you don't continue playing, the "brown scoundrel" will teach you."

"Continue, continue," a dozen or so voices called. The music started a noisy march, but Louis in contrast suddenly felt someone grabbing him from behind; he felt his pistol slip from his hand, and then he was tossed back and forth for a while. When he regained consciousness, he found himself in the street by the steps to the front door, out of which someone with strong arms had thrown him.

Peace had returned to the parlor after a few minutes. A thick scarf covered the Señora's chin, but she slowly dealt one card after the other and paid no attention to the blood, which fell in drops that kept rhythm with the cards onto her expensive dress and precious jewelry.

Once Louis had managed to stand up, his first thought was to return to the gambling hall and take revenge for the ignominy. He only made it as far as the door, where a man met him who not only warned him against it, but also asked him to walk with him for a short while. Louis looked at the small figure suspiciously; he thought

he recognized one of the Señora's companions in the dim light. He did not consider this important, though, and decided instead that the man must have important news for him, and he thus followed him willingly.

"My name and what I do is of no importance to you," the stranger began to address the Potawatomi after they had walked silently for some time. "It suffices to say that I was observing you all evening and felt a certain joy and admiration for the dexterity with which you not only took the Señora's revolver and injured her, but also managed to steal one piece of gold after the other under the watchful eyes of so many people; gold you unfortunately managed to lose again at once."

When he heard this, the Halfbreed stood still and almost imperceptibly reached for his knife because he believed that he had encountered part of the notorious Vigilance Committee²⁴⁶ that made crooks tremble all over California.

The stranger may have guessed his thoughts because he took Louis by the arm and pulled him along, continuing:

"You don't need to mistrust me because I recognize you as one of ours—that is, a cheerful fellow who fears nothing more than the gallows, yet lives dangerously close to it. As I said, your courage and expertness have left me a good impression, and further you seem to be the man who doesn't shy away from anything that might bring a decent sum of money."

Even though the Halfbreed's suspicions vanished as he was listening, he wanted to make sure that his unknown companion was entirely sincere, and breaking

²⁴⁶ It is likely a reference to the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance that was formed in 1851.

into a laughter of disbelief, he answered the indirect question: "Yes, it' true my friend, I am a cheerful fellow, but too much of a fox to be caught in such a trap."

"Like hell, a trap!" the stranger replied. "I am telling you, we belong together. But in order to convince you that I don't have insincere intentions, I will tell you that the money which you watched the Señora pile up is not even one tenth of what she has, and it wouldn't be bad if two or three fellows would split it."

"Goddamn, that wouldn't be bad at all!" Louis said slowly because in his mind he could already see himself with a part of the Señora's fortune.

"But how to go about it?" he asked after a while. "How do we go about it? I am still a stranger here, and I know nothing here in Sacramento except a couple of saloons and gambling establishments."

"It's not necessary," replied the other, who couldn't hide his joy of having found the right man in the Potawatomi. "I will let you know what you need to know; but let's keep walking so we can get to know each other better."

The two had a lively conversation, naturally in a whisper, which was only once in a while interrupted by gleeful laughter and a few curses. They walked up the street, and then back. Finally, they reached the gambling hall where they said their goodbyes.

"My time is up," the stranger said while he gave the Potawatomi his hand. "The Señora will have started looking for me. We agree then that we meet at the appointed hour at the appointed place so that I may introduce you to my friend, with whom we will make further plans."

"Goddamn, spare me your politeness," Louis said with crude confidingness. "I haven't learned such manners, and I shall be hanged if they are required now."

The croupier somewhat condescendingly nodded his well-coiffed head that was covered with a black hat, and then he twirled his small mustache, jumped up the stairs, and disappeared in the crowd.

Louis watched the door for a while and felt annoyed while playing with the silver coins in his pocket. It hurt him deeply that he didn't own more with which to try his luck again at one or the other table, but nobody accepted silver. He felt even more pained because he had forgotten to ask his new friend for a small advance during the lively conversation; in light of the future endeavor, he certainly would not have said no to the request. He was about to find a saloon for the night when he heard the noise of a galloping horse approaching the gambling house.

Louis waited unconcerned for the rider on the horse to pass by, but the latter didn't seem to want to move past him because a short distance from where Louis stood, he jumped from his horse, led it to close to the house and fastened the reins to one of the rails that had been placed on either side of the door for this purpose.

Louis kept waiting on the bottom step of the stone stairs, and apparently the horseman had not noticed him yet because when the latter hurried up the stairs, his body accidentally and forcefully struck the Potawatomi's shoulder.

"I am sorry, sir, it wasn't my intention," a deep voice could be heard, and the stranger turned the corner to walk past Louis and enter the house.

"You here!?" Louis asked astonished when he heard the voice.

The stranger paused, stepped close to the Halfbreed, and regarding him closely for a second, he replied: "Yes, I am here; that is to find you. You will destroy our plans if you continue like this, and it is you who will suffer the most from it; that should be clear to you by now."

"I think your misfortune will be no less than mine, otherwise you would not have bothered to make the pleasure ride at this time of the night from the Miners' Rest Hotel to here," Louis said derisively.

Even though he wasn't willing to sever ties with Harrison, the latter had never appeared at a more opportune moment because Louis desperately needed money. He thus played into Harrison's fears to be able to more easily obtain a sum of money from him.

"The extent of my loss doesn't matter to you," replied Harrison, who could hardly hide his distaste for Louis's increasing presumption. "What's at stake is whether you will be regarded as a beggar and vagabond and end in jail, or if you want to appear in society as a free, independently wealthy gentleman. Don't forget that everything depends on whether I help you or not."

"Ha, ha, ha!" the Potawatomi laughed. "Is that where you are coming from? Goddamn! Drop me from the whole matter then if you wish; I don't enjoy acting the son of the old fool who is rich but not very generous with his dear son."

"What? Not generous? Have you not received more money in the last weeks than you have had in your entire life? And have I not given you significant sums even though I knew you would gamble them away at the green baize tables?"

"Not enough by far, Harrison, my friend, because I shall be hanged if I have as much as a cent left in my pockets, and I will do no further business with you until you give me one thousand dollars in gold."

When Harrison heard the request, he turned around and walked over to his horse without honoring Louis's demand with an answer. He took hold of the bridle and seemed intent on riding away.

Now it was Louis's turn to be anxious, but he was less so because of worry over his future—that, after all, seemed bright after his conversation with the croupier—, and more so because he needed money to continue gambling.

"Look, old fellow, " he exclaimed when he saw that Harrison was serious, "we can perhaps agree."

Harrison heard him quite well, but remained silent and strapped and buckled his saddle longer than necessary.

"Don't you hear me, old horse!" Louis said once more, lowering his voice to a friendly, intimate tone.

"Yes, I hear you well, but it is not worth continuing the negotiations."

"Goddamn, why not? You don't have to take what I said so seriously."

Harrison led his horse to the steps where Louis still stood, and after having contemplated the matter for a few minutes, he began: "Louis, if I speak with you at all, I do so to point out the fact that you are in no position to make demands. Rather, I will let you know mine, which you can either accept or not, as you see fit. First, we must consider that we cannot betray each other without suffering the consequences."

"Yes, true, even though the party is safely buried under the rock plate, and Buschmark was silly enough to jump into the abyss, someone might yet inquire."

"About the party, yes, but not about Buschmark because the carelessness that led to his death can be proven. But to dispel questions about the party, it is imperative that you play the role of the son a short while longer."

"Goddamn," Louis exclaimed at this point, "just tell me to cut the old fool's throat and assure me that I won't hang for it, and I will do it. Don't ask me though to weasel around him with flattery, I haven't learned these things."

"You're not supposed to flatter him, just like you —are not—going to—do—"

"Say it outright: Cut his throat! And that will be the end of it."

"Not so loud, not so loud," Harrison whispered, looking around anxiously.

"The walls often have ears. Let's walk down the street, but stay in the middle."

After the two criminals had walked a short distance away from the gambling hall, Harrison began once more:

"You are not supposed to weasel around with flattery, as you call it, because it doesn't appear to be natural behavior for you. But you must stay in your father's proximity for a few days, and you must talk as little as possible. Look sad, sigh as much as you want to, and talk about the beautiful days in the future—be polite while doing it—, be kind to the two black scoundrels, and then I will pay you one hundred dollars in gold for each day you spent. After I spoke with Newfort today, I can further assure you that you will not be forced to lead such a restricted life for very long, and that great fortune awaits you if you follow my advice."

At this point, Harrison began to recount his conversation with Newfort to the Potawatomi, that is, as much as his own plans allowed it. His words so impressed the half-Indian that by the end of the conversation he was more than willing to help Harrison with his plans, and even promised to be in the Hotel "Miners' Rest" the following day at noon.

Before they left, Harrison gave Louis a sum of money, with which he returned to the Señora's gambling table as fast as his feet could carry him. Everyone seemed to have forgotten the whole incident and eagerly handled the cards because they feared the break of day.

Harrison on the other hand rode back to the well-known inn. His mood was subdued; Louis's behavior had awakened the fear in him, and he trembled when he thought of the final step he still had to undertake, but perhaps less because it involved a crime, and more so because he considered the potential consequences of failure. The bloody ghosts of Buschmark, Joseph, and Franziska and her kin and friends paraded through his mind.

34. In the Goldmines

It requires effort to bring the gold from its dark origin, where it has been for thousands of years, up to daylight; much more effort than one might think. Even the simple washing of the sand in places where water has to be brought across significant distances, or the sand has to be carried to it, and the digging in the hard soil is a labor that, if profit is to be made from it, tires and exhausts the strongest body.

Unbelievable strength²⁴⁷ is required to divert rivers so that men are able to pan for the precious metal in the dry river bed, to blast tunnels into the mountainside's bedrock to follow the veins of gold, to sink water wells into the ground and pull the dirt up by hand in buckets, or even to simply build mile-long aqueducts to be able to wash gold in dry places.

To provide this labor power numerous able-bodied men typically band together. A firm handshake becomes the law they live by, and in this fashion many prospector groups or companies form small republics in which every arm is forced to do the same service, and all eyes keep close watch over the fortune gained.

Nobody can begrudge the miner any gains, small or large, because prospecting is a tough, tough calling. The prospector not only earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, in the truest sense of the word, but he also has to live with wasted efforts and false hopes, and they make his life hard and bitter.

He has worked for months with his fellow prospectors. The river has been diverted, the bed is dry because the water has been dammed up, and the search is supposed to start the following day. All of a sudden lightning and ominous clouds are visible on the horizon; heaven's gates open, and with fury the terrible storm destroys everything human hands have made—the dam, which cannot hold up to the flood, and the shaft, whose walls collapse and fill the excavated depth.

The disappointed prospector looks sadly at the devastation, but there is no time for sorrow, and the pick and the spade offer the greatest comfort.

²⁴⁷ *Riesenkräfte*

The American River's Middle Fork, one of its major tributaries, only covers a short distance. It flows from the watershed of the Sierra Nevada to its western foothills, but it flows fast and carries a significant amount of water, which it takes from the snow covered peaks of the mountains and the slopes subject to the changing seasons of the mighty mountain chain.

The Middle Fork flows along in a narrow bed that is constricted between gigantic rocks. At times the bare rock or the slopes covered with shiny green Manzanita shrubs are reflected in its floods. Everywhere, though, there are tall, straight Douglas firs, either by themselves or in groups, and the strange Sugar Pine and numerous other varieties of conifers grow with such orderliness and strength that they look as if they intend to grow tall enough to take a look over to the eastern side of the mountain.

Along this river a company of prospectors had gathered, and they went about their business with great success. A strong dam, which forced the water from its thousand-year-old bed and around a nearby round hill, drained a stretch of approximately five hundred feet. This was the field of operations where forty men with all kinds of tools were busy like ants.

The damming up of the water had made the water level rise and caused a lake to form above the claim, whose calm mirror-like surface contributed not a little to giving the wild environment a peculiar charm that softened its rigid appearance.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ *das Starre mildernden Reiz*

If one stood in the middle of the dry creek bed on a somewhat elevated point and looked upstream, the eye would encounter distant, fantastically jagged peaks in front of which the promontories lining the creek looked like the side screens of a theater setting until they were at last bounded by the small artificial lake. The blue mountain peaks and the nearby red granite walls, the dark green firs and a grey log cabin swam as upside-down mirror images on the lake and helped to complete a nature scene that would have prompted a painter to practice his art.

Yes, there was a log cabin as well, regarded as common property, since it had been built with a concerted effort and served to accommodate a trader who not only provided necessities, but also maintained a taproom on the side in which the prospectors spent many a leisure hour, drank many a glass of whiskey, but also lined the pockets of the calculating host with many a gold nugget.

Most prospectors, incidentally, didn't notice that their surroundings were picturesque and that they themselves, through their work and their appearance, increased the quaintness of the small scene framed in by cliffs. They had better things to do than worry about natural beauties and more important matters to consider than sketching and drawing.

That is not to say that one or the other did not understand such things and would not have indulged in such pleasures under different circumstances. No, by no means, but to take a look and guess who those men might be, well, that would have been impossible.

All prospectors had the identical weathered, more or less bearded, features, the not especially well-kept hair, the same shapeless felt hats, the same sweat-colored flannel shirts, the same colorless pants that had turned into rags, the same high-water boots, and the same wide leather belt, which had the important function of keeping a man's pants up on his hips. If one adds to this that all the men were driven by their thirst for gold and each one of them watched over their companions with the same amount of suspicion, then one would in fact have the complete picture of a genuine California prospecting company.

Everyone was now a prospector; it was not possible to tell what he had done previously, and it would have been a strange picture if everyone were transformed into what they had been a few years ago at home.²⁴⁹ The merchant mingled with the teamster, the merry student with the industrious craftsman, the polished officer with the peddling Jew, and the pious preacher with the herder and flashy dandy. Here, they were no different because death and gold make everything equal.

On a beautiful, clear day in autumn when the sun had not yet reached its zenith, the prospectors were working with redoubled efforts to see some results before noon.²⁵⁰ They talked little, and only once in a while when someone stood up to take a breath, to wipe the sweat off his brow, or to straighten his back for a few seconds, did a short conversation ensue, which then quickly fell silent again.

²⁴⁹ *als was sie vor wenig Jahren in der lieben Heimath ihr Brod aßen.*

²⁵⁰ *mit verdoppeltem Fleiß arbeiteten die Miner um noch vor Beginn der Mittagsstunde etwas vor sich zu bringen.*

Groaning under the weight of a driftwood log that had been dug up by the dam, and which was dyed black by moisture and the years, a Herculean-looking prospector stumbled toward the other side of the basin, where half a dozen of his comrades had buried themselves, like moles, so deep into the ground that only their shoulders and heads reached above it.

"Watch out, boys, that I don't split your heads!" he called out to them when he was almost by their side.

All six heads simultaneously ducked, but turned their eyes upward, and then reemerged just as fast when they noticed that they actually would have to be six feet higher for the warning to be justified.

"Damn your eyes!" a laughing voice called in broken English from the cave. "If you knew that two parallel lines never touch, even if they are a million miles long, you would have spared your Irish tongue the trouble of speaking!"

"And if you had completed your year in the Prussian army, you would not be so frightfully deluded about the direction of your nose" another voice could be heard.

"And if you had tasted the knee strap²⁵¹ as much as you apparently deserved, then you wouldn't bother us by talking about cobbling shoes that are not even broken!" a third called.

"Goddamn!" snarled a short, broad-shouldered fellow whose bearded face rose only half way above the rim of the bank. "Goddamn!" he repeated while he skillfully flicked a thick wad of chewing tobacco from one cheek into the other.

²⁵¹ cobbler's strap that attaches the shoe to his knee

"Crazy country folk!"²⁵² They talk more nonsense than a cabin boy on his first voyage that wears the topgallant sail like his mother's apron and the jib for a scarf. Look, old tortoise, if you don't know that a ship that follows the rudder can't move leeward if its nose is pointing backwards, then you are dumber than a shark that tries to swallow a three-hundred-pound anchor!"

The man addressed had meanwhile placed the root end of the tree on the ground in front of him and was pushing the other end with his shoulder until it stood upright and the weight no longer burdened him. After he had wiped his brow with an East Indian kerchief that must have been expensive at one point, he took an indifferent look at the men in the pit, who were leaning on their picks and shovels.

"Above all, I would like to say," he began, "that in my opinion it's better to warn people too early rather than calling "watch out" after they have been hit in the head. I remember, back when I still worked as a poorly paid village teacher,—"

"None of your children's stories!" the six prospectors called in unison.

"Well, I suppose not then," the carrier of the tree trunk replied dryly. "I was about to tell you some news about the Señora and a bit of gambling, but—perhaps—not," he said and bent his back to once again shoulder his burden.

"Wait, wait!" several voices called, and in the blink of an eye the former officer and the former sailor appeared on the bank. "Goddamn," the sailor snarled

²⁵² *verschrobenes Landrattengesindel*

with a hoarse voice, "let's hear the news from below deck if you don't want me to sock you in the hull."²⁵³

"A quarter ounce for the news!" twanged²⁵⁴ the former officer.

"Half a quarter ounce from me!" the student called, but added by singing in German: "Write it on the wall, I will have to borrow it!"

"Not for wind and water, not for a quarter ounce, but for one of your jolly gibberish songs I will give you the news, which you would find out shortly anyway."

"Bravo!" the prospectors called in unison, but the officer and the student still sang: "Bravo! Bravo! *Bravissimo!*"

The teacher waited until the singers had finished and then, leaning against his tree trunk, he said with an important and secretive expression: "The Señora will be here tomorrow evening or the day after tomorrow to arrange a little gambling. You have to opportunity to earn more at the gambling table in one night than in four weeks of hacking, shoveling, panning, and washing."

"So tomorrow or the day after? Why not today?" some asked after they had heard the news.

"What do I know?" the teacher said, placing the weight back on his shoulders and walking away.

"Hurrah!" the sailor exclaimed; throwing his hands up in the air and jumping into the gold pit, he eagerly took up his pick; he had no time to work anymore,

²⁵³ *heraus mit dem Ballast aus deinem Raum, wenn Du nicht willst daß ich dir eins zwischen Wind und Wasser schlage.*

²⁵⁴ *näselte*

however, because in the next second the sound from a cow's horn came inviting everyone for lunch and a midday rest.

Everyone laid down their tools and closed up the aqueduct that brought the water from the dam to the place where the gold was washed, carefully weighed the gold they had mined, placed it in small leather pouches, and one after the other climbed up to the bank of the basin.

The camp was a short distance below and consisted of tents, huts made from boards, and caves that had been dug with very little effort into the river bank in whatever manner three or four comrades found easiest and most appropriate; the moderate structures only served as shelter for the night or during inclement weather anyway.

The leaders of the company had not even reached the camp yet, when everyone's attention was drawn to a small canyon that ended close by and was almost impenetrable because it was overgrown with Manzanita bushes and covered in fallen rocks.

They could hear the voice of a man from there who through alternating praise and curses was urging on his horse to keep going and to exert all its strength.

The prospectors stopped and speculated about what any reasonable human being might be doing in that treacherous place; as long as they had been living in their camp, only two men had ever ventured there, and they had returned with the news that in that ravine it was too difficult to locate the precious metal.

The men didn't have to wait for too long because after a few minutes a man's face under a grey felt hat appeared above a rock, and then the head of a heavily breathing horse came within sight.

"Sacré mille tonnerre!" the stranger complained apparently to himself. "This wilderness is not made for Christians. Ho, ho!" he urged on his horse, which had at this point stopped from exhaustion; but following the exclamation, it began to move again.

Man and horse now came around the boulder and the prospectors recognized a Canadian trapper whose horse was tied to a heavy object with his lasso and was hardly able to move the burden anymore.

"Sapristi, my old horse, only a hundred feet more and we will be on a better trail. St. Napoleon, I will let myself be scalped if this is Christian Country. Ho, ho! —"

The old hunter had come so far when he suddenly saw the onlookers. He stood still and put his rifle on the ground next to him, and leaning with one fist and the other elbow on the muzzle, he examined the group.

The prospectors were stunned and didn't know how to react to the stranger's peculiar behavior. The hunter on the other hand seemed in good spirits and apparently felt right at home. Without changing his position the least bit, he called: "Good day, gentlemen!" and then he continued:

"You must have some time on your hands... looking at me like that. Sapristi! You better get busy and come and help my horse pull that piece of meat!"

"You have fresh meat, old fellow?" a rather pert prospector asked, while the rest of them returned the hunter's greeting with gruff friendliness.

"Sacré tonnerre! Yes, fresh meat, much fresher than you have on your own ribs."

"How much per pound?" the same pert voice asked.

"First you should ask if I am selling it!"

"Let us take a look at least," some prospectors remarked and walked toward the hunter.

"By God, what a fine specimen of a trapper," a second said, who had approached and looked at Lefèvre's stocky figure. "He doesn't look like someone who would steal a cow," another said.

"By God, no!" said the sailor. He was impressed by the grey-haired Canadian's determined and dignified face. "By God, no! Dressed up like ninety-sixer and I will be keelhauled if I'm not the first to pull up alongside the old vessel!"²⁵⁵ He pushed past those in front of him and jumped with unexpected agility across the next couple of boulders and bushes to Lefèvre.

"You are just a lubber²⁵⁶ and you don't know what real saltwater even looks like," he called over to the hunter with rough good-nature, "but the nine-tailed cat shall bite me if I leave my course before having exchanged signals with you!"

²⁵⁵ *Aufgetakelt wie ein Sechsendneunziger, und kielholen will ich mich lassen, wenn ich nicht der Erste bin der sich seitlängs des alten Fahrzeugs legt!*

²⁵⁶ *Landratte*

Lefèvre had stood there, but when the openhearted sailor was speaking, a smile appeared on his weathered features, and letting his own hand fall into the sailor's calloused palm with a loud slap, he exclaimed:

"Tonnerre, you are a brave fellow, and if someone receives a nice piece of bear meat from Lefèvre, it will be you!"

A number of the prospectors had meanwhile stepped forward, and since trappers always find a good welcome wherever they come in contact with strangers, here, too, a dozen invitations were issued to partake of the midday meal.

"You may safely issue an invitation, by holy General Washington," he called to the wild fellows, "since you can see that neither my horse nor I can move from this spot!"

Everyone's attention was now focused on the object behind his horse, and which nobody had regarded until now.

It was one those gigantic California mountain bears which often show themselves to be a big nuisance in so many mining districts, bears even experienced hunters like to avoid unless they have one or two companions by their side. This fellow likely weighed a thousand pounds, and the fresh blood that was still dripping from his eye socket and a large wound by its mouth proved that he had only been killed a short while ago.

"Did you shoot him by yourself?" a prospector finally asked after everyone had taken a good look at the animal and convinced himself of the meat's quality.

"Do you think someone has to hold my gun when I aim and fire?" he asked back, laughing.

"I just mean that these bears are dangerous sometimes."

"Yes, dangerous for horses and mules, and this one here really tore my best friend's mount to pieces last night, and that's why I figured I want to take revenge for the appropriation of other people's property. That's why I left early," continued the old hunter, and he became quite energized from the description of his hunt. "I tracked him for three full hours, and on trails that are too bad for a heathen, let alone a Christian. *Sacré tonnerre!* I finally encountered him at the end of this canyon.

"As carefully as I tracked him, he noticed me before I saw him, and while I kept my eyes on the ground and stepped around a boulder, my horse, which I was leading by the reins, suddenly tore away from me and ran off. I looked up and saw the bear, in fact not twelve steps away from me. He stood upright, supporting himself with his front paw on the cliff face; his head cocked sideways, he looked at me with an expression as if he wanted to ask me what gave him the honor of my visit. Have you ever seen such a posture in a bear?" Lefèvre now asked the surrounding men.

"Well, boys, a bear like this looks just like a human being, and not a foolish one. When I cocked the hammer of my rifle, he tilted his head to the other side and appeared to want to ask me: 'What the hell are you doing?' But when I lifted the rifle and took aim, he dropped his paw, sat down just like a human would, and in his eyes he had a look that seemed to say: 'I am now going to make myself comfortable and

wait and see what happens.' Yes, intelligent eyes, Sapristi! Too bad that I had to shoot one out of his head."

Lefèvre had advanced this far into his narrative, when the keeper of the cabin stepped forward and offered him two hundred dollars for the bear.

But before Lefèvre, who thought the offer humorous, had time to agree, twenty voices that advised him against it could be heard.

"Look here, old mountain frigate," the sailor, who was close to him, began. "Don't let him set the price. He wants to buy it for two hundred in order to sell it pound for pound back to us, which will bring him four times as much. Goddamn! He is a decent fellow, has good liquor, but barter like a Chinese. I make another suggestion. Let's bring the bear²⁵⁷ over to the dock together, weigh it, and then we will pay per head. Each one of us will pay a dollar per pound. Our gain is that the pirate over there won't charge us a dollar and a half per pound, and yours is that you no longer have to drag it along."

"Agreed, agreed!" everyone cheered. They hadn't had fresh meat in so many days that the sight of the fat bear had caused them to feel ecstasy.

"Wait!" Lefèvre now exclaimed. "I agree, but there is one condition!"

"What is it, old Gentleman?" it echoed back.

"I will sell you the bear in its entirety, but only after I have cut off twenty five pounds of meat for my own use first."

"More than fair, more than fair!" the prospectors called.

²⁵⁷ *die Prise*

"Everyone to the winches! Ahoy!" the sailor called, untying the lariat from the saddle and hitching himself to the bear. Everyone followed his example and manned the leather line in double rows. The sailor shouted an "Ahoy" and off they went. The bear tumbled and rolled as if it were still alive.

Lefèvre regarded them for a while still and then shook his head and laughed. "Reminds of the Eagle Company in St. Louis," he murmured to himself. Then he took his horse by the reins and slowly followed the trail marked by blood and hair.

In the prospectors' camp he found the bear already dressed, and some men were busy weighing the meat on a scale, while others calculated the price, took the gold from the various members of the group, and bound it in leather pouches. When they handed the old hunter the full amount, and he suddenly had six or seven hundred dollars in his hand, he laughed cheerfully. He was overjoyed to have discovered such a lucrative business because there were many more Grizzlies trotting around in the mountains yet.

The prospectors' lunch was postponed by half an hour on this day because on all the fires roasted fresh, juicy slices of meat next to the salted pork; and when Lefèvre tied his portion of the meat to the cante, fastened the money to his body, and rode downstream along the river, it echoed after him for a while still: "Don't let that be the last bear you bring us!"

35. The Narrow Pass

The roads in California, at least the ones offering a direct connection between the busy goldmines and the settlements, offer at almost all times of day the most

colorful pictures of the mixed populations there, their activities and lifestyles, in short, everything that characterizes them. If one now ascends to one of the mountain passes where several roads from the settlements and towns meet only in order to separate again on the other side by forking into treacherous trails, then one could linger there and, without becoming fatigued, watch the busy life below where so many different things happen, so much new and strange occurs, and so many striking contrasts are at one moment jumbled together, at the next press and shove past each other.²⁵⁸

A heavily loaded wagon, drawn by six or eight draft animals, noisily rolls along the pass. The trail, sloping steeply downward, requires the greatest caution, and several men jump from the wagon, tie long ropes to the ladders and the wheels that carry the canvas top, and climb up the slope with the loose end in hand, ready to hold in balance the teetering wagon that is threatening to plunge into the abyss. After these precautions, the carter then begins to whip the stubborn animals mercilessly. The wagon rolls a few steps further. Then suddenly the first two animals become entangled in their harness and start kicking in a truly dangerous manner. The teetering wagon comes to a halt; the men must not let go of the ropes; the pass is closed.

The carter curses, his hard blows hit the frightened animals, the men close to the precipice grumble, and the travelers accumulating by the pass's entry and exit point are noisy, but despite all curses and imprecations nobody seems to want to lend a hand to help in the confusion and reopen the passage.

²⁵⁸ *grelle Contraste bald durcheinander wirbeln bald sich langsam an einander vorbeidrängen*

The strength of men on the ropes is waning quickly; they let them go with a "Goddamn to hell," the wagon leans more and more, the carter jumps aside, and with a loud "Hurrah" that echoes through the pass from both sides, wagon, horses, crates, barrels, kitchen gadgets, and a hundred other items tumble into the deep bed of a dry mountain torrent.

A Chinese man, the long pole with his belongings across his shoulders, stands for quite a while in the spot where the first animals disappeared. He patiently waits for the reopening of the pass. Then, one of the men who had been busy on the slope jumps up; the derisive laughter about the time-consuming but otherwise not really dangerous accident had made him irritable, and with the words: "There is more room down there, you son of a yellow witch!" he sends the harmless Chinese man after the horses.

More derisive laughter can be heard. The passage is clear, and the walkers are approaching from both sides. A proud and indifferent man opens the procession: he hangs on the back of an emaciated mule. His figure is hidden by the objects fastened to the saddle, which reach above his shoulders. A rifle, a pick, a shovel is visible; the tin gold-washing pan and the cooking pots are rattling; dangling heavily are a sack of flour, a pouch with coffee, and a demijohn of whiskey; the fatty, smoked pork shoulder and some large tablets of chewing tobacco glisten, and among all the items threadbare pieces of clothing are visible, which have received little attention aside from the watertight boots. His equipment gives away that he is on his way to the gold mines. A number of men on foot follow him, and their destinations are the gold-rich

waters of the mountain streams. They carry on their backs the same gear with which the rider has burdened his mule.

Some wild-looking fellows approach from the other side. They are returning from the mines; they have thrown pick and shovel away and are supporting themselves on simple walking sticks. They look ill, and their entire belongings seem to consist of just a dirty bundle. Upon taking a closer look however, it is easy to guess from the suspicious glances they throw at passersby and the awkwardness with which they walk, that they have accumulated not insignificant fortunes and have concealed them under the rags on their bodies.

Half a dozen Chinese follow. The children of the Empire of Heaven have managed to still win a few hundred dollars from the earth that the Caucasian race has exploited. They are on their way back to their home, where they will live as wealthy people.

They are met by a group of Digger Indians. Color and dirt covers their brown limbs, the shaggy hair flutters wildly around their haggard shoulders; the men carry bows and quivers, while small children ride on their mothers' shoulders or hang in reed baskets on their backs; but in everyone's eyes there is a noble sense of disgust when they look at the Chinese, who in turn make their revulsion clear by avoiding the members of this degenerate race. But the European looks at both of them as creatures providence has created as obstacles for him, and as something to be kicked aside. —

Such a pass as the one described above can be found on the way from Sacramento to the Middle Fork, approximately thirty miles into the mountains from

the "Miners Rest Hotel," and the scenes like the ones described occur there almost every day [daily?] when the pass is open. When night falls though onto the mountains and valleys, and the shadows of the overhanging rocks and the somber firs increase the darkness in the canyon, silence reigns because those who couldn't cross the pass during the day camp by the trailhead in order to master the steep, dangerous way the next morning with renewed strength. —

The sun had set behind the coastal mountains. Long autumn fog banks hung over the Sacramento Valley, while the slopes appeared to be covered in a blue mist, and reddish, shimmering clouds shrouded the Sierra Nevada peaks that aspired toward heaven. It was quiet on the pass. Only from afar could the muted noise be heard of the last travelers who had been fortunate enough to cross the dreaded spot before nightfall. The monotone song of some Indian families echoed; they dwelt in the cliffs of the dark canyons like wolves, where, again like wolves, they led a miserable existence.

An uncanny echo could be heard; the cold west wind blew through the pass in squalls and whistled like the sound of thousands of Aeolian harps between the long needles of the spruces, whose tops slowly swayed and whose gnarled trunks sighed and creaked loudly, as if they were indignant over the forced movement.

The moon fought for dominance with some scattered clouds but finally broke through in its full splendor and poured its gentle light over the expansive landscape that was opening to the West and was partially covered in rocky or forested hills. Its rays even trembled in the canyon, where they had found their way painstakingly

between branches and needles. The branches swung back and forth, and the moonlight danced to the same rhythm on the uneven floor. Here it lit up the torn up grass, or the wrecks of wagons, there it fell on the dusty trail, or the bleached bones and hollow-eyed skulls of dead animals; from afar though, like ghosts calling, the monotonous song of the Indians echoed.²⁵⁹

A figure slipped into the pass without making a sound; it hurried to the other side as if it were floating, and as if it were looking for something, it bent over the skulls, the wagon, and then away to begin its investigation somewhere else. Finally, it stepped into the middle of the road where the moonlight formed a moving circle and shone its light on it.

It was a large, grey wolf who probably had found many fat morsels there before. His search that night, however, was obviously in vain because he turned its large, shiny green eyes indignantly from one to the other side, lifted its head to mournfully to the moon, and then howled a deep, lasting howl.

The echo was still playing with the terrible notes when another shadow appeared,²⁶⁰ and then four more wolves stepped into the moonlight to the first one's side.

The hair on their backs stood up and they growled deeply, then the sound of snarling teeth followed. More wolves ran to the spot and were greeted by growling and snorting, and when the whole pack, which was composed of no less than sixteen animals, was complete, the angry beasts sat down and it was quiet. Only the wind

²⁵⁹ Repetition in original

²⁶⁰ *da huschte es abermals den Pass hin und her*

sang a melancholic song between the sap-rich needles, and the Indians sang just as melancholically in the far away canyon.

Suddenly, a gigantic looking wolf began a piercing howl. After a few seconds two, three others fell in with their higher voices, and when they were almost out of breath, the entire chorus joined with all their might and a concert began that made all the wild game in the vicinity flee; even the lonely bear listened suspiciously.

When the infernal music had reached its climax, it stopped. Nothing could be heard. The wolves stood up, their shaggy tails rose. Quiet growling and whining came from their breasts, and in the next second the wild beasts ran through the opening of the pass as silently as they had come.

Several minutes passed—minutes that were in their complete silence as eerie as the prior howling had been. The Indians must have likewise ended their sad dance because they, too, had fallen silent. In their place a cautious squirrel rustled between the thin leaves and spruce needles.

Finally, the steps of a human who was apparently approaching quickly could be heard from the west side of the pass. After a short while, he reached the straight and walked, without slowing his steps, to where the wolves had been sitting a short time before. He seemed to want to make use of the moonlight because as soon as he found himself in the middle of the lighted area, he halted and directed his look to the black shadows surrounding him.

One could only surmise that the man himself was tall and slender, that long hair fell to his shoulders, that a fashionable hat covered his head, and fashionable

clothes his person. In noticeable contrast to his appearance he carried a large bow and a quiver full of arrows, which he carried in his left hand. His belt flashed in the moonlight while he moved and revealed that aside from the imperfect offensive weapon of the indigenous people he also carried the more dangerous rifle of civilization.

After several minutes of waiting, the stranger seemed to have come to a decision because he laid bow and arrow aside with one swift move, climbed down a small distance next to the ravine, and there began to toss pieces of the broken wagon onto the trail. After having worked strenuously for quite a while, he climbed back up, paced back and forth a few times and, after choosing a spot in the deepest shade that seemed suitable to him, dragged the pieces of wood piled up on the river bank to the same spot and stacked them the entire width of the trail, which made it impossible to cross the pass from either side without having beforehand moved the obstacles out of the way.

After he completed the task, he fetched his bow, tightened the string, walked a short distance underneath the overhanging rocks, and then sat down in front of the barrier he had erected so that any wagon coming from the Sacramento side would be kept from passing and would have to face in his direction. He kept so close to the rocks that even the keenest eye would not have noticed him, while everything became more visible for him because the lit-up rock wall on the opposite side formed the background for what he saw.

The stranger, who clearly had not come with the best of intentions, sat in his hiding place and listened. He wasn't bothered by the cracking of branches under the roaming wolves' paws; the cold, damp sea breeze that sighed through the canyon didn't faze him, and neither did the creaking trunks of the spruce trees that seemed to warn him. His mind was only on the execution of his plan.

At the same time two men on horseback approached from the Sacramento side. They, too, seemed to have the intention of waylaying someone because when they were still a thousand feet away from the canyon, they turned onto a small meadow next to the trail and let the horses graze on their lead lines, while they cloaked themselves in their Mexican blankets and threw themselves down into the grass.

However, they were definitely not ill-intentioned because had they been so, they would not have chosen such a wide open spot to rest and, moreover, their conversation was so loud that it was obvious that they didn't care whether anyone passing by noticed them or not.

"I believe the Señora has more courage in her pinky finger than her croupiers have in their hearts," one of them began the conversation after he had managed to light a cigarette.

"In any case, they have a respect for her that borders on fear," the other replied and followed his companion's example.

"I am convinced that the Señora would not have requested any sentinels, but would have crossed the pass by herself, relying on her revolver instead to defend her riches."

"Best of all is that she doesn't know anything about the sentinels posted here. Her milk-mustached croupier is a coward; he is afraid that word about the Señora's gambling trip may get out and some desperados might decide to receive her, or more precisely her purse, at the pass."

"He seems to be more afraid for his own riches than for the Señora's because the anxiety he exhibited when he asked us for the favor makes me believe that a not insignificant part of the gold is his."

"I wonder why they don't camp and cross the pass in the morning when the sun rises?"

"On the one hand, the crowds on the narrow trail may be too much for them, but on the other hand they may not trust the folks in whose vicinity they might be forced to camp. The Señora's safety depends on the fact that nobody knows where she intends to spend the night."

"She must have good reason to fear being robbed since she accumulated her fortune by robbing others. Yes, yes, her card sharpers have her cheating has cost many men their money."

"True, yes, in other countries someone would have put a stop to it by now, but not here, for she is only traveling to the gold claims now in order to pilfer the

heedless prospectors. By the way, I would love to cause some trouble for the three of them."

"How so?"

"Well, I believe it might cause quite a stir if I rode up to the wagon, paid the Señora my compliments, and told her that we were hired to follow her at a distance of five hundred feet on our horses, but that we are in fact so concerned about her safety that we prefer to ride next to her. I am sure her croupiers' indiscretion would drive her up the wall."

"Caramba! That wouldn't be a bad prank," the other laughed, "but our agreement with the milk moustache is: follow them through the pass without anyone noticing, stay behind them for a short while longer, and then we receive twenty dollars each. If we don't want to lose a pretty penny, we must keep our word. The two croupiers may be skilled in their trade, but they aren't clever enough for California. Just as easily as the young man trusted us, he could have fallen into the hands of scoundrels who would have taken pleasure in waylaying them. The tall Irish man who doesn't talk much seems to be even more ignorant than his wispy companion; but listen—a wagon is approaching."

Indeed, the wheels of a light vehicle could be heard, and the sharp sounding tone with which the iron axles hit against the wheels indicated that it was one of those luxurious but strong carriages that are built for splendor, but also for driving across the uneven, cumbersome roads in California.

The snapping of a whip sounded, and then two deft, strong horses pulling a four-seater trotted from under the shade of the trees into the clearing. They were rapidly approaching the two men in the grass, who could see from afar that only three seats in the wagon were occupied by human figures while luggage was piled onto the fourth.

Once in sight of the two strange figures, the horses obeyed the reins and fell into a slower pace. The two horsemen stood up and saw how the Señora, who was holding the reins herself, laid the whip aside and tucked her hand under her cloak. In the same instant, the polite voice of the young croupier could be heard.

"A beautiful night, gentlemen," he called to them, "but too cold to enjoy it on the damp ground!"

"Indeed, a bit chilly," one horseman replied, "but we plan on only remaining here another five minutes!"

"Good night and a safe journey!"

"A safe journey!"

The horses fell back into a trot and disappeared behind a hill, but the two men hurried to their animals to prepare themselves.

After the wagon had passed the two horsemen in the night, the Señora had a short conversation with the twins.

"I would like to know," began the woman, who only had the moniker of a Spaniard or Mexican but was otherwise recognizable as a full-blooded French

woman, "I would like to know what made the men rest right here by the trail. I hope you kept quiet."

"How can you doubt that for even a second, divine Señora," replied Toby.

"You must know by now that your wish is our command."

"Like the devil I trust you; you have often done foolish things that indicated a lack of intelligence and life experience, so that I don't trust you in this instance either. But Carajo! Let them come! She continued, then pulled two revolvers from her pocket and placed them in her lap.

"There is no danger as long as I am by your side," grumbled Finney, who had likewise pulled out a revolver and playfully cocked the hammer.

"You are tall enough, that's for sure, but just as clumsy; stop playing with the gun like a child because as clever as you are at the gambling table, I doubt that you are able to handle this game."

They had reached the entrance of the pass, where the small, uneven trail began to climb steeply uphill.

"I suppose we should make it easier on the horses," the Señora said. She halted. "Move to the right side of the wagon so that you can hold the spokes if it threatens to tip over. The worst part is toward the peak of the narrow pass, so watch out! Caramba! How dark it is in this murderous canyon!"

The two croupiers understood the hint of their mistress and dismounted; the mannish woman²⁶¹ loudly cracked the whip, and the horses moved again.

²⁶¹ *das Mannweib*

They moved uphill slowly; nobody spoke a word. The wagon rattled loudly when the wheels slipped on some rocks or rolled across others with a sudden jolt; the horses' hooves rattled, too, and, just like the iron wheels, once in a while caused sparks to fly.

Suddenly, the horses halted. The Señora cursed and used her whip; the animals reared up and threatened to topple the wagon into the ravine, but didn't move forward.

"Mille Caramba!" the woman screamed. "Where are you clumsy scoundrels! Go, see what is in the way!"

"We can't let go of the wheels if you don't want to plunge into the ravine with the wagon!" the twins answered.

In the same moment a whirring sound came from the rock overhang, and the horse on the right reared up high, its front hooves striking first the lead lines and then the other horse's neck.

The Señora had heard the peculiar sound, but she didn't suspect that it came from a bow, and surmised even less that the horse had been hit by an arrow, which had penetrated deeply into its flank.

"Help me down! Help me down!" she screamed, while she tried in vain to calm the horses.

"Soon, soon!" the answer came. Instead of the twins, a dark figure jumped from the shadow of the rock and approached the front wheel of the wagon.

"Take the reins!" the Señora screamed to the figure she mistook for one of her croupiers.

The figure, however, extended its left fist toward her, but without taking the reins; then it pulled the right to its ear, the whirring sound came once more, and a long arrow pierced the unfortunate Señora's throat with a force enough to make the feathers on the shaft penetrate her neck half an inch deep, and the sharp iron tip vibrated below the back of her head, next to her spine, visible almost in its entirety.

The Señora cried a terrible, piercing cry, but fell quiet when she noticed that the wagon tilted to its side. She had already let go of the horses' reins when she was injured, but now she took hold of one of the revolvers that had fallen into the wagon and, even though she was dying, shot into the direction where she thought the twins to be. "Traitor!" she screamed with a dying voice, when she was hit in the stomach by a second arrow and in the chest by a third. In the next moment, the wagon fell down the embankment with her.

But only the crates with the gold, a bag of provisions, and the gasping Señora arrived in the dry creek bed because the struggling horses held the wagon back.

All this had occurred in less than a minute, and in the blink of an eye the murderer was by the dying woman's side and slit her throat with lightning speed with the blade of his sharp knife.

When he finally stood up after his bloody work, the twins were by his side. Finney fired shot after shot from his revolver into the air, while Toby picked up the bag filled with provisions and handed it to the murderer.

"Escape now if your life and ours is worth anything to you!" he said with a subdued voice. "Someone is coming! Horsemen! Escape! Everything may yet turn out well!"

The murderer listened for a second, but as soon as he heard the sound of approaching hooves, he became fearful of the consequences because he knew that he would fall into the hands of unsympathetic judges. With one quick move he swung over his shoulder what he supposed to be gold and hurried away with the words: "We will meet at the appointed spot!"

He wasn't more than fifteen steps away from the twins when they opened fire on him with the last bullets in their revolver. They yelled: "Help! Murderer!" and then the bullets whistled past him at close range.

"That's how it is!" the murderer screamed with rage. "Just wait, you treacherous scoundrels!" and turning around on the spot where he was standing, he pulled out a revolver from his belt and shot at the twins three times in a row. Only one of the bullets hit—it tore off half of Finney's ear.

He might have been able to hit at least one of his duplicitous friends if the horsemen had not appeared at this point and tried to gain an understanding of the situation by asking questions.

"Catch him!" yelled Finney mad with rage over his injury.

"Catch him!" Toby Ring also called. But the horsemen had to stop in front of the barrier where the two horses were still struggling, and they didn't know where to turn to or how to surmount the obstacle.

This, of course, gave the murderer a significant lead, because by the time the twins and the two horsemen had finally with concerted efforts managed to at least partially remove the piled wood, the escapee had already reached the end of the canyon where he could take any trail that pleased him to disappear entirely into the wilderness.

Following the twins' request, the horsemen still chased him for a while, but returned empty-handed after half an hour to the spot where they found Toby Ring busy trying to revive his motionless friend Finney.

The twins had made good use of the time while the two horsemen were away; as soon as the sound of hooves had faded, they laughed and wished each other luck with the success of their endeavor, and then quickly began to execute their well thought out plan. Toby jumped up the embankment to the wagon teetering half way up and pulled a shovel from it, while Finney carefully carried the heavy crates with the gold to a small spot in the riverbed that he deemed appropriate.

After having made the above preparations, they began to dig in the earth with great fervor, and soon a half round hole had developed through their efforts. When it was approximately three feet deep, they lowered the Señora's treasures carefully into the pit, filled the remaining space carefully with soil, compacted the latter over everything, and then threw the pieces of the broken wagon the murderer had piled up on the trail on top of the freshly excavated ground.

"Let them come now," Toby said pleased. "They would never suspect where the gold is, even if their eyes were as keen as Miss Sally's when it comes to fleecing a stranger."

"We are lucky when it comes to women," Finney replied happily. "Just consider, first Miss Sally, and now the Señora. I believe the Señora is an even better bargain than our St. Louis affair."

"Of course it is, and hopefully this money won't leave our pockets as quickly as the last amount did. Too bad we didn't manage to shoot the murderer right away. He will be surprised to find a week of food provisions in the bag instead of the gold."

"Which in fact might be more beneficial to him than gold. Once the murder of the Señora has become public knowledge, and once we describe the fellow and let everyone know that he lived in the "Miners' Rest Hotel" with the planter, he will be chased around the wilderness for a while to come, and there won't always be provisions ready for him."

"Because he provided us such a valuable service, I wouldn't begrudge him a clean escape; if they find him, he will make the acquaintance of Mr. Lynch."

"I, too, wish him the best; and if only for the reason that we would be forced to testify against him, which will appear as something supernatural to the poor fellow. By the way, he shoots like the devil himself; he missed my head by a hair. I would have good reason to be angry, but I forgive him because he was so easily deceived."

"What good fortune that we hired the two Californios. Their testimony alone should suffice to prove our innocence."

Finney had meanwhile pulled a small whiskey flask from his breast pocket and, after having taken a generous swig, handed it to his companion. Then he took it back again, swallowed, and poured the rest on his torn ear.

"Holy St. Patrick, that hurts!" he exclaimed while he was holding a whiskey-soaked handkerchief to his ear.

"No wonder!" replied Toby, who was secretly grateful to not have been harmed. "But it would be good if we deceived our witnesses a bit more. How about it Finney, why don't you pretend that you are bleeding to death?"

"Not bad, they will easily assume that you spent the time they were away with attempts to revive me."

"Quickly then, the hoof beats sound like they are no more than a hundred feet away."

In the next second, Finney was lying on his back and Toby was tending to him.

"Come closer," the latter called to the horsemen when they stopped on the trail above and looked for the twins. "Come down here and assist me in carrying this gentleman up. The loss of blood has made him fall unconscious."

"Is he wounded?" the two horsemen asked simultaneously while dismounting and tying the lassos, which had been fastened around their horses' necks, together and then throwing them onto the ground.

"I fear, yes, a life-threatening injury!" the answer came. "Apparently the bullet went right through his head, and since you left to pursue the murder he has been lying here lifeless."

The two men climbed down onto the bank, and only with great effort did the three men manage to move the Irishman's heavy body up onto the trail.

After they had laid him down gently, the two Californios began to lend their assistance, less for the promised wages, and more out of pure human kindness. They piled up dry wood and in no time a fire was burning, which spread its pleasant warmth and lit up the canyon in its close proximity.

They placed the still lifeless Finney, whose blood-smeared face had a hideous expression, next to fire, and indeed, the men seemed to have had a significant effect on his condition because after he had stretched a few times, he, as if waking from a long, long sleep, opened his eyes and asked with indifference the question his companion had impressed upon him: "Where am I?"

After these initial words, he recovered very quickly and was helped along by a bottle of *Aguardiente*.²⁶² He was even willing to help carry up the battered body of the *Señora*.

Now, as to what the four men discussed by the light of the fire, well, it only pertained to the murder and the possible capture of the confirmed criminal. They made suggestions and then discarded them, they considered the murderer's tracks and

²⁶² *Agua=diente* [sic]

the shape and color of the arrows, and an hour had passed before they were convinced that the murderer had carried away the gold for at least part of his way.

The narrow pass, in which the scenes had changed over the last twenty-four hours like they do in a kaleidoscope, was now a sight that was no less strange than the all previous ones, but would leave the impartial onlooker much more deeply impressed.

There were not only the dandyish and dirty figures of the twins and the two Californios, who looked polished according to Mexican custom and Mexican vanity, whose physiognomies offered a stark contrast to the dead body lying by the side of the trail, but also the perpetually moving, always changing illumination from the fire of the broken remains of the wagon that stood in such stark contrast to the black darkness of the overhanging rocks and the moonlight of the nearby hills.

The harsh west wind still blew through the canyon in gusts and pushed the flames down so that they almost swept the ground; the trunks of the fir trees creaked and their crowns swayed, but the song that came from between their green needles was so melancholic and sad as if the trees were feeling pain over what they had witnessed silently.

The red light of the flames on the other hand danced cheerfully down the pass and took turns illuminating hollow-eyed skulls and the tree tops, the saddled horses and the protruding cliffs; and when it glided over the body of the Señora or the motionless body of the shot horse, it seemed to bring them to life for a moment by making them twitch. The rays of the light shot to both sides of the hollow pass with

lighting speed, but they returned just as quickly, and then they clung, as if they were afraid and looking for safety, to the figures of the men, who then glowed like red-hot iron, while their mammoth shadows convulsed on the rock walls, becoming larger, then smaller, or even jumped from side to side.

At midnight, the four men left the canyon together. They had managed to bring the wagon back up and had hitched one of the saddle horses in place of the dead draft animal. The twins were on the front seat, the Señora's dead body in the back. The Californio who had given his horse sat behind his companion on the latter's horse. Slowly and quietly they traversed the wilderness in this order. Their next destination was the claims by the upper Middle Fork.

The sound of the horses' hoofs and the rattling of the wagon died away, and slowly the pass gained new life once more. But it was only the wolves that had come to fight rapaciously over the remains of the dead horse.

36. Bigler Lake

There was cause for alarm in the claims by the upper Middle Fork.

Instead of the expected Señora, the twins had arrived with her dead body, and since the two had, as they claimed, placed everything they owned with the fortune of the murdered woman, which was taken by the brazen robbers, the hope of establishing a bank had to be abandoned, to the prospectors' great disappointment.

The twins were thus initially not received in the most welcoming manner because it seemed incomprehensible that they hadn't been able to fight off a single

robber. However, the fact that Finney had been hit by a bullet that had gone straight through his head, which in turn made him fall unconscious, and the circumstances that had made the horses frenzied, which in turn had prevented his companion from coming to the Señora's aid, well, the accumulation of so many unfortunate circumstances justified this failure. The testimony of two rancheros, who had arrived to witness the then only semi-unconscious Finney in a struggle over life and death with the murderer, had helped significantly to redeem the experienced croupiers in everyone's esteem. Thereafter they couldn't complain about a lack of hospitality because now the prospectors considered them entirely destitute.

The accounts of the twins and the rancheros, by the way, were entirely congruent, so that everyone had reason to believe that the murderer might be captured soon enough, and that if not the whole amount, at least a part of the gold would be recovered.

Hence a group of twenty and then some men had departed on their way to the pass in the early morning hours to track the escapee themselves, and to inquire at the Miners' Rest Hotel, since, according to the twins, the half-Indian had stayed just the day before. It was unanimously assumed, by the way, that this stranger had committed the crime, and that he was driven by feelings of revenge because he had lost so much money to the Señora and needed to make money the easy way. The barely healed wound on the Señora's chin, which after all had been inflicted by the same *Halfbreed*, confirmed the likelihood of the assumption.

In any case, the prospectors were determined to try their best to apprehend the hardened criminal and to punish him to make it clear that a repeat of such an attack seemed ill-advised in their district.

Even a number of friendly Indians were recruited to track the escapee, and since they knew all the hiding places in the mountains and often served whites as guides, well, everyone had no reason to doubt that the outcome of the endeavor would be successful.

And as for the Señora, she was buried properly according to her rank and status; that is, they tossed her into a depleted claim and pushed some dirt over her. Some compassionate souls moved a large boulder on her grave, and to prevent the rock being removed should someone need it, the cheerful student took up his pick and chiseled the Ace of Spades, the Ace of Hearts, the Ace of Diamonds, and the Ace of Clubs on each of the sides of the soft sand stone respectively, which made it a fitting tombstone on the resting place of a gambling woman.

After everything had been set in motion and properly ordered,²⁶³ the remaining prospectors went back to work in order to at a minimum, as they said, recover their expenses.

Finney and Toby were accommodated in the log cabin. A licensed doctor who was among the prospectors declared that Finney's injury was entirely superficial and wouldn't keep him from traveling or working, but everyone insisted that the two men stay and identify the treacherous criminal they were about to capture and bring back.

²⁶³ *eingeleitet und geordnet*

The rancheros on the other hand had joined the party that had been sent out to capture the murderer, and they intended to return to the claims with the latter and make themselves available as witnesses for the short legal proceedings.

The day went by; the prospectors returned in small groups of three or four men after they recognized that what they were attempting was not possible, and when night fell, only two prospectors and the two rancheros, who had set out with an Indian guide, had not returned yet; that is aside from two prospectors who had gone straight to the Miners' Rest Hotel. —

On the mountain range's eastern side, on whose western slopes numerous springs and snow-melt creeks join to form the Middle Fork of the American River and flow to Sacramento, there lies hidden, and almost guarded by the mountains a wonderful, charming lake. Its name is Bigler Lake,²⁶⁴ after its discoverer. The man who gave it its name, and who is very likely still alive, can truly be proud to have such a picturesque namesake in the mountains.

One can reach Bigler Lake only via very difficult and treacherous trails, and unless gold is discovered in the narrow valley surrounding it, it is unlikely that a large population will enter this region, which aside from natural beauty has nothing to offer that might entice humans who look for material gains.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Lake Tahoe. John Bigler became California's Governor in 1851; he made Sacramento the state capital. However, there seems to be a historical inaccuracy in the narrative. According to the timeline, it is only autumn of 1852 at this point. Bigler Lake was still referred to as "Lake Bonpland," "Mountain Lake," or "Fremont's Lake." The name Bigler Lake appeared somewhat informally on maps for the first time in 1853, and was officially confirmed in 1854.

²⁶⁵ Möllhausen and his party made this assumption about the Grand Canyon as well.

What use can the gleaming surface of a lake be to the merchant if he can't use it for shipping; what use can the picturesque environment be to the farmer if he can't plow it because the rock will bend the plowshare, and what use are the proud peaks to the prospector if he can't reach the treasures under the rock. And people who simply enjoy admiring nature's creation, who love nature in itself, unconcerned about the gains it may offer, they only very, very rarely find their way to this remote and formidably beautiful wilderness.

However, the territory surrounding Bigler Lake is not entirely without life. When deep shadows still rest on the quiet surface of the water in the morning and the first rays of the still invisible sun turn the craggy peaks golden, Bighorn sheep and Blacktail deer climb out of the rugged canyons in long rows to drink undisturbed. When the atmosphere, which is protected against wind from all sides, quivers and trembles in the midday sun, bears of all shapes and sizes appear to refresh themselves in the cool waters. They look so peaceful and harmless that one might get the idea that it was possible to mingle among them without danger. When night falls, the waterfowl arrive; they come in long, wedge-shaped formations or flocks, the splendid white pelicans and the long-necked swans, the hoarsely screaming geese and the cheerfully quacking ducks, who all look happy in the dark waters as if hunters and predators didn't exist, as if they didn't notice the small raccoon that sits in a lonely spot and hungrily regards them from a distance.

The poor raccoon, he is about to eat his simple meal of sweet roots; but simple as the meal may be, it does not forget to wash it; yes, he rubs the root between his

small front paws until it shines as golden as ducats, and even then he only bites of a small piece, and then dips it in the water once more to polish it.

After he has eaten the root, the raccoon remains in its comfortable position; he has a pebble in his hands, and as if in deep thought, the charming animal rubs the stone over and over. Once in a while, he drops the stone, but then he feels the ground underwater until he finds it, and once more he rubs and washes it. He rarely looks at the product of his labor, which is unimportant; his clear eyes look here and there, and then remain on a large heron, which is standing in the water nearby with its neck bent; it is paying no attention to its surroundings. This is animal life around Bigler Lake.

But humans live there, too; wretched, degenerate beings, who are only slightly more adept than the wild animals surrounding them. They desire no more than animals, and even the bear builds its den with more care than these poor, deprived beings.

On the southern end of the lake, the shallow water caresses the base of a steeply inclined rock wall for a short distance. The rock wall has burst in several places from top to bottom, and one of the holes is right above the water level, so that it resembles a gate through which the interior of the cave can be reached. This crevice, or cave, reaches no more than sixteen feet into the mountain's interior, and since half of its area is still covered with lake water, it offers enough room so that perhaps ten human beings can crowd in there without squeezing themselves too tightly together. Since the beginning of time, this cave has been the favorite summer

camp for a number of indigenous families, and is probably still used today for the same purpose; unless, that is, some prospectors have discovered gold and have chased the Indians away to make use of it themselves.

On the night on which the prospectors had set out to track the murderer, a bright fire was burning in the cave. A tripod made from three poles stood over it, and from its tip hung a large tin kettle, which looked like those the prospectors typically use to prepare their meals. The flames cheerfully licked the wide bottom of the kettle, something bubbled and boiled inside it, the delicious aroma of meat mingled with the biting smoke of the pine branches, and together they hurriedly fled the cave and came to rest on the lake's quiet surface like banks of fog.

The figure of a half-naked, emaciated woman, the archetype of an ugly, old Indian squaw, stood in front of the kettle and stirred mechanically with a pitched fork, while three ragged-looking children between the ages of eight and twelve cowered close to her on the ground and gnawed on some bones with pitiful expressions on their faces. When the old woman took the ladle from the kettle and stoked the fire with it, the flames rose up and illuminated the dark room and three figures that were sitting in the background on small bundles of twigs and carrying on a lively conversation through gestures.

Whoever had seen Louis, the Potawatomi *Halfbreed*, earlier in the "Miners' Rest Hotel" would probably not have been able to recognize him now. He had undressed completely and painted his limbs from top to bottom with a mixture of wood ashes and water, and his face with a paste made from charcoal and grease. His

hair, too, had been rubbed with a mixture of wet ash, and consequentially stood so stiffly tousled on his head that he could easily have been mistaken for a full-blooded California Digger Indian, if his regular features and strong built hadn't been in such noticeable incongruence to those of his companions squatting next to him. He had draped a torn-off piece from a Mexican blanket around his shoulders, but other than that he wore only the customary loincloth and the boots that he owned because of Newfort's kindness and money.

His companions, a young man and an old man— two haggard, ugly-looking creatures with crooked limbs and thick, swollen joints—, wore the same attire as the Potawatomi, with the exception that no fresh ash was smeared on their limbs; instead they wore a leather-like coat, which over the course of time had grown to a significant thickness from the ever-new layers of grease, smoke, and dust.

Aside from his bow and arrow, which everyone carried, Louis also had a revolver and a bowie knife in the leather strap around his waist—implements that seemed to guarantee that the Indians were willing listeners. Each time Louis was of a different opinion, which he made clear with unambiguous gestures, their eyes sparkled with animal-like wildness as they looked at the gleaming weapons.

The topic was the articles of clothing Louis wanted to submerge in the lake, but which the Indians felt themselves entitled to keep because they had provided the refugee with the shelter of their cave.

Several times the old Indian reached for the travel bag that held Louis's suit along with a heavy rock, and just as many times he rolled away toward the fire, hit by

the Potawatomi's foot. This, however, didn't seem to disturb the amicable arrangement because the droopy-eyed old man rose each time again to take his seat indifferently by Louis's side.

"How is it, old witch!" Louis asked after some time. "Will I have something to eat today or not?"

The old Indian woman, who probably guessed that Louis had addressed her, turned her half-closed eyes toward the Potawatomi with an idiotic expression and pulled her wrinkled face into an ugly grin.

The oldest of the children squatting by the fire used this opportune moment for thievery. Quickly he pulled a burning stick out of the fire and just as quickly plunged it into the kettle, probably with the intention of stealing one of the pieces of meat. The hissing of the fire being extinguished drew the attention of the woman back to the kettle, and as soon as she took in the boy's unambiguous posture, she swung the forked staff, which she had been using as a tool to stir the pot, over her head and dropped it heavily on the young offender's shaggy head. The boy screamed in pain, but less over the blow itself and more because the boiling liquid dripping from the staff had burnt his body in several places. He jumped up in a rage, dipped the stick into the kettle once more, and then flung it at his mother or grandmother, or whoever she was.

The woman screamed, but the desire for revenge quickly gained the upper hand over the pain. She jumped up with lightning speed and pushed the tripod forcefully, sending all of the contents of the kettle after the boy.

He had seen the attack coming, though, and jumped to safety, but a part of the boiling liquid splashed onto the other children's bare legs, who in turn now started to howl and fell to the floor in pain.

After the old woman had satisfied her desire for revenge in this barbaric way, her screaming turned into cackling admonitions, but even this stopped when a heavy, burning branch from the old Indian's hand struck her on the head and rendered her unconscious. This, however, was not punishment for the mistreatment of the children, but for the spilling of the kettle because the old man immediately set out to retrieve the pieces of meat from the ashes and sand, and he paid no attention to wailing the children, who followed their older companion toward the water.

Louis on the other hand found the entire scene so comical that he entirely forgot how hungry he was and how precarious his situation, and fell on his back laughing with wholehearted, satanic joy.

But the young Indian used this opportunity to steal the bag and flee from the cave with it. He had not yet reached the exit when Louis pulled his revolver and shot; and the Indian would have certainly paid for the theft with his life if the darkness and the flickering light of the burning pieces of wood had not made it impossible to aim properly. That the Indian was a good shot, however, was easily recognizable by the fact that the bullet penetrated the travel bag and became stuck in the rolled up clothes inside. Before Louis could send another bullet after him, the escapee had disappeared behind the rock wall.

A silence followed the loud bang, which echoed eerily in the enclosed space, but then the children began to wail again; the woman, too, showed signs of life because she began to twist on the ground and then tried to stand up. The strings of curses and imprecations the Potawatomi uttered in between the sounds of pain and the derisive laughter of the old Indian over the successful theft of the clothes now sounded twice as terrible.

"Swallow your damned laughter, old man, unless you want me to tear out your tongue!" called Louis to the man, but without considering that he didn't understand his words at all.

"I am telling you, stop laughing!" he repeated while cocking his revolver.²⁶⁶

At the same time, the Indian fell silent, placed one hand over his open mouth, and pointed with the other to the cave's opening.

Louis understood and looked over to the spot, but the smoke and darkness prevented him from seeing anything at all; instead he heard the voice of the oldest boy, who, standing in the water up to his knees, spoke to another Indian with a loud voice.

He listened intently and was convinced that it wasn't the voice of the savage who had escaped with his clothes. The anxiety he had felt soon disappeared from his face when the stranger stepped into the cave's opening and through an "How you?" (How do you do?) revealed himself to be a friend.

²⁶⁶ *die Faust an den Kolben des Revolvers legend.*

"Hello, Chief?" he called out to him. "What is new? Have those dogs found my tracks?"

"No dogs, no track," the man replied, stepping into the light of the fire. He looked like an indigenous Californian, but also wore the shabby, torn clothes of civilized man. "Dogs take other way," he continued while taking a seat by Louis's side. "Dogs take other way, nobody come this wigwam."

"Goddamn!" the Potawatomi cursed. "I will cut you into quarters you if you are lying!"

"I no lie!" the mischievous Indian replied. "I hungry, much, much hungry. I come far, I see white squaw dead, bury, and white dogs go on wrong way... I very hungry."

After he had calmed the *Halfbreed's* fear, he turned to the remaining inhabitants of the cave and apparently gave them orders in his mother tongue because the whimpering children drew back and squatted down close to the wall, while the old woman and the old man brought the dusty, steaming pieces of meat and placed them in front of him.

Louis and the Indian had an unusual appetite because they didn't even think about how dirty the meal really was, but swallowed everything with the lust of animals. After Louis had satisfied his initial hunger, he then began to grumble once more, and more than once swore to take revenge on the croupiers, who had given him only a sack of foodstuff instead of the promised gold.

His Indian companion, who had through intercourse with the prospectors learned enough English to understand this eruption of anger, listened quietly and seemingly felt indifferent, and only when Louis had finished he turned his grinning face and said: "Meat, you can eat, gold no can eat!"

"Goddamn crow,²⁶⁷ you!" Louis snarled. "I am telling you, don't make me angry, or you head might burst like a dried out gourd before we know it!"

"No break head," replied the other, "revolver no powder, no lead. Revolver already talk."

"Yes, once, you stupid animal. Five more times it can tell you dangerous things. But wait, even the sixth shot can be fired." and he pulled the pistol from his belt, placed it on his knees, and then took the ammunition from the bag on his side and placed it on the floor next to him.

"Show revolver with six mouth?" the Indian asked and reached for the Potawatomi's weapon. But before he could even as much as touch it, he received a forceful kick that was accompanied by strong curses, and he rolled toward the fire that was now once again burning cheerfully.

"Wretched toad, do you want it to go off in your clumsy hands?" Louis snorted. "Even though nobody cares about your life, you dog, what a waste of powder and lead; and I am pretty certain you won't bring me any ammunition."

The Indian had by now risen once more and cowered in front of Louis with animal-like submissiveness, while his older companion took a seat on the other side.

²⁶⁷ *Krähe*

If the Potawatomi had taken the time to look into the "Chief's" eyes, he would have noticed a baneful, glowering sparkle, like that of a rattle snake who prepares itself to sink its fangs into a victim as soon as it comes close enough.

Regarding his surroundings with indifference, Louis pulled his knife from its sheath and placed its tip on the narrow wedge that connected the barrel with the grip. The wedge gave under the pressure, the barrel came loose, and then he dropped the knife to be able to use both his hands. The Chief's half-closed eyes lit up, but he didn't give his intention away by moving. Louis now took the barrel and the grip with expert hands, shook them a few times, and then pulled forcefully, separating the two. He gently put the barrel down and, pulling the cylinder away from the barrel, he checked all chambers; only one was empty. After he had reassured himself that that none of the five shots were likely to fail, he pinned the cylinder between his knees so that the loading gate was facing him, and then took the powder horn to refill the sixth chamber.²⁶⁸

The chief appeared to have waited for this moment to execute his plans because as the powder flowed slowly from the powder horn into the measure and Louis kept his eyes firmly on the latter, the Chief exclaimed "Ha!" and took the knife and the gun's barrel with lightning speed. Jumping across the fire like a wild buck, he

²⁶⁸ The sixth chamber would typically not be loaded because the hammer should rest on an empty chamber. If it was in fact loaded, and the gun were dropped or struck something, it might go off. His travel narratives confirm that Möllhausen carried a single-action revolver (a six-shooter) and must have been aware of how to load it. The loading of the sixth chamber thus seems to be an underhanded joke that aims to portray Louis as a fool. However, German readers of the period were barely or not at all familiar with cap-and-ball revolvers (most handguns of the period were single shot) and the joke may have gotten lost on the audience.

disappeared behind the cave's exit, while the other Indian, who taken hold of the bow, followed him just as fast.

Louis ran after the men with blind rage and got outside shortly after them, but when he turned the corner to pursue them further, he was suddenly caught by two lassos around his head and shoulders and pulled to the ground. Despite the darkness one of the lassos had been thrown with such skill that it pulled both his elbows so close to his body that he was unable to stand up again. Since the lake itself was two feet deep, the water swallowed the curses he uttered.

The four men -- the two rancheros and the prospector, led by the so-called Chief -- who had tracked the murderer to the cave, were in no hurry to free him from his predicament; no, to the contrary, they held him in this position until the Indians appeared with lit torches and provided light.

By now Louis was half-suffocated and unable to resist, and five minutes later he lay in the back of the cave, tied by his hand and feet, where curious whites and Indians surrounded him and made their observations.

Once he had accepted the fact that any form of resistance was useless and any hope for an escape futile, he placed himself in the hands of captors with stoic resignation. He spoke not one word, but also didn't answer any of the many questions he was asked, and since he didn't move a limb to either walk or stand, he resembled a living dead body that had to be carried from one place to the next.

He gnashed his teeth at times when his looks fell on the Chief, and all his hatred and thirst for revenge seemed to be directed toward the rejoicing Indians, who had betrayed him and delivered him to the prospectors.

The company spent the night in the cave, but as soon as it was light enough on the following morning to discern the trail that lead into the mountains, the men began to take their way home with their captive.

The cave's inhabitants and several other natives, who had hurried from their hiding places, joined the procession and willingly obeyed when asked to help carry the Potawatomi.

Despite the assistance the journey progressed only slowly because Louis couldn't be moved to take as much as a single step. Only once in a while, when he cursed after being touched ungently, did he make it known that he was in fact still alive.

Only after a difficult hike did the party manage to arrive at the gold claims the next morning, and here the criminal was greeted with cheers, but also with serious threats.

Time is precious in the claims, too precious to waste it with lengthy legal proceedings. Since there was no doubt that the Potawatomi was the murderer, everyone decided to finish work a bit earlier than usual on the day of his arrival, to quickly select a jury, to question the criminal, to convict him, and then to execute him at sunset.

The sailor, who had once witnessed an execution on an English warship, insisted that a similar process must be observed in this case as well, and his suggestion easily found agreement among the men because it didn't require a long interruption of their work.

37. The Log Cabin

The news of the Señora's murder at the hands of the Potawatomi, which was disseminated in the "Miners' Rest Hotel" by the escapee's pursuers, struck Harrison like lightning. He would have liked to keep it a secret from Newfort until he had verified the news, but since the two black servants were present when the news of the murder was conveyed, and since the entire household at once broke into panic because the accused was a one of their own, he gave up any plans to keep it a secret.

He wanted to flee because he feared if the murderer was caught, he might be implicated in some fashion through his statements; on the other hand, though, his sudden disappearance would have roused suspicion of his direct involvement in the gambling woman's death, a suspicion that appeared sufficiently grounded that it might lead to him being pursued.

Thus he could do only one thing to save himself: Free the captive, or at least attempt it, and force him to remain silent.

His next thought was of Newfort's gold, and he didn't doubt that the latter, driven by paternal sentiments, would freely make great sacrifices and would try to bribe the judges and guards to save his supposed son from the terrible scandal.

He went to see the planter while thinking about his plans. When he arrived, he immediately realized that the news had already reached him because he found him lying on his bed with an expression of deepest despair on his face, while the slaves, who stood in front of him, made their sorrow known by loud crying.

"Oh, Harrison! Harrison!" Newfort called out to the man. "What has the unfortunate boy done?! — A murderer, a robber! And that is my son! I suspected it; I felt it! But you, you who always spoke of his good qualities, now give me advice and help so that the unfortunate at least doesn't have to die the public death of a criminal!"

"I feel for you, my dearest friend," Harrison replied with a trembling voice, "but it is not yet proven that your son did in fact do it; and if he did, so help us God, who says that he didn't act driven by feelings of revenge or impulsiveness, following his Indian nature? If he is caught, he will fall into the hands of harsh judges who will not consider such issues and simply see the murderer in him. He will die, even though he may be innocent."

"Harrison, don't torture me by painting such terrible pictures! I am suffering enough! Help me find a way to save the unfortunate from death and such scandal. The world is a big place, and wherever he may go, he shall not be entirely destitute, even though I do not wish to see my son again because he has blood on his hands. He is not innocent because no defenseless woman would become the victim of simple revenge."

"Tell these poor men to leave," Harrison now said while pointing to the Negroes who filled the room with the whimpering. "Their outbursts of pain prevent us from collecting our thoughts, and we must think and discuss matters. Joseph can't fall into the hands of heartless judges, he must be saved, or his soul is doomed to follow his body!"

Following Newfort's intimation, the Negroes left the room. As soon as Harrison had made sure that they weren't listening by the door, he sat down on the planter's bed, took his hand, which the latter let him have without resistance, and then he began:

"Let us not argue about his guilt or innocence, but rather work on his rescue together. You, his father, who wants to prevent his bringing shame to his own flesh and blood, cannot pray more intensely for the well-being of your son than I, as a teacher and propagator of Christianity, want to try to save his soul from doom. Believe me, it is not only the duty of my office that makes me say such things, but also the deepest conviction that I will be able to guide this unhappy, lost young man onto the right path, and to keep him there."

"You are mistaken," Newfort replied with an expression of indescribable pain. "You are mistaken, I know so, but what would I give if it were different! Even an animal has a greater attachment to its parents, but I never saw a trace of filial sentiment in him. Everything, everything shall be forgiven, all the sorrow he has caused me, if only he is saved. But tell me, has he already fallen into his pursuers' hands? Be honest, I beg you! I am ready to hear the worst."

"He is still a free man, but I doubt that he will enjoy freedom for very long because according to the news I heard, there were numerous parties that left from the mining claims this morning to search for him. We must hence make the utmost haste in order not to be too late. Most prospectors are unconscionable when it comes to taking a criminal's life, but also when it comes to listening to the sound of money, and they won't be able to resist it and will free your son, as long as they gain some advantage from it. It may seem wrong in the eyes of the world to use such means,"²⁶⁹ Harrison continued when he saw a contemplative, sorrowful look in Newfort's eyes, "but such considerations come far behind the sacred duties that you as a father and I as a human being have to fulfill."

"If it only took nothing more than money to save him," the planter said after a long pause, "then I would give everything, but I feel that I am not able to act properly and make the right choices to nurture even the faintest hope for success."

"Leave that to me," Harrison replied, "because as a servant of God it will be easy for me to connect with Joseph's judges and to explain all the advantages of his acquittal. By the way, if they haven't managed to find him in three days, and the first excitement has vanished, the prospectors will go back to work to make up for lost time by redoubling their efforts, and they will forget the whole affair rather quickly. It is still absolutely necessary that we leave for the mining claims, wait nearby for whatever comes, and make the required preparations to intervene at the decisive moment."

²⁶⁹ *Es mag in den Augen der Welt ein tadelnswertes Mittel sein*

Harrison sought to influence Newfort in this manner and to use him for his purposes. He missed no opportunity to mention that it was "his son" and "his flesh and blood" they needed to help. However, he didn't argue with Newfort over his desire not to see his son again because he feared to be betrayed at the last minute by the criminal, even if they couldn't save him from the gallows; and that would of course bring about an investigation by Newfort against him.

At least for now, Newfort's fortune was lost to him, and he sent news to Browns and Antonio that same day explaining what had happened. The latter was in Havana, where no one knew or paid attention to him and where he waited, outside the reach of any possible betrayal, for the conclusion of the enterprise he had set in motion.

The following morning, at approximately the same time at which the murderer was brought back to the claims, a light carriage with four seats, drawn by two fast horses, crossed the familiar mountain pass. It had traveled at a fast pace all night. It passed the spot where the Señora bled to death and the spot where the fortune was buried.

Newfort, Harrison, and the two Negroes sat in the wagon. Nobody spoke; from the distraught looks the latter two gave the broken remnants of the wagon that were lying about, it became clear that the circumstances of the attack were known to them, but that they were hesitant to draw their Master's attention to them in any way. They pitied their Master as he sat so deeply grieved and withdrawn, and if they had

felt homesick, the feeling had vanished the previous day when they had heard the terrible news after it reached the "Miners' Rest Hotel."

Harrison was as dispirited as the planter. For the first time in a while, his features mirrored the true expression of his feelings. The energy he had always felt when he executed his murderous deeds had now left him in light of the failing of his so carefully nurtured dark plans. He trembled when he thought about the future and wished he were thousands of miles away from the spot where he believed a terrible punishment awaited him at any moment, when in reality it was only his conscience that tortured him continuously.

The travelers left the pass far behind; the path up along the Middle Fork grew steeper and increasingly difficult due to bothersome obstacles, and the sweating horses dragged their burden along slowly. They encountered only a single horseback rider.

"They got him!" he called to them. "They captured him, the goddamned *Halfbreed*, that killer. If you hurry, you will arrive just in time to see him hang!"

Each word tore painfully at Newfort's breast, and he turned his face away; the trembling Harrison on the other hand, who was holding the reins, stopped and asked:

"Is it true? Is it true what you say?"

"Drive on, and if you arrive before sundown, you can easily see for yourself."

That was his answer, and they each went their separate ways.

"Too late! Too late!" Newfort moaned, and he grabbed Harrison's arm forcefully.

But Harrison was silent and urged the horses on.

"I am telling you, it is too late!" repeated the planter with a desperate voice. "I have wished not to see the unfortunate boy again, and now you lead me to show me his dead body, his shame, and the scandal!"

Harrison remained silent and whipped the horses harder. "We will arrive long before sunset," he finally said, "but even if we arrived only ten minutes before the appointed time, we would still have the chance to rescue him."

They fell silent again and hours passed without a sound other than the hard breathing of the horses and the rattling of the wagon. The sun crossed the meridian and moved to the West, but nobody considered stopping even though the horses looked like they were about to collapse. Half a dozen men on horseback were behind them; they were happy and excited—they came from a mining claim far away and were on their way to the Middle Fork to watch the murderer hang.

"Hurry up, Gentlemen!" they called to Newfort and Harrison. "Hurry up or you will miss the interrogation; the jury must be assembling about right now."

"How far is it?" Harrison asked.

"Three to four miles!" they answered, and the cheerful group galloped away on the uneven trail and made the sparks fly from the rocks. Nobody wanted to miss the hanging because it was rare that such entertainment offered itself to the prospectors in this secluded wilderness.

"I won't be able to stand the sight!" Newfort said quietly to himself after the horsemen had disappeared behind the next bend. "No, I won't be able to take it, but

others will enjoy the spectacle and will deplore it if we are in fact able to save him!

Halt!" he called after a short while. He took Harrison's reins and the horses halted.

"Stop! I don't want to, I can't be witness to unfortunate boy's end!"

Harrison looked around as if he did not know what to do. The closer he came to the Potawatomi, the more uncertain he felt that this was the proper way to save himself. The fact that Newfort refused to ride along any further wasn't entirely unwelcome to him, since a single word from Louis could set him on the proper half breed's tracks, who, according to his knowledge, lay buried under rocks. But he himself, he had to at least speak with the murderer before his death and show him his goodwill, his friendship, and his willingness to sacrifice, so as to prevent him from making the terrible secrets public. His looked around helplessly. Suddenly his looks fell on a small column of smoke that was rising in a canyon adjacent to the Middle Fork, not too far away.

"White people live there," he said to Newfort, and he pointed with the whip.

"White people, who will gladly give you and your servants a place to stay for a few hours. Go there and allow me to take your carriage and hurry over to the claims to make at least an attempt to save your son!"

"Yes, try to save him! Save him!" Newfort exclaimed in agony. "If it takes gold to do it, promise it. You know I will fulfill any promises you make, just save his life! —Yes, I will stay behind, I will take advantage of the hospitality of the people in the canyon over there, and I will wait there, but hurry, hurry! You see that the sun is already moving behind the mountains!"

He climbed down from the wagon while gently being helped by the two old Negroes, and when Harrison urged the horses on and rode along the creek, he looked after him with sadness. "May God bless your efforts with success," he said to himself, folding his hands convulsively. "It would too harsh a punishment for the sins of my youth!"

Washington and Sambo's black features had turned grey with fear, and now, as they watched the wagon disappear in the direction of the place of judgment, they felt great relief and stepped to their Master's side. "A good trail leads to the smoke, Massa!" Washington began, pointing backwards with his hand.

"A good trail," repeated Sambo, who was the official echo of his older companion.

"The boy can walk ahead and lead the way," Washington continued.

"I can walk ahead and lead the way," echoed Sambo, who had held the moniker "boy" for almost sixty years now.

"Maybe there are decent people living there, Massa," Washington said in a whiny tone of voice.

"Yes, very decent people, Massa," Sambo affirmed just as whiny.

"And a warm fire and something to eat, Massa."

"Something to eat."

"People who will cheer Massa up."

"Cheer Massa up."

"And they will tell Massa to travel back home."

"Travel home."

"To warm Louisiana, Massa!"

"To Louisiana, Massa."

"To the beautiful plantation."

"With the sugarcane fields."

"And the tobacco fields."

"And all the countless black folks."

"Oh, Massa, don't cry, it makes a nigger sick to see Massa sad!"

"Come, Massa, come along!"

"Yes, come! Here is the trail."

And the two slaves urged their Master, whom they had seen grow up, confidingly [affectionately?], but not without reverence.

"You go ahead, boy!" commanded Washington as soon as he saw Newfort move into the intended direction.

"Yes, yes, Master!" called Sambo. Taking some long strides he surpassed Newfort, who was followed by Washington at a short distance.

Despite all their friendliness and obligingness, the old servants could not induce their Master, who was sad and withdrawn, to speak. He followed their orders automatically, leaned heavily on his walking stick, and looked frailer than they had seen him in a long time.

Their Master's silence made the two loquacious Negroes fall silent, and the small party walked quietly down the winding trail, which at one place crossed paths

with a spring coming from a precipice, and at another wound itself around thick Manzanita bushes and rocks that had tumbled down from the heights. A solemn silence reigned in the isolated wilderness; a silence that was good for the grieving Newfort, even though he paid no attention to his surroundings and apathetically followed the lead Negro.

And yet the surroundings were beautiful, and such a magnificent peace was present in the wildly romantic landscape that it was hard to imagine that scenes of horror could take place in their vicinity. The spring ceaselessly murmured and whooshed across the colorful rocks; here loud and impatient, there almost imperceptible; but it spoke to everyone on its banks, and told stories according to the each individual's mood and touched each man's heartstrings forever. The happy man heard secret laughter in the quiet murmuring and splashing, and when he sought to reveal his feelings and memories of sweet, pleasant hours in a song, then the spring accompanied him with its cheerful music that made each song and each melody charming.

The sympathetic creek cried with the sad man; its deep voice was melancholy when it plunged in a forceful stream down a small cliff and into a ravine it had created; and sometimes the water flowed silently for a short distance, decorated with bubbles like breaths of air. The bubbles were like false hopes and dreams, and they quickly burst, one after the other. Here, one burst right away, and there after a longer interval of floating on the crystal clear water. At the top of the incline were rocks, twigs, and leaves, and the fast-flowing water moistened them like a never-ebbing

flow of tears, and droplet after droplet fell down and disappeared, like the bubbles, on their common way.

Large oaks spread their branches full of leaves protectively across the creek. The otherwise straight spruces bent over it as if they wanted to admire their slender growth in the flowing mirror or wanted to allow each single one of their needles to take a look at the friend that had been moistening their roots for hundreds of years.

Quietly Newfort and the two greying Negroes wandered on the trail, which wound itself along under oak trees and spruces, past granite walls and along the water.

Finally, the three wanderers reached the spot where an artificial dam cut across the creek and redirected it to the foot of the mountain slopes nearby. There were deep pits and terraces in the dry creek bed, which had been made by the prospectors when they were looking for the precious metal. There were no tools at the small claim, but if Newfort and his Negroes had made the effort to look at the dug up earth a little more closely, they would have realized that it had been worked just the day before.

But they did not care about gold pits, or whether anyone still worked there, and they only once in a while looked over to the column of smoke where they suspected white human beings to live, and where they intended to rest and wait for Harrison's return.

Soon they were able to discern a small cabin. It was situated right next to the spring and its exterior fit into the picturesque landscape. Rocks and clay, but mostly

logs had been used to build it; the latter, through the manner in which they had been cut, revealed that had only recently been felled, and hence the people had not been living for long in this remote corner. Even the branches of the spruces, which covered the roof in thick layers, still looked as lively and green as the ones on the untouched trees.

The fire whose smoke the arriving men had already seen from the Middle Fork did not burn inside the cabin as one might have expected, but a short distance from it and in the middle of a clearing. To protect the fire from rain and sun, a small roof covered it, likewise made from spruce branches. It rested on a square of six long posts staked into the ground, and it reached to each side far enough to offer protection to those who were cooking and even a small company that might want to assemble around the fire. In any case, it looked as if the people living here only intended this place to be a temporary abode and meant to leave it when the winter approached; otherwise they would have built a fireplace in the cabin and made the whole place more substantial.

Three people were by the fire, while two sat on the log by the cabin. It was a rich and lively picture of peaceful seclusion.²⁷⁰ Washington and Sambo, who had feared that they might come upon an Indian camp, suddenly regained their courage. Their first glance fell on the figure of a slender Indian warrior who sat in front of the fire as if he were petrified and teased the sweet aroma of tobacco and sumac leaves from a long pipe decorated with eagle and woodpecker feathers; they lost all fear

²⁷⁰ *Diese Scene friedlicher Einsamkeit war daher verhältnismäßig reich belebt*

when they realized an Indian woman was kneeling on the ground next to him carefully stoking the fire, while close by a white woman busied herself with baking small loaves of bread.

Even though the thick needles softened the sound of their steps, the three wanderers had not remained unobserved because when Sambo stepped from the manzanita bushes into the clearing, he realized that the Indian had been watching him, but that after he had deemed him harmless, he had turned his attention back to the fire.

The Indian, whose fantastic adornments and regular build showed that he didn't belong to the depraved California natives, must have announced the strangers because when he turned his back to them once more, the young white woman stood up and looked over to them with an expression of anxious surprise.

Newfort, who had been following Sambo with his eyes turned down to the ground the whole time, now looked up. He stopped amazed by the beautiful apparition a few feet away from him. But soon enough, the terrible reality once more took hold of him, and, composing himself quickly, he walked over to the young woman and asked her politely to let him stay a few hours. "I am waiting for a friend," he said, struggling to contain his emotions. "I am waiting for a friend, He will pick me up here on his return from the claims."

Newfort's sorrowful look and tone appeared to awaken the deepest feelings of sympathy in the woman, and the initial awkwardness, which was perhaps the result of her hands being covered with fresh bread dough and her thick blond braids almost

falling over her big blue eyes while she was working, disappeared quickly, and she invited Newfort to make himself as much at home as the sparse condition allowed.

"Father, Sidney!" she called then in the direction of the cabin. "Come, we have visitors!"

The men thus addressed, who were busy whittling handles for shovels and picks from oak wood, rose and welcomed Newfort warmly.

"Please, don't let it bother you," the man who held a curved knife in one hand and a silver-plated meerschaum pipe in the other began. "Please, don't let it bother you that we are not able to offer you a chair; we are no less sincere in our offer of hospitality for all that. We are in the mining claims where one must get used to a certain lack of things. But look around," the old man continued, "as far as you can see is our kingdom; granted, it's a bit untamed, but not too wild to provide happy people a temporary home. This here is my daughter Franziska, over there the son of my dear, courageous friend, Sidney; here is another dear friend of mine, Mr. Wabash, or Bear, if the latter is easier to pronounce; between us, he is a man I trust with my life; and by the way, he speaks better English than I do, of which you can easily convince yourself. This here is Mrs. Wabash, my Omaha friend's faithful wife, and if you stay for a while, I will introduce you to my son-in-law and a demigod of a bear hunter. My son-in-law is like no other, I assure you, and the bear hunter as honest as the spring here; once in a while you will hear his "Sapristis" and "Tonnerres," but he has a heart more precious than the gold we pan from the sand. Yes, stranger, you must meet them all. They will return tonight; they only left to find more prosperous ground; they left

very early; this canyon doesn't seem to hold enough gold to make our efforts worth it, and that's why we are seriously considering leaving this charming corner."

Andree talked without taking a breath. Aside from making the mistake that so many Germans abroad make, that is, to force every stranger to listen to stories about their personal situation extensively, yes, about their entire life, Andree spoke from his overflowing heart. To see everyone around him, to know his daughter was married to such a decent man made him indescribably happy. By the way, the cheerful humor that had been a characteristic of his younger years, had returned along with his health, accompanied by the feeling of total independence and the conviction that he was still strong enough to earn a living somehow. Busy from morning until nightfall, he had no time to lose himself in feelings of nostalgia, and even though mining for gold had only brought him meager profit, he was no longer plagued by worries and by and by considered himself fortunate—a feeling that his companions furthered by sometimes sliding a large golden nugget into his pan, whose discovery then caused him ecstasy. Under the impression of such feelings, Andree welcomed Newfort and the Negroes and described his present situation as paradisiacal. He did not miss the fact that Newfort had a distinctly depressed air about him, but he blamed illness for it, as he had experienced it once himself. It could be conquered after all, but presently he wanted to Newfort to speak some words and show a smile.

He, on the other hand, sat on a block of wood, did not move, and first looked into the fire and then at the young woman, who was busy with her buns again, with a sad, veiled look. Several times his looks fell onto a white band that was tied around

the white neck of the young woman. It was made from a red piece of cloth that had faded over time, and its edges were delicately embroidered with the colorful quills of the porcupine, while a number of brass buttons were stitched in the middle.

The sight of this simple Indian adornment seemed to kindle vague memories to life in Newfort, but only for a moment, because the terrible circumstances that had brought him to this place always quickly regained the upper hand and blotted out the pictures of times past that appeared in his mind.

After Andree had finished his story, it was quiet. Newfort might have felt that all eyes were on him because started as if awakening from a dream and asked: "Your son-in-law is the husband of the young woman there?"

"Of course!" Andree replied. "Only for three weeks now. They were married the day after our arrival in Sacramento, and four days later we were busy building our cabin here. My only daughter, Sir!" he concluded by giving Franziska a pleased look. She, to hide her embarrassment, bent so deeply over her bread dough that her blushing features were almost entirely hidden by her voluminous hair.

Newfort appeared to not have heard any of it. He sat up and looked at the mountain chain in the West, whose craggy peaks were now dipped in gold by the disappearing sun. He shivered. "How long until sundown?" he asked suddenly.

"For us here, in his remote corner, no more than another five minutes of sunshine," Andree replied friendly, "But I think the real sunset is yet another hour and a half away. Yes, indeed, we lack sunshine here at night, but in turn it blesses us earlier in the morning.

"Another hour and a half!" Newfort sighed. "It's awful, awful!"

Franziska looked at the stranger with pity, but she didn't dare to say words of comfort; he appeared too unhappy and apathetic.

Andree, too, had fallen silent now in light of Newfort's deep sorrow, and he looked at the fire. Wabash on the other hand drew the smoke from the long pipe deep into his lungs without stopping and exhaled it in thick clouds, while the Indian woman stoked the fire ceaselessly and turned the buns baking in the pan.

"You probably hardly ever go to the remote upper claims, do you?" Newfort asked after a long pause.

"Only Lefèvre has been there once to sell meat. and it appears as if he has found a good market there for the game he shoots. You must know that Lefèvre will fall ill if can't head out with his gun once in a while."

"Lefèvre is your son-in-law?" Newfort remarked in a questioning tone.

"No, not Lefèvre," Andree replied, "but if I had another daughter and Lefèvre wanted to take her as his wife, and she him as her husband, I would happily give them my blessings, even though Lefèvre is older than I am. No, no, my son in law's name is Joseph—"

Newfort made a sudden movement that interrupted Andree. Newfort had jumped up, but soon sat down again, and, as if talking to himself, he said with a quiet voice: "Joseph, Joseph, probably a German?"

"Not German," remarked Andree, "no, Joseph belongs at least partially to the Nation," he added, "that can lay more claim to the American continent than you and I, and all Europeans together."

"A *Halfbreed*!?" exclaimed Newfort while he regarded Andree transfixed. "A *Halfbreed* and Joseph is his name?"

"I am proud to be the wife of a *Halfbreed* named Joseph," interrupted Franziska warmly. She had misinterpreted Newfort's sudden fierceness and now turned her face, which was flushed from the fire's heat, to him.

"But his last name? His last name? And who is his father?" Newfort now yelled, jumping up again.

Despite the fear the stranger had awakened in her, Franziska composed herself enough to be able to answer.

"I am not sure what right you have to ask his name," she replied, "but my husband's name is Joseph and his father, who would have reason to be proud of his son if he could see him, but is kept from him by a dark fate, is a respectable man in Louisiana, whom I honor and love for my husband's sake."

"Unfortunate woman!" Newfort exclaimed full of desperation while he stepped closer to the young woman. "Unfortunate woman! You are deceiving me! You are deceiving yourself! Newfort's wretched son, the robber, the murderer, who is about to meet his judge for eternity, he can't possibly be your husband!"

Franziska turned deathly pale when she heard these words. She staggered and would have swooned if she had not held on to one of the roof supports. She was

unable to speak; her glassy gaze remained fixed on the stranger who had told her such terrible news. As soon as he had realized the change in Franziska, the Omaha had jumped up and positioned himself behind Newfort; the Negroes shrank back from him, and they were audibly and forcefully knocking their ivory teeth together in fear.

"You are insane, Sir," Andree finally addressed Newfort. "You are insane, but you can't have come here with calculated maliciousness to scare my daughter to death with shameless vituperations and false news. But if you have come to mediate something between my daughter's husband and his father, then simply wait for Joseph's return, and he will give you the answers you are looking for.

"You have been deceived!" Newfort exclaimed with an expression that left no doubt about the sincerity and truth of his feelings. "I am Newfort! I am his father! I have come to save him! Do you see the brass studded collar²⁷¹ your daughter is wearing—it explains everything to me; I saw it on Joseph's mother once, I watched her make it, and the brass buttons were a gift from me. But his heart can't be that corrupt if he honors his mother's memory! He stands in front of his accusers right now; he is accused of murder, and he will be condemned, and when the sun sets, then—"

"Unnatural father!" Franziska screamed, taking Newfort by the arm with both hands forcefully. "Your son is with his accusers and you just sit here quietly?! Your son, my husband, a murderer? A robber? Indicted for murder? You are lying! Joseph, who has sympathy for the sufferings of a worm, a murderer? No, no, never! Tell me

²⁷¹ *Halsband*

that you are wrong, you must be wrong because he just left me this morning, he left me like always, and he will be back tonight like always!"

"He left this morning? Oh, God, it can't be a mistake then! He was captured this morning! Newfort fell back into his previous position on the block of wood, he supported his face with both hands, and the deep sighs that came from his breast revealed how tortured his soul was by the encounter with the wife of his reputed son. The young woman's question: 'Your son is with his accusers and you just sit here quietly?' had shaken him to the core, just like the discovery of the collar and its preservation, which seemed to indicate gentler feelings of the heart to him. But why had he kept it a secret that he was married to such a god woman? Why had he kept it a secret that he maintained steady relations with such decent, respectable people? If such people loved him so dearly, then he had not fallen as deeply as his father had assumed. He could have been accused of murder through unfortunate circumstances, but he might not have committed the actual murder itself. Wild thoughts ran through his mind while he sat quietly for a few minutes and regarded the people surrounding him with a mixture of terror and doubt.

Suddenly, he lifted his head and looked at the western peaks. The sun had disappeared behind them, but the red illumination shot through the sharp, craggy rocks like the aurora borealis. "My God, if only I had gone myself; I should not have let myself be kept back! He might have been saved! He is certainly innocent!"

His last words appeared to have restored Franziska's composure and quiet contemplation. The transfixed look in her eyes gained a new spark, and pushing past

her father, she stepped close to Newfort. "If you are indeed Newfort," she said with a determined voice, "then my husband Joseph is your son! Thus you understand that I have the natural right to be concerned about him. Your demeanor indicates that disaster is looming, and you seem to know what it is. I beseech you, answer one question, but let your answer be a sacred promise. I, Joseph's wife, demand honesty from you."

Franziska took a deep breath as if she meant to gather her strength and courage to get bring forth her question. "Is it true? Joseph stands in front of the ruthless lynch mob and he is —" she was in agony and could not speak. Newfort, who understood the magnitude of her pain, spared her more questions. He rose and took her hand with a gentle, even tender expression.

"Calm yourself. I have done what lies within my power to take him from the merciless judges. Yes, it is true, he is suspected of having murdered a woman; he was captured this morning, and at this moment, he stands in front of the jury three miles from here in the gold claims, and if he is found guilty, then he will see his last sunset tonight!"

Franziska let Newfort conclude without interrupting him. She knew from his mourning look that he spoke the truth, and she asked once more with a trembling voice in a whisper: "Is it true what you have said?"

"He is certainly innocent," the planter answered deeply moved. "My friend has at this point set the wheels in motion to save him, to free him. Compose yourself, calm down. I have misjudged him, but now I will hurry to him and if—"

But Franziska did not hear his last words. She had shrunk away from Newfort with the loud exclamation: "He is innocent!" and hurried down the winding trail toward the Middle Fork like a scared deer.

But she had not covered a distance of fifty feet yet, when Sidney and the Omaha were by her side. They were not stopping her, but followed at her pace in order to watch over her and protect her on her way to the upper gold mines.

Newfort looked after the fleeing woman for a moment, but worn down by the burden of the unfortunate circumstances, he sank back down onto the wooden block that had served him as seat before. Unable to make a decision, he sat and stared into the embers full of desperation. "Too late, too late!" he murmured to himself. "It's too late, she won't see him again!"

Andree's voice brought him back from his brooding. He didn't speak to him, but stood a few steps away from him with a bare head; he looked up, big tears rolled over his wrinkled cheeks. "God in heaven!" he said with indescribable sorrow in his voice and demeanor. "Oh, good God in heaven! You have shown me paradise to take it from me? But it's your will that shall be done, not mine!" and then, covering his head, he walked past Newfort without paying further attention to him and followed his daughter.

"My poor child! My poor, poor child!" it sounded across to Newfort as the latter stood up supported by the Negroes and readied himself to likewise hurry to the place of judgment. He doubted the success of Harrison's efforts.

The shadow of the western rocks had in the meantime already glided up the slopes of the eastern mountains. Only the top of the peaks still glowed in red light and there was less than half an hour left until the sun set. Dusk had settled in the canyons; large bats and small bats described the incalculable zigzag lines a thousand times over; the rabbits had left their hiding places already and sat on the trails and in the clearings listening, and the small crowned partridges enticed each other, almost telling stories, to seek protection in flocks under Manzanita bushes and the leaves of the Opuntia cactus.

There was only one human being left in front of the cabin, the faithful Indian woman. She cried and wailed, and the spring, which sympathetically murmured past her, cried and wailed along with her.

38. The Trial in the Gold Mining Claims

The miners had concluded their work earlier than usual. The dry basin stood empty and cleaned tools, which were neatly placed together or spread out in an orderly fashion on the mounds of earth, showed that nobody had deserted the mines, but that work would begin again the next morning with renewed vigor and strength.

The atmosphere was lively in the prospectors' camp. Laughing and joking had naturally ceased and a never before known seriousness had settled onto the various

faces and physiognomies, but all the men mingled busily and each one looked like he was deliberating something very serious—here alone, there with his comrades, but yet without coming to a conclusion.

They intended to form a jury to investigate the case of the Pawnee *Halfbreed* Joseph—Louis had been introduced in the claims by this name—, to interrogate the witnesses, and in case of his guilt, to sentence him and execute him immediately.

They had to agree on the number of jurors first, which wasn't as easy as one might think, since most would rather be a spectator than a participant and thus sought to praise another man in order to draw attention away from himself. If a man was chosen however, he had to oblige.

Aside from the people who called the claims their temporary home, a number of men had arrived from neighboring claims where news of the expected trial had spread, which brought the total to eighty men.

Everyone had gathered in the camp, stood or squatted together in groups, and only a few isolated figures maintained the connection between the log cabin and the camp so as to ensure that the required drink was not missing while they deliberated.

Louis himself wasn't visible. He was tied up in one of the caves excavated in the creek bed, where two prospectors guarded him; there he awaited his fate with animal-like indifference.

After the preparations had taken some time, the sailor, driven by the obvious impatience, finally opened the voting.

He rolled an empty flour barrel among the crowded men, who were standing and lying around, stood it upright, and after he had made sure with seaman-like prudence that it couldn't fall over and was strong enough to bear the weight of a man, he jumped onto it, lifted his hat in a greeting, propelled his chewing tobacco from cheek to cheek a few times, pushed his hands in his pockets, cleared his throat, and began:

"Gentlemen and mates!"

Silence followed this address.

"Gentlemen and mates! — The Señora was done in.²⁷² She has perished with everything on board. Of course, she was no longer a seaworthy vessel, and on top of that a caper that sailed under a false flag, but if she had gotten rigged up and mended,²⁷³ she could have still sailed around the claims for many years."

"The murderer lies down there as safe and sound as an anchor in the harbor. The Señora's two mates, who followed her everywhere so faithfully, like the wake of a ship, are here, too, to bear witness. There is no shortage of trees to take the place of yardarms²⁷⁴ and sufficient hemp, and hence I advise you to make everything ready *for action*, to hoist the brown forest pirate, and to end this business with strong grog.

As little as the sailor had said in his speech, it was enough to bring the men back to life because as soon as he had left the barrel, which had served him as a stage, the Irish teacher stood on top and motioned for his audience to be quiet.

²⁷² *hat eins zwischen Wind und Wasser gekriegt.*

²⁷³ *frisch aufgetakelt and neu getupfert.*

²⁷⁴ *Raa* (f.) (alt. *Rah, Rahe*). A yard is a spar on a mast on a sailing vessel.

"Allow me, Gentlemen, to not waste time and to immediately begin with the selection. The name of the students —"

Laughter interrupted the former schoolmaster.

"Quiet!" the Irishman yelled. "Quiet, or in the name of St. Patrick, I will leave the lectern! So let's call the names of the men I suggest as jurors, and whom I ask to step aside and position themselves in alphabetical order after being called. — My dear opening speaker, who, as we know, once witnessed an execution on a warship" —

"Helped to hoist," the sailor snarled with pride.

"Helped to hoist," the teacher continued, "would make a good juror in my opinion; thus, I suggest him first and ask for your decision."

"Agreed! Agreed!" it came from all sides.

The teacher noted the name on a dirty tablet and continued:

"I have informed myself systematically about the character and the inclinations of each man in our company, and thus I believe that Johnny from New York should be suggested for transfer, I mean selection. His father was a judge, later was elected to Congress, and hence we can expect a certain degree of respect for the law and knowledge of the law from his son."

"Agreed!" it came again.

The teacher wrote down the name and began once more:

"Further, here is Baron von Kreuzer! Once he was a German student, then an officer, then a franc-tireur in Baden,²⁷⁵ then a man of letters, then a bartender in New York, then a newspaper hawker in Cincinnati, then a farmer in Minnesota, then a Methodist preacher in Illinois, and finally a cattle drover in Missouri! A man of such experience and rich education is naturally suited to be a juror! I thus recommend him!"

Baron Kreuzer was directed to stand with the other jurors, and the teacher kept calling new candidates, whose advantages he loudly brought to everyone's attention, and who were then elected in unison.

When the number of jurors had reached eleven in this manner and the teacher was about to suggest the twelfth and last one, he was interrupted by a loud commotion and prompted to take the place of the twelfth himself. He tried to recuse himself, but since the men seriously urged him, called him a learned man, a professor and had charged him with presiding over the proceedings, he could no longer resist; and after he thanked the company with a few words for the trust they had placed in him, he stepped down from the barrel and hurried to set the proceedings of the peculiar court of law in motion.

The entire selection process had lasted less than half an hour, and only fifteen minutes later, the jurors sat on the green lawn in a semi-circle. The tied up murderer was lying in front of them on the ground; he still refused to use his limbs and had not

²⁷⁵ An irregular combatant who does not belong to a regular military organization but still fights in a war or conflict. Cf. "Freikorps." Cf. also Luetzow in the Napoleonic Wars. Baden today is part of Baden-Württemberg.

spoken a single word. The remaining men formed an impenetrable circle around the transgressor and the court.

The offender was asked the usual questions, he was read the indictment, but neither one prompted him to speak or move as much as a muscle in his face. He had not seen the twins and did not suspect that they were staying in the claims, but when they were led into the circle and stood facing him, he seemed to lose his composure for a second. Soon though, he gnashed his teeth, looked at the two witnesses with the most vitriolic hate, and uttered a curse.

"Defendant, do you know the two witnesses?" the teacher asked in his capacity as president.

"Yes, I know them. Damn them." Louis replied. "If I hadn't met them, I wouldn't be here in front of you!"

"Did you murder the Señora?"

"Yes, I delivered the world from that witch, but these two instigated it."

"Did you take the Señora's gold?"

"I took a sack with bread and ham, but not a penny of her gold. The younger one of the two crooks gave me the sack with provisions. But where the gold is, they will know best."

A dirty travel bag was now passed into the circle. The president took it, stepped in front of Louis, and asked:

"Defendant, is this the bag you took?"

"It is."

"Witnesses, is this the bag in which the Señora carried her gold?"

"It is."

"Witnesses, you are under oath, so let me ask you: do you recognize this half Indian as the man who robbed and murdered the Señora on the pass?"

"Your Honor," Toby Ring now began, "we stand before you destitute because everything we owned was taken by this brazen robber, along with the Señora's money. We only have our reputation and our good name to defend, but both are under attack by this criminal. I urge you to examine the matter closely. I forgive the murderer his charges against me since he just seeks to prolong his life for a few days. But for our sake, I urge you again to examine the case closely. I can only answer your question whether I recognize the murderer with "yes," for myself that is; as to the fate of the gold, I can't speak to that and thus refer you to my companion and the two neutral witnesses who saved us from our predicament. If I may add, we owe the two witnesses our life because I would have been hardly able to mount any kind of resistance to the bold fellow in the dark after my companion was shot down. By the way, I had seen the defendant in the gambling houses in Sacramento several times, where he injured the Señora just a few days ago, and I immediately recognized him again when the flash of his revolver illuminated his features for a moment."

"I can only confirm what my friend has spoken," the more awkward Finney said without waiting for the presiding man's question. "I forgive him the loss of half of my ear, but that he battered the divine Señora to death and made off with her entire fortune, he shall hang for that."

Laughter rewarded the awkward but honest testimony. The president called the company to order, and soon thereafter the rancheros appeared to give their testimony; that is as far as the facts were known to them.

After questioning the last two witnesses, there was no reason to draw the proceedings out any longer. The jurors rose, and since they couldn't withdraw to any other place, they formed a tight cluster to vote on guilty versus not guilty.

Louis had once again assumed his stubbornness because he was certain he couldn't hope for rescue. Only once, during Toby's testimony, did he show a bit more engagement because his eyes were fixed on the young criminal in whom he had found his match, and who, after he had used him for his plans, now was about to be hanged on the gallows. Louis had given up on his case so completely that he did not feel it worth the effort to speak another word.

After ten minutes, the jurors separated. The murmuring of the surrounding men stopped and the teacher approached Louis to make the result of the deliberation public, and as soon as everyone realized his intention, the greatest silence reigned.

"We have deliberated and, taking the importance of the question into account, come to a judgment to the best of our ability," he began with his stentorian voice. "In our midst here is the Pawnee *Halfbreed* Joseph; he is accused of robbing and murdering the Señora; the criminal has been convicted by irrefutable evidence, so that his confession wouldn't have even been necessary. There are no extenuating circumstances that might be taken into account. We, the justly appointed jurors, unanimously find him "guilty"! The Pawnee *Halfbreed* is guilty of murdering the lady

known as the Señora in cold blood. We thus find the punishment to be hanging by a rope around his neck until he has passed from life to death! — Is there anyone here who doubts that this is the just verdict, or anyone who wishes to speak on behalf of the criminal?"

Everyone remained silent. The joking and cheerfulness had disappeared from the wild, bearded physiognomies and silence had fallen onto the gathering like an oppressive humidity.

"Well then," the teacher began, not without a certain solemnity in his voice. "We have judged fairly. May God bless his soul."

"Defendant," he continued while turning to the Potawatomi. "When the sun sets, which is approximately three quarters of an hour from now, you will die for your crime. Thus if you have anything to say or if you wish anything, speak now."

"Since I am to be hanged, my talking and wishing will help me little. But wait! I wish to see the Señora's two croupiers hanged on either side of me. I would also like to drink a bottle of whiskey before my end, and finally that all of you staring at me go to hell."

A murmuring of indignation came from all sides, but the teacher quickly restored order once more and spoke to Louis.

"Convict! Your first wish is unreasonable. There is no reason to hang the two witnesses because you want to take revenge. We thus have to deny the desired wish. Your second demand is more reasonable. I find it natural that you want to strengthen your heart for the journey, and it shall be given to you in double, no, even triple

amounts. Regarding your third wish, which is indeed flattering, I can only reply that it is up to the individual whether he wants to be damned or not because we live in a free country here where no school or church²⁷⁶ controls the free will with which nature has endowed us. But anyway, you are just a savage, and to speak with you about such matters means casting pearls before swine. I thus close the proceedings and advise you to drown your hatred for your rightful judges in whiskey."

"Bravo!" it came from all sides while the gathering disbanded. A second later, the sailor knelt next to the criminal, and while speaking to him in his rough manner, he held a small bottle with whiskey to his mouth and told him to enjoy it.

"A vessel can't keep a steady course without having its freight tied down properly," he explained when he noticed that Louis was drinking to the fullest. "Think of this when you swing from the yard and haven't noticed yet that the wind has ceased blowing in your lungs and your sails hit the mast."

"Goddamn! This boy drinks like a frigate being pushed under water by an eighty-pound bomb. That's right! I will hoist you up as quickly as a mutineer is pushed off the deck feet first."

The sailor would have continued for a while yet to speak his words of comfort to Louis if the rattling of an approaching wagon had not drawn everyone's attention in a different direction. A few minutes later, Harrison pushed the exhausted horses into the camp, jumped of the wagon, and made his way to the convicted man.

²⁷⁶ *Schul- und Kirchenrevisor.*

"Has he been convicted?" he asked the surrounding men, and when they affirmed the fact, he continued: "Thank the Lord I have come in time to save his soul from eternal doom. Let me see him."

The prospectors, who immediately recognized Harrison as a man of the cloth, politely made way, and soon Harrison stood next to Louis and the sailor.

"I fear this wreck is too far off course for you to guide its soul to heaven," the sailor said to the missionary, while he pointed to the tied up man with his hand.

"God's grace is never too late," replied Harrison smoothly²⁷⁷ "but please do me a favor and don't disturb us. The remaining time is short for the unfortunate man, so please let me at least attempt to save his soul."

Harrison didn't make his request in vain because all the surrounding men withdrew with a certain attitude of deference, so that he could have a conversation with Louis without being heard or understood.

He had, by the way, no plan yet as to the manner in which he was going to speak with the Potawatomi, but Louis's behavior itself dictated it, and his initial words convinced him that he would have to act with the greatest caution if he did not want plunge into the abyss with him.

"Unfortunate boy," he whispered to him, "what has your recklessness brought you?"

Louis looked at Harrison with grim anger for a while and then said quietly: "Have you come to save me from the gallows or to heap blame on me?"

²⁷⁷ *mit Salbung*

"I have come to save you, but be careful!"

"Tell me how you are going to save me, but remember if I don't like your suggestion, then I will reveal the life story of a certain *Halfbreed* and a certain Buschmark here publicly."

"Quiet, quiet!" the terrified Harrison said. "Newfort has sent some men with his money to save his son from the shame of the gallows. Don't spoil matters by behaving too fiercely, but listen to my advice carefully, and I will promise you that this time you will escape the terrible end. We have managed with great effort and diligence to recruit a number of men for our plans. They have hidden close by."

"When are they coming to free me?" asked Louis, who in light of his possible rescue lost much of his slyness.

"Now, when they would rather put a bullet through your head than let you get away?" Harrison asked. "But don't interrupt me, otherwise it may be too late to acquaint you with our plans and tell you how you must act. It is only a quarter of an hour until sunset. So let yourself be lead from here peacefully, or carried, however you like; let them place the rope around your neck —"

"And let them tie it tight before you can reveal what a criminal Harrison is!" Louis interrupted.

Harrison stood up quietly and motioned to walk away. Louis, who in light of his pending execution had a redoubled fondness for life, immediately called him back—something Harrison had expected and obeyed with intentional hesitation.

"Speak," Louis said fractiously, "speak and show me the way out of this trap and you shall never have to complain about me again."

Harrison secretly rejoiced when he heard this. "It's my condition," he replied with a steady voice, "I will save you and demand obedience in return."

"Continue, continue," Louis said with an impatient gesture. "I am listening and will do anything."

"Well then, your rescuers will use the preparation time for your execution to glide close to you. It is now only a question of making those who are in charge of your execution hesitate a bit."

"The sailor is in charge of it," Louis whispered quietly and fearfully.

"I know it and I see it; he and three others are busy tying the rope to the tree. I will go over there at once. They won't be able to resist the sound of gold. But listen further: When you stand with the noose around your neck, I will step in front of you and speak a long prayer. As soon as I have finished, you will say to your executioners: 'The noose is too tight, move it sideways.' The sailor or someone else will approach and fix the noose until the time for your rescue has come. One of your waiting friends will glide to you and cut the ties with a quick cut, and then it is up to you. Escape as quickly as you can, and then seek to get in contact with me again as soon as you can."

"Five more minutes, pious man!" the teacher called.

"Soon!" Harrison responded. "He is conveying his last wishes and orders regarding his family by the Missouri River!" Turning back to Louis, he continued:

"Don't let your executioners know anything of the impending escape. They must not know anything, and the delay must be due to another reason. Don't be stubborn anymore, but explain that you no longer want to be carried so that the shackles will be removed from your feet. Farewell and remember your promise."

Harrison rose and turning to the gathering of prospectors, he indicated the futility of his endeavor with a slight shrugging of his shoulders, and then he turned quietly and walked over to the spot where the men had fastened a winch, usually used to move boulders, to the lowest branch of an oak tree.

When he reached the place of the execution, the sailor sat astride the branch and was busy drawing a long rope through the winch.

"A sad task!" Harrison said to the sailor.

"Saddest for the pirate who will swing here," he replied with indifference.

"If we could only make his death struggle easier," Harrison continued.

"It's not a struggle, godly man. The roller in the block is greased with tallow, four men hold the rope, and: Ahoy! Off he goes so fast you will think a southeaster has swept him off deck!"

"I believe you, but how about we help him with the anxiety of anticipation?"

"With a load of whiskey?"

"No, not that; you are an understanding, humane man, and I will be frank with you. Driven by pity, I lied and told the poor fellow that he will be pardoned with the rope around his neck. After I leave him, he will ask you to fix the noose in the belief

that it will be removed entirely. Answer in the affirmative, but do your task at the same time."

"Not bad," said the sailor, who had in the meantime concluded his preparations and jumped down. "Actually too great of an honor for a pirate, but it shall happen according to your wishes."

This was their conversation when the procession of prospectors approached with the heavily guarded Potawatomi in the front.

The wild figures with their serious sunburnt faces offered a strange sight as they moved along on the uneven path. The worn out articles of clothing, the smoking clay pipes and cigarettes all increased the picturesque qualities of the group, and everything was in strange harmony with the achingly beautiful, wild romantic landscape, in which the sun painted its fiery lights for heightened effect like an artist finishing a picture.

The procession moved along slowly; slowly glided the shadows across the illuminated peaks, and when the last ray of sun disappeared from the landscape's highest peak and hesitatingly followed its mistress into the ocean, Louis found himself under the fateful tree. The noose was around his neck. The sailor and three other strong men tightly held the rope itself. But in front of the sinner himself stood Harrison, apparently in deep prayer.

The audience murmured impatiently and prompted Harrison to step back and let justice take its course.

"Don't forget the noose! Your rescuers are close by!"

Louis nodded imperceptibly and was about to turn to the sailor, when his features suddenly froze and he looked at the audience with an expression of terror because he had detected a movement in the crowd.

A young woman had pushed through it and then stood still as if frozen in place.

The Potawatomi recognized the girl he had circled so many times in the prairies and rock deserts at night, and whom he had believed to be buried in the collapsed cave.

He recognized the smith's son, whom he had so often watched in the girl's company. He recognized the Omaha, his archenemy, who pushed through the crowd behind the young woman, but then pulled the blanket over his head and concealed himself entirely when he saw Harrison.

He thought he saw the ghosts of the slain beings in front of him, and opened his mouth to speak; then he remembered Harrison's words.

"The noose is tight!" he called to the sailor. "The noose is too tight, push the knot—"

"A—hoy!" the addressed commanded, and in the blink of an eye the murderer's flew up and his head struck the iron ring of the winch. — — —

After having convinced himself of the death of his accomplice, who could have so easily become his accuser, Harrison sighed deeply.

"I am saved," he murmured, "but the money, the money is lost." —

The acute excitement he had felt during the last half hour had drawn his attention away from what was happening in the mob of prospectors. He was thus even more surprised to see a young woman in front of him, who was surrounded by a circle of rough men who regarded her—who was breathless with terror—sympathetically.

Harrison had never seen Franziska, and Sidney was likewise a stranger to him, and he was unable to see the Omaha because the latter pulled the blanket tightly around his torso to watch over every movement the despised missionary made and to prevent him from possibly fleeing.

"Come, let us leave," Sidney said quietly to Franziska who still stood in the same place and had her face covered with her hands. "Come, let us leave, this is no sight for you, not the place to be. Your father and your husband will be looking for you," he continued in an urging voice when he noticed that tears ran through her hands. "Compose yourself, everything is fine."

"Yes, my daughter, leave," Harrison addressed Franziska, "and if the young criminal's death has upset you —"

"Yes, it has upset me!" Franziska said and pulled the hands from her eyes, "but only because I witnessed the agony of a fellow human being. Oh, it was awful! An obvious mistake led me here! — Come, let's go!" she finally said to Sidney with an anxious voice, supporting herself on his arm. "Come, they will worry about me."

The rough, often even brutal prospectors stepped aside to let the two, whom Harrison followed, pass. Were those dissolute men still under the spell of the events, or did Franziska's presence demand reverence? Well, not one man dared to make a

single joke, and only when Franziska was far enough away did they begin to speculate who the beautiful stranger, who had so miraculously appeared and disappeared, might have been.

Sidney and Franziska moved along without stopping; they did not speak, but their hearts were grateful that such a horrible misfortune had not been theirs after all. And when Sidney asked what might have prompted the stranger to come to them with such words of doom, Franziska could not answer and did not know how she could have been made anxious for as even much as a second by such words.

Harrison followed slowly, but he paid little attention to the people hurrying along in front of him. He also hardly noticed the Omaha, who kept pace with him at some distance. He kept to himself and thought of how he might separate from Newfort and escape from Antonio's sphere of influence now that his plans had failed.

When he reached the wagon and set out to return to the log cabin, Franziska and Sidney had already covered a great distance. Dusk had long since fallen, and the horses sought their way with tired but careful steps among the rocks and tree stumps. The deep blue sky with the quickly-emerging stars was mirrored charmingly on the Middle Fork's surface and brightened it. Everything else was cloaked in the shadow of night, as if it were about to sink into the arms of an undisturbed peace.

The Omaha silently passed the wagon now; Harrison did not notice him—he was in deep thought. He thought about those who had found their demise because of him and the comparatively minor advantage his crime had brought him.

The whimpering of a cougar that appeared to come from the Middle Fork a short distance away woke him from his brooding. He froze, but felt comforted by the sight of the two young walkers in front of him. To them the music was comforting because they came from the faithful Wabash, who had joined them and made the sounds to either attract Joseph and Lefèvre or inform them of their return.

Finally, they heard the steps of a human being walking in their direction. Wabash stood still for a moment and listened, then stepped next to Franziska and said with a quiet voice: "The white father!"

As soon as she heard the word, she hastened her pace and sank with an "it wasn't him!" into her father's arms.

The two embraced for a long time; they could communicate their feelings in broken sentences, and the tears they cried were tears of joy and happiness. Why should they now still worry about the dark circumstances that had precipitated the confusion of the names? It was sufficient for them to know that no calamity had happened to their happy family circle and that no disaster was looming; they waited for the *Halfbreed* and his two companions impatiently.

Before they continued their walk toward the canyon where their home stood, Wabash signaled once more. This time, someone answered from far away, but they noticed that the members of their group they had been waiting for all day had already left the canyon and making their way to the upper claims. Franziska urged everyone to hurry on. She imagined the tortured souls of the ones searching for them.

"Wabash," she whispered to the watchful Omaha, "dear Wabash! You have eyes like a hawk and are fast on your feet like an antelope, hurry to Joseph and tell him everything that happened!"

"Joseph is a man, Lefèvre is a man, Robert is a man," the Omaha replied with indifference, "they will see when they come."

"Oh, Wabash, what if I ask you to do me the favor and hurry ahead! They must be terribly worried!"

"Men never worry; have great worry and no fear. I not leave your side Joseph said and I promised. Lefèvre said and I promised. I tell them: Everything good, because Franziska say: For me." And once more he imitated the howl of the California cougar. But he didn't stop, but continued with a long, cheering²⁷⁸ sound, clapping on his wide open mouth with his hand in a vibrating fashion, so that it resonated between the rising rock walls and the dark canyons, and the echo continued to play with the disharmonious sounds for a while yet.

Similar sounds answered him, and they, too, were lessened by the distance, but Wabash's last doubts had vanished and he turned to Franziska again.

"Joseph know everything now," he said with more warmth in his voice than one might have expected from an Indian. "Joseph know everything good; no need to hurry. Otherwise Franziska feet break between roots and rocks."

The uncanny howl of the wild beast and the Indian call had made a less than comforting impression on Harrison, and even though he was already a significant

²⁷⁸ *jauchzend*

distance behind the homeward bound group, he halted the horses for a while to increase the distance between himself the supposed danger.

Wabash drew their attention to steps coming in their direction from the river. Soon they were able to discern the voices of the Negro slaves, who were seeking to comfort their Master, but then, scared by the Omaha's signals, begged him to turn around, while the desperate Newfort himself was completely apathetic toward everything that was happening around him and could only make his way with the support from the two slaves.

"You were too late, I know it!" Newfort called as soon as he saw his hosts.

"Not too late to see a murderer hang," replied Sidney fiercely; he could not forgive Newfort the terror and anxiety he had caused everyone, "but if you assume that it was Joseph the *Halfbreed* who paid his earned dues, you are mistaken."

"Not Joseph the *Halfbreed*?" Newfort asked full of amazement and tense anxiety.

"No!" replied Sidney in a still fierce tone. "If you want to see him, turn around with us, but I doubt he will recognize his father in you!"

"Sidney! Sidney!" Franziska said reproachfully. "Why couldn't the stranger have made a mistake?" She approached Newfort and said: "It wasn't your fault that we were frightened to death, and it makes me happy, indescribably happy to give you my holy promise that it wasn't the *Halfbreed* Joseph who was sentenced and executed there; I should know it," she concluded her warm reassuring words with a hint of bashfulness.

"Not Joseph the *Halfbreed!*?" exclaimed Newfort who tried in vain to penetrate the secrecy that shrouded his supposed son's demise and his hosts' relationship to the latter. "Not Joseph the *Halfbreed?*" he asked again. "Oh, God! You try to deceive me, to comfort me, and yet, if you are Joseph's wife, I can't doubt it. But a mistaken identity is not possible!" he continued to be plagued by new doubts and worries. "They could be two different men who have the same name by chance!"

"You are exhausted and weak," Franziska said now once more in her gentle manner to Newfort. "You need rest to recover. I will take you to our quiet log cabin myself, but forgive me if I hurry ahead of you and you won't be able to keep up, but I must hurry to see Joseph; my young friend Sidney will take you on the most passable trail. We will expect you then, and if you are really looking for Joseph the *Halfbreed*, you will find him with us; good bye then!" Full of sympathy for the deception the stranger had experienced, she took Newfort's hand, and told him once more not to hurry, to trust Sidney's guidance entirely, and then she disappeared into the darkness with her father and the Omaha, who had come to her side.

"I will stay behind, await the stranger, and return with him." Andree said after a few steps. "My old limbs are no longer limber enough to walk at such a pace; and then I have heard a number of peculiar things from the stranger that have kindled ideas of the most curious nature in me. He is either a swindler himself or the victim of a cleverly conceived fraud, but in any case, matters are baffling to me. You go and see your husband and ease his worries. The Omaha will accompany you."

Franziska gave her father her hand and bade him goodbye and then hurried away with her Indian protector without another word. The stranger's behavior, his words and revelations, had moved her deeply, but now everything faded in light of the joyous expectation of reuniting with her husband. Just as deathly terror had earlier made her hurry to the place of execution, love now quickened her pace, and when she saw the *Halfbreed's* dark figure before her and heard his exclamation of delight, she fell into his arms with blissful feelings and tears of joy choked her voice. "Oh, how I have worried about you," she whispered to Joseph, who squeezed her to his breast and immediately turned toward home. "May God forgive those who caused me such deathly terror!" she continued while she tenderly nestled up against her husband. "I forgive them because I have you back now."

Joseph and Lefèvre understood nothing of what Franziska referred to, and their astonishment increased by the second when she described the stranger's arrival, his demeanor, their flight and the horrifying scene in the goldmines. The *Halfbreed* became more and more thoughtful with each word; Lefèvre on the other hand heaped curses upon the man who had dared to disturb their peaceful seclusion. "Mille tonnerre, let him come!" he exclaimed while the young couple walked up the winding path in front of him toward the log cabin; "I will show him and his black servants hospitality; he will have to answer me, Sapristi! Wants to be the father! Just want to know what he looks like; Wabash, you have seen him? Wabash! Omaha! Can't you hear me?"

But Wabash had long since turned back, and he was following the wagon on which his archenemy Harrison sat and brooded over his predicament, while Robert had joined his father and Newfort.

39. Recognition

The *Halfbreed*, his young wife, and Lefèvre sat in front of the log cabin for almost half an hour before they could hear the rest of the company approaching.

The Indian woman, who had remained behind by herself, had made a good fire and showed her white friend her joy over the happy ending to by continuously placing new wood and fir twigs into the fire. The flames shot up cheerfully and lit the surroundings as bright as day, and whenever the sap-rich needles dampened the fire and darkened the illumination for seconds, the flames shot up more eagerly in the next moment; the needles dissolved crackling into white ash and, like a fiery rain, thousands of sparks were driven up by the heat to playfully end their short lives in the damp night air.

"The she-bear is going to burn down the house and everything with it," Lefèvre remarked with a smirk while he cleaned out his pipe.

"White father, Wabash, and all see fire, find way here easy," the Indian woman said while she kept pushing new twigs into the fire.

"Would love to roast the intruder along with his Negroes," Lefèvre grumbled. "They deserve it, holy St. Napoleon! Who has ever heard of such a thing! Joe, you,

hanged? Sapristi! Want to know how many prospectors it takes to hang one of us! Ha, ha, ha! Even wants to be the father!"

"Let the poor old man be," Franziska tried to calm him, "he looked like he was suffering and sorrowful, and if I am not mistaken, he is a close relative of the unfortunate man." The young woman trembled when she thought of the scene she had witnessed. "In any case, he was a *Halfbreed*, so why shouldn't he be called Joseph?"

"But Newfort?" asked her husband, in whom all the memories of the past and its humiliations were kindled to life, and who had until now silently looked at the glowing embers.

"Yes, Newfort!" Lefèvre said, pushing his felt hat around on his bushy hair with embarrassment. "Newfort, Newfort," he repeated, "but why can't there be more than one Newfort? Sapristi! The matter is too scholarly for me; I can't find the red thread. But I want to question him, if only to teach him that he can't just walk up to people and frighten them. Tonnerre! But it dawns on me! The man's name isn't Newfort at all, he was joking!"

"No, Lefèvre, the man didn't look like he was able to joke; oh, believe me, it's difficult to joke with tears in your eyes —"

"Yes, truly!" Lefèvre interrupted her.

"And then," the young woman continued warmly, "he seemed to be familiar with the neck band, which Joseph's mother used to wear once."

"Strange indeed!" said Lefèvre, who tried in vain to explain that fact.

"Still, what if he really is?" Joseph said as if he were speaking to himself.

Their attention was now drawn away from the conversation by Sidney and Robert, who appeared, each of them leading a horse. Since the strangers had decided to rely on the hospitality of the log cabin's inhabitants for the night, and since Newfort wanted to meet the other *Halfbreed* Joseph—even though he had heard from Harrison that the one he believed to be his son had been executed—they had left the wagon at the entrance to the canyon and only taken the horses in order to provide care and safety for them during the night.

A small distance behind the wagon followed Andree, and behind him came Newfort and Harrison, while the two Negroes and the Omaha concluded the procession.

At the place where Harrison was expected with the wagon, they had exchanged a few words, but otherwise they had covered the distance in silence. Andree had intended to obtain some information about the peculiar circumstances, but he had likewise fallen silent after several futile attempts of drawing Newfort into a conversation, and nobody suspected the scenario that awaited them. The Omaha did, but only in so far as he expected the unforeseen meeting between Lefèvre and Joseph with Harrison to have a decisive impact.

Once the arriving men stepped from behind the bushes into the open space in front of the cabin, the bright light of the fire blinded them, and they only recognized Franziska, who hurried toward her father. Lefèvre and the *Halfbreed* had taken a seat on the opposite side because the wind was blowing the smoke into the canyon. This way, however, Newfort and Harrison remained invisible to them, and the latter

likewise could not see them. As soon as they heard Andree's voice, they rose and walked around the fire, where the light of the flames illuminated them entirely.

"This is Joseph, the *Halfbreed*, my husband, and this is my fatherly friend, Lefèvre," Franziska said to Newfort now, while she pointed with her hand to the approaching men. At the same time, her glance fell on Harrison, who stood next to the planter in the light of the fire. She fell silent and shrank back as if bitten by a snake because his countenance was no longer the serious, firm face of a man of the cloth who had spoken to her so kindly at the place of execution, but a horribly contorted appearance that stared at the *Halfbreed* and the trapper behind her with a terrifying expression.

The usual pale yellow color of the missionary had turned ash grey; his eyes almost came out of his head, and a rattling sound came from his breast through his wide open mouth, while he stretched out his hands defensively toward those who, he thought, had fled their graves. So he stood—a picture of sheer terror and the object of everyone's attention because nobody had missed the sudden change that had come over him.

Complete silence reigned and fear overcame Franziska. Hesitatingly, as if she were seeking protection, she moved backwards without taking her eyes off Harrison, who stood still.

But even the *Halfbreed* and Lefèvre looked indescribably surprised, and Franziska felt sheer horror when she saw that they, too, looked at Harrison without moving.

"Joseph, Joseph!" she whispered while she pressed herself against her husband. "Joseph, you frighten me." But the Halfbreed did not answer; Lefèvre on the other hand came alive when he heard Franziska, and, uttering a strong curse, he jumped behind the fire, where he had left his rifle.

In the blink of an eye, he was by Joseph's side once more, the butt of his rifle flew to his shoulder, the barrel was pointed at the immobile Harrison, and the shot rang out through the narrow precipice. Franziska uttered a cry of horror, the Negroes wailed, but louder than the thousand-fold echo came Lefèvre's voice.

"Sacré mille tonnerre! Joseph," he called, "I was going to send him to hell for you, and once again you defend your archenemy! But you won't be successful," he continued angrily, while he threw the rifle, which Joseph had struck at the moment he fired, aside. "You won't be successful! Sacré tonnerre!" he pulled his knife and was about to attack Harrison, when Franziska laid her arms around his neck and stopped his movements.

"Lefèvre! Dear friend!" she begged. "Compose yourself! He is a man of God!"

"A man of Satan!" the hunter bristled with anger. He had tried in vain to remove the young woman's arms from his neck with a gentle move.

"Lefèvre!" Franziska continued, "Lefèvre, you who have watched over us with such great care! You, who called me his daughter! I beg you, I beseech you! Spare his life!"

Joseph heard every word. He noticed how the trapper's fist closed itself convulsively around the handle of the knife, but he refrained from intervening

because he knew that it took only the tone of his voice now to fan his friend's anger to the utmost, and he would have certainly pushed Franziska aside and pierced the wretched man in the blink of an eye. He thus thought that his wife's efforts had the best and only chance of success because the rest of the men present would have even less influence on Lefèvre than he had, even if the confusion hadn't been as great.

"Yes, my daughter, for you I will do many things! Many things!"

"I thank you! I thank you!" replied the young woman and she pulled her arms back a bit.

Now Lefèvre's look fell on Harrison again, who hadn't moved aside from his arms, which were limp by his side; a strong shaking had seized him.

"Murderer!" the trapper yelled, whose full anger came alive again. He lifted the fist with the knife threateningly, and his right foot moved forward, but at the same time Franziska's arms were back around his neck.

"Escape! For God's sake, escape!" she called to Harrison in terror; "flee, I beseech you!"

Harrison's good sense seemed to have come alive with her words. He realized the grave danger he was in, and he looked around, but appeared to be at a loss. He looked into the dark night, and then he turned around quickly, pushed past the two Negroes, and followed the trail out of the canyon at a quick pace.

As soon as Lefèvre lost sight of the hated priest, his composure returned. He pushed his knife back into the sheath, and placing his bony hand gently on Franziska's part in the hair, he looked her in the eyes amicably: "I have always said it," he began,

"you have the heart of a warrior in your breast; sacré tonnerre, I want to see the man who dares the take a hold of Lefèvre's arm when he is about to punish a criminal. It is better this way, my daughter. I don't like the sight of blood, but for him death might have been a blessing."

Franziska thanked the old man with a warm handshake and then stepped back to her husband's side. She could read pride and joy in his eyes about her behavior.

Silence settled, a silence that usually follows important events; in this case however, the silence was the result of the feeling of awkwardness that Newfort's presence caused.

Newfort himself, exhausted to the highest degree by the events and Harrison's flight, had once again taken his seat on the wooden block where he had been sitting a few hours earlier. He supported his head with both hands again, and the mental tension seemed to be much greater than his physical tension. The two Negroes, whose faces had turned light-grey in horror, but now glowed like molten iron in the light of the fire, stood behind him and watched his movements with concern. Even the inhabitants of the log cabin, with the exception of the Omaha, who was missing, looked at the broken man with sympathy, but everyone hesitated to begin a conversation that might make him even more sorrowful; yet, they all had a burning desire to understand the words he had spoken a few hours ago on the same spot.

"You must be exhausted," Franziska, who first and foremost felt pity, addressed him now. "You must indeed be very exhausted. Would you like to step inside the cabin and rest on a comfortable bed?"

Newfort looked up as if he were awakening from a dream, and once more, his eyes fell on the Indian neckband and he kept looking at it for a while.

"Yes. Yes, Sir," Lefèvre confirmed, "enough places to rest in the cabin; go inside and recover. You can tell us tomorrow what has brought you together with the murderer, the criminal Harrison."

"Murderer, criminal?" asked Newfort, "And you know him?"

"Know him?" replied Lefèvre astonished, "just ask my friend Joseph if you don't believe me. Sapristi, we met him on several occasions. Ask the Omaha, too, he will likewise give you a report; hello, Wabash!"

But Wabash did not hear anything since he had disappeared with Harrison.

"Your name is Joseph?" Newfort now turned to the *Halfbreed*.

"My name is Joseph," he replied. His voice trembled because after what he had heard, he no longer doubted that his father was in front of him; he had come to look for him and had been deliberately misled. Harrison's presence had suddenly solved the mystery for him; it struck him like lightning that from the moment he had met Harrison, he had been pursued without cease, and he had only managed to escape through what seemed to be miracles.

Newfort had once more assumed his thinker pose. He apparently was trying to compose himself before asking further questions.

"Your father's name is Newfort?" he suddenly asked while he leapt to his feet.

"You were turned away at his doorstep; you and your father were deceived. It was not Newfort's son who was executed; Harrison's escape explains everything. The

neckband! The neckband! Where does it come from? In God's name, don't deceive me. I have been deceived so many times that I don't dare believing anything!"

"The neckband?" Joseph replied with a wistful expression. "It's the last and only inheritance from my mother. But answer me one question; a question that may perhaps decide the fate of your son: Have you come to find your son? Your son, the descendent of a despised, downtrodden race?"

"Joseph!" Newfort exclaimed deeply moved while he took the *Halfbreed's* hands and looked into his eyes with an indescribable expression. "Joseph, I have come to find you, my son, and to atone for how I wronged your mother, to never separate from you again, to never let anything come between us again!"

"Not even this young woman?" Joseph asked. He pulled his wife close with bashfulness though pride shone from his eyes.

"She was the first in many, many years who spoke sincerely, received me with warmth and care, and I should —" once more his voice faltered from the depth of his emotions. "But is it true?" He exclaimed after a while with teary eyes. "Is it all true? I can't believe it! There, the *Halfbreed* Joseph was executed! Here, I meet the *Halfbreed* Joseph; a *Halfbreed* my heart feels affection for! Tell me again that I am not mistaken; tell me it is the truth, and I will thank God for his grace and mercy. You, worthy old man, and you, too, who reveals his good, honest heart in every word," he now spoke to Andree and Lefèvre, "don't be angry with me, but consider my predicament. Here, misery; there, peaceful smiling happiness! What a difference! Don't look at me in silence! Speak and tell me that I am not mistaken!"

Andree approached Newfort. He was so moved that he couldn't find words, but instead took his hand and squeezed it in a heartfelt manner. He pointed to Joseph and Franziska with a friendly nod at Newfort.

Newfort understood. A heretofore-unknown joy filled his breast when he saw the two standing before him like shy children, but he was too moved to speak; the tears in his eyes expressed it clearly and without misunderstanding.

"Look, old Gentleman, or Mr. Newfort, or whatever your name may be!" said Lefèvre, who could no longer contain himself. He stepped in front of the planter, placed his right hand heavily on his shoulder, and took his felt hat off with his left hand. "Look at my scalp! It used to be as brown as a ripe chestnut, Sapristi! That was a long time ago, but now it is snow-white and there isn't a single hair that hasn't turned grey in an honorable fashion, so believe me that I will not ruin my last few years with a lie. If ever a Pawnee *Halfbreed* named Joseph set foot on the green prairie, it was this one here; and he is a gentleman on top of it, from head to toe. I've known him twenty years and taught him to trap beavers; he's got the eye of a cat, and a hand as steady as the Governor's mansion in Jefferson, and a heart like a dozen gentlemen. The old Mac Neal educated him and blessed him while dying, and the old Mac Neal was world's most pious man—promised to pray for me—Nekoma rocked Joseph, and Joe, as he stands before you now, said: —my fatherly friend Lefèvre—shall—in his old age—not—yes, he said that and more! Sacré tonnerre!" the softhearted hunter exclaimed; and when he felt that the tears were slowly running into his shaggy beard, he turned around quickly and began to stoke the fire.

Lefèvre speech had touched everyone's heart because when he ended, Franziska was holding Newfort's hand and looked up at him. "What he says must be true," she said kindly. She wanted to continue, but Newfort interrupted by exclaiming: "How can I doubt it? It's only that the past weighs heavily on me, and I can hardly understand the happy present. Joseph!" he continued, placing his hands on the *Halfbreed's* shoulders and looking at him; Joseph, you are my son, the son of the poor Indian woman who was a victim of my improvidence. Joseph, look at me and tell me that you forgive me in the name of your poor mother!"

"My mother forgave you before I was born; my old nurse and the missionary, in whose house I was born, told me."

"Holy St. Washington and everyone else who is holy!" Lefèvre roared. "If she hadn't forgiven you then, she would do so now because she sits in heaven now, looking down, and she is happy that you are not ashamed of the half Indian; yes, in heaven; Mac Neal said it; whether Negro, Indian, or white man, all good people met in heaven; and damned be every priest who tells you otherwise! I wouldn't make it since I didn't see a church as a child!" Lefèvre jumped over to the fire again to compose himself. — — —

The rough hunter's rough words sounded like a prayer;²⁷⁹ like a natural, sincere prayer spoken as a blessing over everyone assembled, who now extended their hands to one another, without any pomp and glory, and looked each other in the eyes.

²⁷⁹ *des rauhen Jägers rauhe Worte klangen wie ein Gebet*

The spring murmured and sputtered so cheerfully and boisterously as if it meant to share the happiness of the mortals who were reunited on its edges; the Negroes sat offside and first tears of wistfulness rolled down their cheeks, and then they showed their happiness through roaring laughter; and when Franziska asked them kindly to move closer to the fire, they obeyed like bashful children who had committed a small infraction.

A quarter of an hour later, everyone sat in intimate conversation by the fire. Newfort was between the *Halfbreed* and Franziska and listened to this person and that person, whosoever was recounting the events that had happened since they first made each other's acquaintance or added to another one's story. He shivered when he considered the sinister net that had been cast over him and his son, and he tried to convince himself in vain that Browns had not been in a culpable relationship to Buschmark and Harrison. He remembered the extensive power of attorney with which he had left Browns, a power of attorney that, if misused, could cost him the greatest part of his possessions. But his thoughts only meandered to such matters momentarily because when he looked at the *Halfbreed*, who in a serious, thoughtful way that almost contradicted his youthful exterior explicated his opinions, or when he heard the views of the reasonable young woman, whose shyness had quickly given way to her usual trusting, winning nature, well, then he felt at ease with his situation and no complaint would have crossed his lips if he were forced to take up pick and shovel to work for a living together with them.

The company disbanded only around the midnight hour to seek their beds in the small cabin. Lefèvre, the two Negroes, and the Indian woman had spread out their blanket under the small shed by the fire. The Indian woman fell asleep as soon as it was quiet in the cabin, but the Negroes on the other hand still conversed in a whisper for a long time. They were too excited to close their eyes, and they talked about the events of the day— a reality they almost seemed to have difficulty grasping— again and again.

They preferably talked about Harrison. Now, that they knew his story, the two old fellows assured each other eagerly that they had known him to be a crook at first glance, but refrained from talking about it out of respect for their Master.

Slowly, they became more monosyllabic. "Would you want to wander around in the dark now like Master Harrison?" Sambo asked his companion after a long break.

"Certainly not, but would you like it?" came the answer.

"No, no! It's too terrible in the wilderness, and then in the dark where he can't see anything. Poor Massa Harrison."

"Poor Massa Harrison."

"Po—or—Harr—"and the two slept so soundly that it would have taken a blast from a cannon to wake them.

'Poor Harrison' they had said. Nobody ever heard from him again. Newfort and Andree were of the opinion that he had fled to the Sandwich Islands because he never returned to the "Miners' Rest Hotel," and Lefèvre had no desire to make

inquires that might have been successful. Wabash was the only one who might have known his whereabouts because he had been the last to see the priest. —

The Negroes had fallen silent and Lefèvre had dropped his little pipe, when the Omaha went quietly past the fire and down to the little spring. Soon thereafter quiet splashing could be heard, the result of him thoroughly washing himself, and a few minutes later, the Indian threw new branches into the fire and dried his dripping body before the leaping flames.

40. The Farewell

Approximately three weeks after the events described in the previous chapter, the dock in San Francisco's west end was the picture of busy traffic. It was the pier where the steamship destined for Panama was to hoist anchor and begin its journey south with mail and passengers.

People swayed back and forth on the gangway and on the jetty because there were not just passengers and their friends and relatives who had assembled, but also countless curious people who took an hour of their precious time to enjoy the colorful scenes that usually accompanied the departure of an ocean steamer.

It was a wild throng indeed because aside from the fact that all classes of people (or at least those to be found in California) were present and a number of nationalities, and just as many languages and dialects, the haste with which passengers and porters moved back and forth, and the slow obstinacy with which spectators often blocked their path gave rise to frequent disagreements that threatened

to develop into open conflict; this in turn was doubly welcomed by the spectators because it animated the situation and brought relief from monotony.²⁸⁰

The boilers in the colossal vessel had already been heated in the early morning, and therefore the humming of human voices, the whistling of the boatswain and the singing of the sailors, which accompanied their work, were all accompanied by the peculiarly blustering sound the steam made when it sought its way out through the smokestack.

The greatest part of the travelers had already been on board since daybreak and they were frequently jostled by porters and stewards in the most ungentle manner, but had had the advantage of being able to guard the cabin they had selected or finagled so that no other passengers might occupy it.

Some took their precautions so far as to take to their beds right after their arrival on board, and they didn't reappear on deck before the hundreds of travelers had settled—not unlike the contents in a cloudy glass of water—and made themselves at home.

Under such circumstances it was only natural that a number of closed doors that led to the most comfortable cabins on the upper deck, each equipped for only two people, were regarded with envy by the arriving passengers. They were untouchable because aside from the fact that they were locked and deadbolted, which would have only been a minor obstacle for passengers looking for a good place to sleep, the names of the fortunate travelers who had managed to obtain one of them in advance

²⁸⁰ *Leben und Abwechslung*

through bribery or close acquaintance with the captain and the secretary, were written in pencil, chalk, or ink on each of the varnished and gilded doors.

In front of two of the doors sat guards in a manner that signaled that entry into the closed cabins was only possible over their dead bodies.

These sentinels, who were two grey-haired Negroes, took turns preempting anyone who stepped closer to try and read the names on the door by either proclaiming the names "Massa Andree and Massa Newfort" or "'young' Massa Newfort with Lady" respectively.

A certain triumph shone in the old servants' eyes when they watched the travelers walk away dissatisfied after such inquiries, and if they had not found it undignified, they would have shown their feelings openly and even broken into their usual snickering laughter. For now, though, they were happy to let their pupils disappear entirely in the corners of their eyes and to show each other the whites of their eyes with an inimitable expression, while they made short jokes, provided that the butt of the joke was far enough away not to be able to hear their squibs.

Newfort, Andree, Joseph Newfort, and the young Mrs. Newfort were at this time still in town. They sat on a bench in front of their inn from where they watched the steamer they had chosen for their journey. They could rely entirely on Washington's and Sambo's watchfulness and care, and since the two Negroes had already gone on board with the luggage before dawn, nothing kept them now from enjoying until the last minute the company of their loved ones with whom they had lived for so long and whom they were about to leave for a long time.

Lefèvre, Robert, and Sidney had accompanied their departing loved ones to San Francisco, and only Wabash with his wife had remained in the log cabin by the Middle Fork. Lefèvre intended to return to the upper Missouri and to meet the *Halfbreed* in St. Louis or New Orleans. Since he, like most trappers, had a unconquerable dislike for the ocean, his friends' most urgent pleas had not managed to convince him to travel the comfortable and less time-consuming water way.

His decision to return over land was irrevocable, but he wanted to let the winter months pass, or, more precisely, pass them with lucrative hunting in the mountains, and then begin the arduous journey in the company of the Omaha and his wife when the weather became milder.

Robert and Sidney, on the other hand, could not be moved to leave California any time soon. The few weeks they had spent there had been sufficient to convince them that it would be much easier there than at any other place on earth to work their way to independence. As difficult as the goodbye was, and as much Sidney yearned for his loved ones, they did not waver in their decision: no return home until they were able to look with pride at the fruits of their striving and their labor. They intended to spend the winter in the company of Lefèvre and the Omaha and to live by supporting themselves through hunting like them. They had determined the time of Lefèvre's departure as the point by which they would make a decision regarding their future way of life.

Smith, the traveler who had been in the accident and had then become their travel companion, who had already joined merchant life in San Francisco and had

sought out his old friends after they arrived in the hotel, agreed in his views with the two young people. Thus Andree gave up the hope of seeing his son and his host's son travel with him, though he did so with a heavy heart.

At the bottom of his heart he understood their views because in his own case it had taken all of his daughter's persuasive power and Newfort's promise to "find him an appropriate occupation" to make him follow them to Louisiana.

Joseph and Franziska adjusted more easily to the new circumstances, and the reserve and bashfulness that Joseph had initially felt for his new father vanished quickly in light of the sincere tenderness Newfort showed for him and his wife. When the latter handed Franziska an open document one day and not only called her his daughter, but also Mrs. Newfort, the last barrier that had existed between father and son vanished, and it was thus an intimately connected family that sat on the bench by the hotel and looked over to the steamer hoisting its anchor.

"You should have traveled with us," said Franziska, who looked doubly charming in her simple but carefully selected travel suit. "You should have traveled with us, Father Lefèvre. It makes me sad to think that you want to make the dangerous trip through the wilderness again."

"Well, Father Lefèvre you call me?" the trapper replied, incredibly moved, while he planted his hand carelessly onto Franziska's dainty hat that was decorated with artificial flowers and bows. "Well, Father Lefèvre, Sapristi! You are an elegant lady and I am an old beaver trapper!"

"I do it intentionally; you must know that Joe and I insist on having our fathers close to us, which means you must spend your old age with us."

Lefèvre took turns looking at Joseph and then at his blossoming wife; he looked at both with the same expression of goodwill. "Yes, yes," he began, "when my old limbs begin to fail me, I will come to you. I taught him how to catch the beaver and the otter, so can teach me how to relax at the end of my days. Tonnerre! If the ocean was a green prairie, then I would travel with you, but I won't go on the water; yes, you can smile, it's not fear, just dislike; I would rather meet all the Shoshone and Ute vermin on the warpath than spend a night on the ocean. It's too nice to have solid ground underfoot instead of the untamable water, and a horse instead of a ship. I feel like my own master this way, rather than being a slave to the water; I was told the wind can't be harnessed and brought to a standstill."

"That is true," Franziska replied, "but there is no reason to stop anywhere but a safe harbor. Just look at Joseph; he, too, is embarking on his first sea voyage."

"If Joseph had grown as old as I am in the wilderness, who knows if he wouldn't have preferred to return through the prairie with his young wife as well?"

"And I would have certainly accompanied him; I have the heart of a warrior," Franziska replied.

"Sapristi! You are right, my daughter," said Lefèvre. He relished hearing his words repeated. "But just be patient for another six or seven months, then we will see each other again and talk of our journeys."

"Please bring Wabash and the she-bear with you," the young woman requested.

"Yes, Monsieur Lefèvre," old Andree interrupted, "if you want to heed a sincere request, then bring these good people to us again."

"Certainly, certainly, I will do that!" replied Lefèvre warmly. "Wabash is a gentleman through and through, sacré tonnerre! How happy he would be if he knew how we talked about him here!"

Newfort had regarded the group surrounding him with quiet pleasure this whole time. But the ringing of the ship's bell, which just sounded for the first time and reminded farther away passengers to hurry, signaled to everyone that the hour had come in which all other feelings would pale in comparison to the pain of separation. Yes, the sound of the bell made everyone fall silent because there was nobody among them who would not automatically ask: "Will we see each other again?" Who knew? The deceptive sea and the dangerous wilderness were about to step between them and disperse them, and even if their eyes were turned upward in a trusting manner, their hearts were full of deep grief.

They sat silently and tears of wistfulness came to their eyes every now and then in light of the impending departure. Their eyes were fixed on the ship and the surrounding people.

Suddenly, in the dense crowd a broad pathway was opened up and became visible. It ran from the first row of houses to the mighty wheelhouse of the steamer. Several men appeared, and taking up the entire breadth of the open pathway, they

walked up to the gangplank. After them followed some small, locked carts, each pulled by a horse. On both sides of the carts walked men, rebuffing the approaching mob.

It was the fortune destined for the mint in Philadelphia. The entryways on the steamboat were blocked off, and when the first cart reached the casing of the steamer, sailors had already lined up in long rows to receive the heavy boxes with precious metal and transport them from hand to hand into the safe vault. The mob fell silent with awe, the covers of the carts were opened, and the first box prepared the way for the hundreds that followed.

How everyone sought to get a glance of the riches that were handled here like ordinary goods!²⁸¹ And how different were the wishes that accompanied the single boxes! But that didn't keep the sailors from the task; thousands of dollars became hundred thousands, hundred thousands millions, and when the last box had disappeared in the hatch, the workers wiped the sweat of their brow. They all seemed happy that it was not more. —

The passage was reopened, the bell sounded for the second time, and then a waiter stepped to the group that was sitting in front of the door. "It rang 'On Board,'" he said, and everyone rose silently to walk the short distance to the dock.

Ten minutes later, the entire company was on board the steamer, where Newfort's Negroes led them toward the less crowded back.

²⁸¹ *totde Waare*

A steward, who from time to time made a hellish noise with a Chinese drum,²⁸² walked across the deck now. "Everyone who is not a passenger is asked to disembark!" he called, and once more his copperplate rattled.

"Children! We must leave!" Lefèvre finally said when the noisy drum was far enough away and they could hear each other. "We must leave if we don't want to become involuntary passengers on this blessed ship! Remember your old friend when you are far from him," he continued while shaking everyone's hand. He wanted to say more, but the compressed steam screeched fiercely through the pipes, drowning out the blessing and wishes that were exchanged. Why did they need words anyway? The eyes swimming in tears, the convulsive handshake, and the warm embrace expressed everything. —

The sound of a cannon thundered from the foredeck. "Sidney, Robert, come! The ship is already moving," called Lefèvre; he feared to be carried out to high sea. "Come!" he repeated, taking both by the arms and pulling them to the gangplank, where he jumped ahead of them onto the pier.

A second shot of the canon vibrated over the expansive port basin, the gangplank was withdrawn, and the boatswain standing on the wheelhouse called loudly: "All clear!" The pilot gave the mate, and the captain the foreman the signal; the rumbling of the steam in the smokestack stopped, and for a few moments it was completely silent.

²⁸² *A Tanggu*

Now the paddles sank slowly into the waters with a splashing sound, and the mighty structure moved backwards a full ship-length, responding to their pressure, just as slowly. The wheels stood still, and then they spun in the opposite direction, and slowly the ship moved forward, the front part moved farther and farther away from the pier, while the back of the ship rubbed along the dock with creaking and cracking.

The Newfort family floated past Lefèvre and his two young companions; the departing company bent over the railing, looked down, and saw the silent pain of their friends. Robert and Sidney cried freely; Lefèvre stood with his head uncovered; he held the hat in both hands, and by the manner in which he kneaded it, it was clear that the separation was painful for him.

The last hawser with which the steamer had still been tied to the dock now fell splashing into the water.

"All clear!" the first officer called. "Fire!" commanded the captain. The cannon thundered, and a thundering hurrah answered from the crowded deck and from the pier.

For the second and third time the ship's cannons woke the echo in the far away mountain chain, and just as often the farewell greeting came from a thousand throats.

The rudder beat the water to foam at a faster pace now, the vessel tilted to its side, described a wide arc, and soon disappeared from the sphere of the voices, which still continued to send one or the other farewell after them. Handkerchiefs still waved

a long time on board and on land, and innumerable silent blessings were sent back and forth.

Lefèvre, Robert, and Sidney looked sadly after the steamship; only when it disappeared in the "Golden Gate," and the fort had greeted it with the usual salute of three salvos and had in turn received the same greeting, did they go back to their hotel to prepare for their departure to the gold country.

Lefèvre soon enough found his cheerful courage and good mood again. Sidney and Robert on the other hand lost their gloominess only after they had arrived at the lonely cabin and accompanied Lefèvre and the Omaha on their hunting excursions.

Since the departure of their friends and family, they felt no desire to continue prospecting, but shifted their energies to hunting together, which not only brought them a decent sum, but also allowed them to save a not insignificant amount that they considered the foundation of their future endeavors.

The winter with its sustained, powerful rain soon chased the prospectors from the claims and forced the four hunters, too, to move closer to the coast. The innumerable flocks of waterfowl offered them opportunity there to exercise their favorite pastime, and since they could easily reach the market in San Francisco, they had no reason to complain.

They experienced the first sorrows in the spring, when the feared moment of their separation approached. But their personal desires had to give way to unchangeable necessity. Lefèvre and his Indian companions went east; Robert and

Sidney, on the other hand, turned with youthful courage and hopes toward the tumultuous bustle of California trade.

41. On the Plantation

Exactly twenty-one days had passed since their departure when Newfort landed with Andree and the young couple in New Orleans. He had notified Browns from San Francisco about his arrival, but without telling him about Harrison's betrayal, and he had received a letter from Browns on the day before his departure, in which the latter conveyed the most joyful news about the plantation in his care. Newfort was thus greatly surprised when he did not see Browns at their arrival.

He still sought to suppress his suspicion of the seemingly sincere friend and even now considered it not unlikely that Browns had not received his last letter and thus had had no reason to send a carriage from the plantation to the dock when he heard the news of the Panama steamer's appearance at the Mississippi Delta.

The bad impression all this had left was heightened by the fact that the driver of the coach Sambo had fetched told them that "Mr. Browns, the known deputy and representative of the plantation owner Newfort" had been absent for weeks now.

Newfort, who was highly displeased by the news, delayed investigating further in town and immediately went to the plantation with his loved ones to see matters for himself.

Those who accompanied him had more or less noticed his anxiety; a fear that weighed on his breast like a nightmare, and which even the cheerful Negroes were

unable to chase away. The poor slaves, little did they know what sad news awaited them.

Newfort let the driver halt by the gate to the premises; he was almost fearful to drive up to the main house, and thus he invited his family, which is how he referred to Andree and the young couple, to follow him on a short cut through the yard.

They walked silently on the gravel-covered path. Aside from Washington and Sambo, no one paid attention to the picturesque trees that still displayed full, albeit colored, foliage. Instead, the planter's gaze fell on the thick grass clumps that had sprouted up on the neglected walkways and paths.

They heard the barking of some dogs from the Negro village, but Washington and Sambo didn't hear the self-important cackling of the hens, the shrill call of the guinea fowl, and the cheerful quacking of the ducks, and this gave them the first reason to be disappointed.

After a short walk, the company reached the flower garden behind which the *Halfbreed* had experienced such undignified treatment. He had found out long ago that he had not in fact killed the attacking Negro, but a painful feeling came to his breast when he thought of the past; just as quickly, he felt pure happiness again when he looked at his lovely wife and considered that he owed the fact that he possessed²⁸³ her to having once been turned away from this spot.

While they walked around the flower garden, they saw a Negro woman who was squatting on the top steps of the veranda. They could not see her features because

²⁸³ *ihren Besitz*

she held her face between the pulled-up knees; the grey wool that peeked out from underneath the turban-like scarf she had wound around her head revealed that she was very old.

She appeared to be sleeping, or at least didn't notice them approaching.

Suddenly, Sambo pushed past his master with as loud exclamation.

"My own, dear, sweet Miss Snowball!" he wailed with a voice once might have mistaken for crying.

As soon as the old woman heard the first tone of Sambo's words, she sprung up, looked at the approaching man for a second, and then sank with the piercing cry "Sambo! Oh boy! Oh boy!" into her husband's arms.

It was a touching scene, this old married couple, how they cuddled and kissed, took turns laughing and crying, and how Washington pushed himself into the middle to get his share of the affection.

Newfort had unwittingly stopped so as not to disturb the happiness of the two old people; when he heard however that Miss Snowball began to sob, it dawned on him that matters on the plantation were not as they were supposed to be.

"How are our children and grandchildren? How are big Sambo and little Sambo? How is little Jim? Is he walking yet? What is neighbor Pompeius telling you? And the others?" Washington and Sambo asked in one breath.

Miss Snowball though was sobbing and couldn't speak; finally, she composed herself: "Sold!" she screamed with a piercing voice. "Sold! All were sold! Oh,

Massa!" she continued turning to Newfort. "Why have you done this to us? Why did you sell our loved ones?"

Sambo and Washington froze; they couldn't believe their ears! Miss Snowball's new, increased wailing removed their last doubts; their black features paled to a bluish grey, and grabbing their white wool with their hands, they broke into such a heartrending wailing that Franziska pressed herself fearfully against her husband and wished herself far away from the scenes that threatened to break her heart.

"That is the curse of slavery!" said Newfort and turned to Andree and his son. It was the first time in his life that he voiced such an opinion. "Yes, that is the curse of slavery, but as God is my witness, I am not immediately at fault for the misfortune of those poor people."

The wailing of the three old people had in the meantime attracted the largest part of the remaining black population from the village, and when Newfort entered through the door Miss Snowball had opened into the saloon, a crowd of frail old slaves stood by the foot of the veranda asking their Master for relief from their suffering.

"It is awful," Newfort said while looking at his loved ones one by one. He registered an expression of confusion and despondency in them. "It is awful, but I must know the entire extent of the misfortune before I am able to intervene and bring relief."

He then went outside to speak some words of comfort to the poor people, and it took all his skill to persuade them that he had not ordered the sale of one third of his slaves, but that he had been betrayed. That, however, did not dry the tears, but he restored some trust so that he was able to sketch a picture of the treasonous Browns.

"Take heart, children," he said after he had restored enough quiet to be heard by everyone. "Take heart and consult with each other. Try to recall all circumstances of the sale and recount to me exactly to where your loved ones were sold. I on the other hand promise you to buy every single one back whose location we know—even if I have to sell my plantation. I, too, will make inquiries and do everything in my power to reunite you with your loved ones. But now go, children; don't burden my heart any further with your lamentations. Go and send the overseers to me."

"The overseers are no longer here!" the answer came. "The white ones disappeared, sent away by Massa Browns, and the black ones were sold!"

"Leave then, children, I must deliberate undisturbed how to ease the misfortune in the quickest way."

The usually so cheerful black people went back to their village feeling despondent, and Newfort went to his family that awaited him in the luxuriously furnished, but dusty parlor feeling no less despondent.

"That is the curse of slavery," he said once more while he sat down on the comfortable cane chair he had sat on so many days, yes, so many years while he was ill. "How different it could be! But, my dears don't take the sad reception to heart. — We have a difficult task to accomplish before we can think about the future. You will

help me to bring the children back to their mothers, the parents back to their children who were taken from them in such a cruel manner. It must be terrible to be separated in such a fashion from those one loves the most."

"We will help to the best of our ability," replied Andree, Joseph, and Franziska while they gently squeezed Newfort's hands. "Just tell us how we can be useful."

They felt empathy for Newfort and were unwittingly and unconsciously touched by the sincere sorrow because it was not just the slaveholder who spoke to them, but a man who had been refined by his own terrible worries and now felt sincere sadness for the misfortune of his fellow human beings and only wanted to ease their pain.

Newfort's finer sentiments had been awakened by the events of the past year, and they had won over the prejudices of his youth. *Most of the North American slave holders and slave dealers, however, will only realize the disgrace of their attitudes when those who are the most dear to their heart bleed to death from the revenge the unleashed race is bound to take, that is, when it is "too late."*²⁸⁴

It took Newfort, Andree and their children some effort to restore order on the plantation because not only had most of the Negroes been sold, but also all the provisions that are usually accumulated in the late fall on plantations.

²⁸⁴ Emphasis in the original

Just like the garden and the plants, the buildings and rooms had likewise been neglected, and the slaves, in the absence of a guiding hand, had taken to eating all the cows after having gone through the chickens.

Many Negroes who believed themselves to be unburdened of their duties in light of the chaos and privation had walked away, and others had fallen ill, so that the once splendid plantation was a truly pitiful, disheartening sight to behold, no matter where they looked.

The friendly courtesy and tender care of the young Mrs. Newfort, who helped and consoled wherever she could, lifted the broken spirits of the slaves up enough so that they voluntarily offered to help remedy the situation.²⁸⁵ Except for a few of them, the refugees returned, too, and as a result of that the estate soon again looked like it had in its earlier, good times. The inquiries Newfort made through the court in New Orleans showed that Harrison had not only used the power of attorney to the highest degree, but that he had also falsified it by adding additional paragraphs. Thus, he had no difficulty mortgaging Newfort's property and securing that sum, together with the proceeds from the sale of the slaves, for himself.

Under the circumstances, everyone easily believed his excuse that the planter had speculated in California and needed unusually great sums, and since the slaves were clandestinely shipped to Cuba with the power of attorney Browns had in hand, nobody found anything strange about the whole situation.

²⁸⁵ *ihre Kräfte zur Beseitigung von Mängeln und Übelständen aufboten.*

Harrison's last letter, in which he recounted the failure of the so carefully crafted plan, had been the impetus for Browns to act in such a ignoble manner, and the timespan of only two weeks had been sufficient for him to sell the majority of Newfort's assets.

The cunning crook had been able to keep his flight a secret so that despite the most thorough investigations, they were not able to find any trace of him. It was in vain; Browns had disappeared and remained gone, and with him the unbelievable sums of money he had stolen in the brazen theft.

On the day on which the steamer with the Newforts on board turned into the Mississippi Delta, a light brig navigated with all sails hoisted around the Bahama Banks. It had sailed with its cargo from Vera Cruz to Havana, had taken tobacco on board there and then sailed for twenty-four hours in sight of the lighthouse. A pilot cutter had approached it during that time, had anchored by its side for half an hour and unloaded passengers and luggage. As soon as the small vessel turned around, sailing hard into the southwest wind to drive toward the South, the brig hoisted its canvas sail and danced cheerfully on the foamy, blue water by using the wind and the current.

Its destination was a French harbor in the Mediterranean Sea.

However, individual pieces of luggage that were temporarily tied up on the gangplank showed the destination "Rome." Aside from the Captain, who paid close attention to the notorious channel, and the sailor at the steering wheel, whose eyes went from compass to bowsprit, there were only two men on board.

They were the passengers who had come on board in a secretive fashion. They sat on a bench on the side and contemplatively regarded the waves dashing against the ship and sending their splashes up to them.

"I want to know what happened to Harrison," the shorter one broke the silence.

"Don't worry about the past," the other replied, "you must always remember that along with your name you have also changed your entire purpose in life. Your former friends and companions are dead to you now. You must even ban the memories of them from your breast and keep your eyes unfailingly on the beautiful goal you have set for yourself."

"It is true," the first man now said, "you paint a colorful future, and I would indeed like nothing more than to break with the past and to forget everything because in the end we committed nothing more than common theft."

"Become used to looking at the matter from a different vantage point from now on, You know, the money was originally destined for the church. We, and I purposefully say "we," took what was no longer rightfully the planter's, didn't belong to him anymore. We took what the church had a rightful claim to. May the world condemn us; we are justified before God and our superiors because the end justifies the means."

Once more a wave clapped against the boat and a fine mist fell over the bulwark and onto the scrubbed deck. The passengers rose and walked to the other side where they did not have to worry about such accidents. The vessel pitched

cheerfully through the waves; here it dipped its black bow deep into the salty floods, and there it showed its copper embossed keel to the wind. The masts bent under the full sails and a whole row of sailors hung on the main yard, like a human chain. They reefed the topsail and sang:

My girl is an angel,
Ahoy, ahoy!
Here comes the jolly boat,
Ahoy, ahoy, ahoy!

42. Conclusion

Now, that I am approaching the end of my narrative and see everything completed in front of me, I feel a certain regret over the separation from people with whom I had relationships in my imagination for so long.

The regret becomes more intense because I have met so many of the people—the *Halfbreed* Joseph is among them—that appear in *Der Halbindianer*; in many instances, I haven't lost sight of them yet.

Robert Andree and Sidney Bigelow stayed in California for many years. They perpetually struggled against circumstances—sometimes favored with luck, other times pursued by misfortune.

Their adventures were numerous; too numerous and diverse to find a place here, so perhaps I will make them the subject of a narrative later on. I will consider the twins on that occasion as well.

Mr. Sarpy of St. Louis, who had at one point hoped to win the *Halfbreed* for his services, has long since joined his fathers. Even the fur company will soon see its demise because civilization is advancing and the animals becoming extinct.

This is the reason in particular why I enjoy returning to the peculiar scenes and events in the West that still offers a rich, free life, but which we will soon only know from stories that, although they are in harmony with nature, will be regarded as a sort of fairy tale. I say thus with full conviction once more what I have said previously, and what other travelers have told me as well: "Take the indigenous hunter and roaming buffalo herds from the North American continent, and it will lose its poetic character with which a generous nature has endowed it, and which can be replaced neither by railroads, nor by the smoke stacks of distilleries and factories; neither by conscienceless politics, nor by the soothing words of fanatic, egocentric priests."

But let me return to the family I have grown to love, and let me dedicate my last thoughts and words in this work to its members.

The stay on the plantation only lasted a few months, but it gained a certain charm for everyone because they all helped with the difficult, in some cases unfortunately futile, work of finding the sold slaves and buying them back.

And when they managed to restore a father to a family, children to their parents, and tears of delight streamed down the black cheeks and the poor human beings crowded their masters to show their gratitude through affection, then everyone

felt richly rewarded for the efforts and the significant financial sacrifices Newfort had to make.

Such scenes softened the once cold-hearted slave owner, and it took little effort from Joseph, Franziska, and Andree to get him to issue free papers to the black population that were to be irrevocably valid after the planter's death.

Even though Newfort had enough financial reserves after the incredible loss to keep his plantation in its old splendor, he decided to sell it. On the one hand, he was moved to do so by the climate that seemed to be disadvantageous to his health and that of his loved ones, but on the other hand he wished to escape the ridicule he suffered from all sides because of the humane way he treated his slaves.

When the plantation passed into new hands during the course of the sale, the Negroes were not part of the deal and their free papers became effective. A part of them remained behind as free black workers in their old home, and others migrated to a Free State to settle there, and a not insignificant portion followed Newfort up the Missouri where he had a vast estate with a furnished house.

— — — —

Newfort's farm is situated approximately six miles from the city of Kansas. The stately house stands on the banks of the Missouri and composed the eastern border of the estate along with the gardens, house for the Negroes, stables, and barns. The land stretches far to the West and offers charming transitions between cultivated fields, picturesque forests, and just as picturesque prairies,

Cheerful Negroes work the fields, numerous well-fed herds are grazing on the prairies, and a number of black children and white children are playing in the courtyard in front of the house, which is shaded by trees. In the house itself live the former planter, the former German veterinarian, and the young Mr. Newfort with his lovely wife.

A short distance from the main house, but likewise situated with a view of the magnificent river, lies a second house. It is simply built of beams and boards, but the hundred-year-old oaks and maple trees that partially conceal it give it a truly cozy appearance. Before the new house was built, this had been the actual main house. Now it is not vacant either because an old, grey hunter and an Indian couple have made it their home. How close they are to the occupants of the villa becomes easily apparent when the inhabitants of the main house gather every night in front of the simple house when their friends, who are devoted to hunting, are present; or, in case of bad weather, inside the house in front of a big fireplace. Then, they chat all evening and part of the night. One can clearly hear the narrative voice of an old man, the light laughter of a young woman, and the cheers and quacking of happy children; through everything comes an occasional "Sapristi!" or "Tonnerre!" that sounds like congratulation or secret laughter.

Once in a while, one can hear the children exclaim a "Sapristi," but it always in connection with the word "grandfather." The old hunter, who is addressed by this name, breaks into hearty laughter each time, but it makes him prouder than if he had

been elected President of the United States; the term bestows a dignity on him that was due to the holy St. Napoleon or the just as holy St. Washington. —

Three months after Newfort had sold his plantation, in late summer, three people sat in front of the simple house, namely the planter, old Andree, and Franziska. The construction of the new house had not yet begun, and the entire land still had a wild character. But nothing compared to the peaceful silence that lay on the green landscape with its so peculiarly swooshing river, which was transformed through the sun setting behind the trees.

Apparently, the three waited for someone; yes, they had been waiting for someone for three days. That is, they had been waiting for Joseph who had traveled to the mission in the Council Bluffs.

"It's inexplicable," said Franziska who sat between the men. "It's inexplicable and it worries me that Joseph hasn't arrived yet. He wanted to be here the day before yesterday."

"Calm down, my child," Andree said. "It's not a short journey he is making, and there are no railroads here yet."

"He will come," Newfort added. "Who knows in what condition his nurse was when he arrived, and who knows if he doesn't intend to bring her here. He is a decent fellow, and if I could love him anymore, I would do it because he feels such gratitude and is so attached to the old Indian woman. I wish with all my heart to have her with us. — No, no, Franziska, you need not worry about your husband. There is more reason to worry about Lefèvre's long absence."

"Good old Lefèvre," Franziska said sadly. "From Robert we know that he left California, and that the good Wabash and his wife were well back then, but God only knows where they are now. What wouldn't I give to hear from them —" she wanted to continue, but she was interrupted now by Washington and Sambo who ran as fast as their old limbs allow.

"They are coming!" yelled Washington, moving his arms in the air like the wings of a windmill.

"They are coming!" yelled Sambo. He tried to be louder than his companion.

"Who? Who?" Franziska asked jumping up.

"They are coming, they are coming!" the two old servants yelled at the same time. "Everyone is coming! On horseback! The horses are trotting! Massa Joseph! Massa Bearhunter Tunnerre! Indian Gentleman and Lady! Oh, they are coming, Hurrah!" and with tears in their eyes the two began to sing in incomparably fast beat:

Walk in, walk in, walk in, I say,

Walk into the parlor and hear the banjo play

Walk into the parlor and hear the banjo ring

And watch the niggers' fingers how they pitch upon the string.

But they only sung to themselves and the trees because Franziska with Newfort and Andree had run off in the direction from where they expected the men to come.

They hadn't gone very far when a group on horseback trotted from the trail into the clearing. "It's everyone!" Franziska exclaimed with delight. She quickened her pace and soon she embraced her husband.

Indeed, everyone had come; Joseph, Lefèvre, and the Indian couple, but also the cheerful Master Bigelow who had joined the passersby to pay his neighbors a visit.

For a while, the two Negroes watched with emotion the group of people that greeted each other with such pure joy; they considered their own large families, whose members Newfort had managed to bring back over time; then they ran off to stir up all the black people and to prepare a proper welcome for the arriving members.

After the first greeting, the reunited members walked slowly to the house. Lefèvre walked ahead with shining eyes and greeted each Negro that came running in his usual heartfelt manner; he was followed by Newfort and Andree who tried in vain to engage the excited trapper in a coherent conversation. After them came the Omaha with his wife, and at the end walked Joseph and Franziska arm in arm.

The *Halfbreed* had a wistful expression on his face as he looked into his wife's eyes, who in turn looked just as sad. He described his stay at the mission. Good, old Nekoma had died; she rested at her unforgettable Master's feet, just as she had wished while she had been alive.

End

Table 1. Locations

Chapter	Location	Time (if stated)
1	Havana, Cuba	1851
2	Eau qui Cours	
3	Missouri River	
4	Council Bluffs	After that
5	Council Bluffs; St. Joseph	After that
6	New Orleans, Louisiana	Later
7	St. Louis, Fur Company	
8	St. Louis, Chestnut Street	One week later
9	St. Louis, edge of town	October 1851
10	Northern St. Louis, New Bremen	October 1851
11	The Inn <i>Hungry Belly</i>	October 1851
12 & 13	St. Louis	
14	St. Louis, 18th Street (Miss Sally's house)	
15	St. Louis, cabin	Nov/ Dec 1851
16	New Orleans/ St. Louis	Dec 1851
17	Kansas City	March 1852
18	Kansas City; Council Bluffs	
19	Kansas City; Island in the Missouri	April 1852
20	Aspinwall Panama	July 1852
21 & 22	Horseshoe Creek/ Platte River	
23	Salt Lake City	
24	Bear River & Overland Trail to California	
25	Fort Bridger & Bear River	
26	Bear River	
27-30	Medicine Mountain's Eagle's Nest; 2nd cave	
31	Fort Bridger; Bear River; Overland Trail	
32	Near Sacramento; Sierra Nevada	Fall 1852
33	Sacramento (gambling den)	
34	Middle Fork of the American River	
35	Sierra Nevada, pass somewhere between Sacramento and the Middle Fork	
36	Bigler Lake & Middle Fork	
37	Canyon near upper Middle Fork	
38	Upper Middle Fork	
39	Canyon near upper Middle Fork	
40	San Francisco	3 weeks later
41	Near New Orleans	21 days later
42	Near Kansas City, Missouri	1853

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Listed are Möllhausen's works published in book editions until 1905 with the name of the publisher of the first edition and the number of volumes. Editions published after 1905 were often abridged up to forty percent and the original publisher (he had approximately eleven different ones) and number of volumes serve as an identifying mark for the original work. I have only listed books here, but Graf's *Der Tod der Wölfe* has the most extensive bibliography of Möllhausen's works, including letters and all serial publications in magazines.

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