

quite stampeded us off the line, axemen included. Besides the strict orders against meddling with them seriously, there were always enough of idle Spanish vacqueroes scouring about on the watch to pick up a pretext for complaints and lawsuits, which the Government of the new State could not then help attending to; though, so far as concerned our annoyance, the Spaniards took but little pains, seeming rather to relish the sight. This was all very well for Judge Tracey, the Surveyor, who kept a riding-horse, and got along comfortably enough when using it. As for our compassman, Mr. Higley, he could make shift with one of the mules; but one morning the case was pushed just too far to be borne. A shaggy-headed bull gave chase to Lettson and me, and so far from being daunted, would certainly have finished one or the other before there was time to use our Colts, but for the lucky neighbourhood of a clump of bush on the open, with a large tree in the midst. We thus dodged him, firing several shots after all with very little effect, till the two axemen came up to our help, and settled the business. Both surveyors, of course, had observed what passed, and, though no Spaniards could have been within view at the time, Mr. Higley rode up with decided instructions to bury the carcase carefully there and then, turfing it up, and on no account meddling with it further. This he waited to see done. The work was then proceeded with as before for the rest of the day, during which some miles were completed; and, as usual, by sundown we got round to camp, which was still in the old place.

Nothing more had been said of the bull till supper was serving up for the bell-tent, where the surveyors had their quarters, our own meal being all ready at the fire, outside the main-tent. Nor in fact did any one seem to have thought of it again, till the time came for smelling that perpetual salt-pork, as we could do through the best fry which our cook could turn out. To tell the truth, not only were camp-stores seldom varied after being so long off from the settlements, but even Uncle Sam's chief staple had begun to get rather rusty for our taste, and that in spite of every attempt to help it out on the part of our two camp-keeping hands, old Tobin the teamster and little Andy the cook, who made up the party. Andy was a Malay, and though clever at his own work, a perfect imp for skill at trapping, snaring, and decoying; while our worthy teamster, who came out of New Orleans, and was of course far above associating pleasantly with aught in the coloured con-

nexion, at the same time had a touch of the true nigger turn for "possum," always treeing and baiting for odd venison at every chance. There was rather a suspicion amongst us that the pair occasionally squared their differences behind backs, to the concocting of what Andy called a *blind-frijolé*; which in fact often proved too good to be inquired into. Somehow that evening the mess was not so successful; at all events there were sundry discontented remarks, with a pretty plain allusion or two to the prime fresh beef lying "câched" at the moment within reach, under the big oak on the level. However, the night was dark, and the spot some distance off; moreover, the mouth of that ugly-named redwood cañon had to be passed on the way, and after a stiff day's survey all hands seemed to think the treat not worth the pains. The surveyors had no better fare than ourselves; so it was just going to be made the best of, with the prospect of a good pipe at the fire before turning in, when suddenly we missed our Missouri axeman, Rufus, from the mess. It turned out he had left before the talk commenced, and, as Billy never failed at his grub, this meant something in his case. The truth was easy to guess, when we brought to mind his wistful looks behind him that day. He had taken his tools along with him, after giving his knife a sly rub of the grindstone, and clearly intended securing some tit-bits for a late roast to his own cheek; indeed, Billy was not the character to think of extra slices for his friends.

He could not have been many minutes gone, when, on listening after him behind the tent, we could hear plain enough that the coyotés had been beforehand in the design, evidently likely to save Billy some trouble at shovelling up. Then, in the midst of their noise, off they scattered with a louder yell than before; close upon which we could make out a loud note or two from our axeman's voice, apparently giving them a Missouri war-whoop to quicken their flight. It now occurred to our joky old teamster that the cook and he, both being fresh, might give Master Bill a start in turn, as he well deserved; namely, by setting off quietly across his tracks, on a nearer cut over the open. The right bearings they at once got from us. Accordingly away they set at a good rate, the Malay first signifying for our benefit that the supper might perhaps not lose by waiting a little, though the surveyors had got theirs served.

By old Tobin's subsequent account, they steered fair for the clump of bush, with the big tree for a mark against the stars. They