

soon got there; everything was dark inside, and all quiet except the pattering of the earth on the leaves where Billy's shovel seemed at work, with the grating of his knife, apparently, as he fell closer to. Going up nearer, the teamster caught sight of him through the dusk, hard at it; there he was, sure enough, evidently never dreaming he had been followed, hodging up and down in the hole, and tugging and cutting away like a good one. Tobin then made Andy wait, while he stole softly in behind, flattening his hand to come down sharp upon the fellow, and setting his mouth for a suitable remark in Mr. Higley's style. At the same time he thought he heard something like a husky whisper from aloft, with a rustle out of the tree; and our worthy teamster being as superstitious an old boy as ever was raised on the Mississippi, this "struck him strange" at the moment, as he expressed it. Rufus's manner of handling the meat had caused a horrid notion already, as if he began to nuzzle at it in the raw; so, with a pretty smart slap on his shoulder, Tobin commenced a speech of his own, by no means inferior to what our compassman would have given, oaths aside. The words stuck in his throat, however, for he found himself turned round upon with a growl like thunder—his escape being solely due to the depth of the hole, and the other's hands being full at the instant, with his jaws as well. It was no less than an enormous old grizzly that he had tackled in this fashion. As for poor Rufus, he was fast treed overhead, trying for breath to tell how matters stood. Tobin fired one shot at random as he bolted, tumbling over little Andy, who came off after him into camp. The first alarm among us, in fact, was such that the Malay ran some risk of being shot by mistake for the grizzly in pursuit.

The Judge and Mr. Higley got out their rifles, in addition to which they had it in their power to keep mounted on the occasion. They accordingly decided at length to go in a body and see what could be done for getting the axeman off. The survey-duty for next day was certainly much more to the point than any mere risk to Billy, or his night's comfort; and even then the whole object lay in scaring the bear off, or at least drawing it out for a sufficient time, while the Missouri man could get down to run. This was given him to understand, and proceedings were therefore tried on the cautious system. But whether the old bear was too much bent on his night's meal, or had an eye to the tree besides for supplies, it proved difficult to make him leave it at all on any reasonable terms. Back he always would go again, growling savagely; Rufus having

once more to scramble up, before he was well down, and more than once he just narrowly missed being gripped. The bear appeared set on keeping cover within reach of him, where there was no mark for a shot; so that we had nothing for it but to fire the brushwood to windward, which was cleverly done by the Malay creeping in. Here it was found we had brought matters to a head, and no mistake; for though our axeman of course succeeded in getting down on the safe side, the bear no sooner took the open, than instead of giving chase to the mounted surveyors, as calculated upon, he turned and charged us where we stood. It may easily be believed I never forgot the sight; the blaze of the scrub showing the old monster as he tore along upon us, with the hoar-frost bristling from him, as it were, and his swinish eye at red-heat.

We had taken care to get the channel of a dry arroyo in our favour, but he came on like a race-horse, and was over it in a twinkling, with the bullets of five six-chambered Colts emptied at him, to no apparent effect save on one fore-leg. Just as he was upon us in the dusk, we scattered right and left, some dodging down the dark bed of the water-course. My friend Lettsom had still a bullet left, and seeing it was useless to run, he stood on the bank as the bear dashed at him, then fired close into the brute when rearing on end, claw up, with his jaws about his very shoulder. Down they went together into the arroyo-bed, the bear uppermost, but luckily losing hold for a moment or two in the reedy bottom. Owing to his crippled fore-leg, too, the brute did not nip poor Fred so quickly as must otherwise have been the case, but kept searching, in a style that made the sedge fly like rags. Not a shot among us was ready, and the quickest-loaded would have been too late. Mr. Higley had left his mule, taken a steady aim, and hit the old bear somewhere, yet without serious effect. He went on loading again as he ran up, for it must be said of our compassman that he was not the character to flinch at such points, no matter who might be concerned.

By this time, however, we did not even see which was which in the shadow of the arroyo. The best we could have done was useless, had it not been for the old Judge himself, who came forcing his terrified mare right over the hollow; then he threw himself off, let her go, and next moment was down in the arroyo, rifle in hand for the proper moment. He took the grizzly fair in the eye when just rising with Lettsom in the hook of its free fore-paw; a sure shot, that dropped the brute a dead weight a-top of the poor fellow,