

him to commit the cruel murder. A small party of Texans happened to be passing through that region, who, hearing what had been done, arrested the murderer; but McManus's Mexican friends interfered, and forced the Texans to liberate him. But the devil lured the murderer on to his fate. He started again toward the Rio Grande, still mounted on the murdered preacher's horse, and again he fell into the hands of the Texans. What befell him then was not stated definitely in the narrative given by one of the party. It was merely said: "McManus will kill no more preachers." This does not leave a very wide field for the exercise of the imagination. Stewart was buried where he met his strange and tragic end. Of all the men who bore the banner of the cross in the early days of California, there was no truer or knightlier soul than his.

A MENDOCINO MURDER.

AMONG my occasional hearers when I preached on Weber Avenue, in Stockton, was a handsome, sunny-faced young man who, I was informed, was studying for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. His manners were easy and graceful, his voice pleasant, his smile winning, and his whole appearance prepossessing to an unusual degree. He was one of the sort of men that everybody likes at first sight. I lost trace of him when I left the place, but retained a decidedly pleasant remembrance of him, and a hopeful interest in his welfare and usefulness. My surprise may be imagined when, a few years afterwards, I found him in jail charged with complicity in one of the most horrible murders ever perpetrated in any country.

It was during my pastorate in Santa Rosa in 1873 that I was told that Geiger, a prisoner confined in the county jail, awaiting trial for murder, had asked to see me. Upon visiting him in his cell, I found that his business with me was not concerning his soul, but his family. They were very poor, and since his imprisonment matters had been going worse and worse with them, until they were in actual want. Knowing well the warm-hearted community of Santa Rosa, I did not hesitate to promise in their name relief for his wife and children. After having satisfied him on this point, I tried to lead the conversation to the subject of religion; but seeing he was not disposed to talk further, I withdrew. Before leaving the jail,

however, I was asked to visit another prisoner charged with participation in the same murder. On going into his cell, the recognition was mutual. It was Alexander, whom I had known and to whom I had preached at Stockton.

"I little thought when I saw you last that we would meet in such a place as this," he said with emotion.

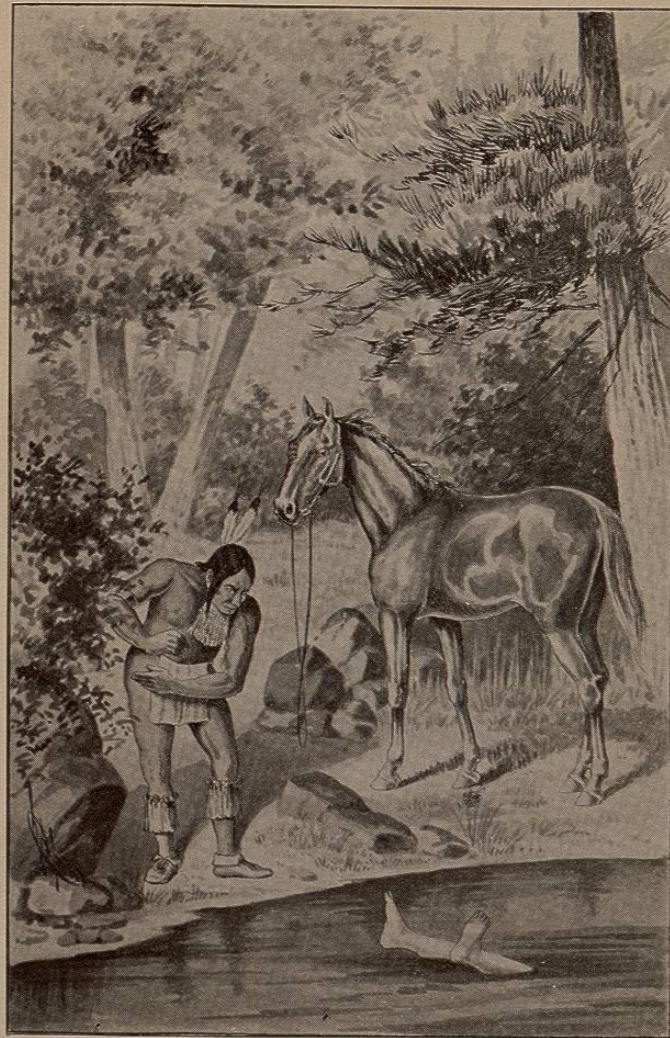
"How comes it that you are here? Surely you cannot be the murderer of a woman?" I asked, perhaps a little abruptly.

"It is a curious case, and a long story," he said; "it will all come out on the trial."

I looked at him with an interrogation point in my eyes. Could that pale, meditative, scholarly-looking young man be capable of taking part in such a dark tragedy as that of the murder of which he had been accused? I left him inclined to pronounce him innocent, despite the strong evidence against him. But the conviction of many, who watched the trial a few months after, was clear that he was one of Mrs. Strong's slayers.

Briefly given, here is the story of the murder as gathered from the evidence on the trial, and recollected after the lapse of several years:

Mrs. Strong was a middle-aged woman, with the violent temper and hardened nature so often met with in women who have been subjected to the influences of such a life as she had led—among rough men, and in a rough country, where might too often makes right. Geiger and Alexander lived not far from the Strongs, in the wildest region of Mendocino County. A quarrel arose between these two men on one side, and Mrs. Strong on the other, concerning land, the particulars of which have passed my memory. It seems that the right of the case lay rather with the men, and that Mrs.



"His roving eye caught sight of a swaying something."

Strong, with a woman's peculiar talent for provocation, rather presumed on her sex in ignoring their claims, at the same time forfeiting all right to consideration on that score by violent language and unwomanly taunts whenever she met them. According to the most charitable theory (and to me it seems the most reasonable), Geiger and Alexander, previously angered by unreasonable opposition, accidentally met Mrs. Strong in a piece of woods. The subject of dispute was brought up, and it is supposed that the unfortunate woman became more and more violent and abusive, until finally, maddened by her words, one of the men, Geiger, it is supposed, struck her down. Then, seeing that she was injured fatally, and fearing discovery, he and Alexander finished the job and, fastening a heavy stone to her neck, hid the body in one of the darkest holes of the stream that flowed through those wild hills, piling stones on the breast and limbs of the corpse to insure concealment.

Of course Mrs. Strong was missed, and search for her began, in which her two murderers were forced to join. What a terrible time that was for the two men—those rides through the woods and canyons, a hundred times passing the dreadful spot with its awful secret! Surely worse punishment on earth for their terrible crime could not be conceived. Those two instruments of human torture which the Inquisition has never surpassed, remorse and fear, were both gnawing at the hearts of these wretched men during all of that long and futile search. But it was given up at last, and they breathed easier.

A few weeks after, an Indian on his pony, riding through the woods, felt thirsty, and turned down the canyon to a spot where the trees stood thick,

and the rocks jutted out over the water like greedy monsters looking at their helpless prey beneath. He stooped to quench his thirst in the primitive fashion, but before his lips had touched the water his roving eye caught sight of a swaying something a little way up the stream that made even that stolid red man shrink from drinking that sparkling fluid, for it had flowed over the body of a dead woman. Mrs. Strong was found. The force of the stream had washed away the weighting stones from the lower limbs, and the stream having fallen several feet since the heavy rains of the past weeks, the feet of the corpse were visible above the water. The stone was still attached to the neck, thus keeping all but those ghastly feet under the water. The long-hidden murder was out at last, and the quiet Indian riding away on his tired pony carried with him the fate of Geiger and Alexander. When the news was told, it was remembered how unwilling they had been to search near that spot, and how uneasy and excited they had seemed whenever it was approached. Indeed, they had been objects of suspicion to many, and the discovery of the body was followed immediately by their arrest. The trial resulted in the acquittal of Alexander, the justice of which was questioned by many, and a sentence of lifelong imprisonment for Geiger. Before his removal to the State prison, however, he made his escape, aided, it is supposed, by his wife, who is thought to have brought him tools for that purpose secreted in her clothing. He has never been found, and in all probability never will be. Some say he has never left the country, and is living the life of a wild animal in the mountains there; but it is more likely that he, like the first murderer, fled to far lands, where he must ever bear the scarlet letter of remorse in his heart.

MY FIRST CALIFORNIA CAMP MEETING.

A CALIFORNIA camp meeting I had never seen, and so when the eccentric Dr. Cannon, who was dentist, evangelist, and many other things all at once, sent me an invitation to be present at one that was soon to come off near Vallecito, in Calaveras County, I promptly signified my acceptance, and began preparation for the trip. It was in 1856, when we occupied the parsonage in Sonora that had been bequeathed to us in all its peculiar glory by our bachelor predecessors. It had one room, which served all the purposes of parlor, library, dining room, and *boudoir*. The bookcase was two dry goods boxes placed lengthwise, one above the other. The safe, or cupboard, was a single dry goods box, nailed to the redwood boards, of which the house was built, with cleats for our breakfast, dinner, and tea sets, which, though mentioned here in plural form, were singular in more than one sense of the word. The establishment boasted a kitchen, the roof of which was less than the regulation height of the American soldier, the floor of which was made by nature, the one window of which had neither sash nor glass, the door of which had no lock, but was kept shut by a small leather strap and an eight-penny nail and its successors. The thieves did not steal from us—they couldn't. Dear old cabin on the hillside! It brings up only pleasant memories of a time when life was young and hope was bright. When we closed the door of the parsonage, and, sitting be-

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hind McCarthy & Cooper's two-horse team—one a beautiful white, the other a shining bay—dashed out of town in the direction of the bold and brawling Stanislaus, no fear was felt for any valuables left behind. The prancing of that spirited white horse on the narrow grade that wound its way a thousand feet above the bed of the river was a more serious matter, suggesting the possibility of an adventure that would have prevented the writing of these "Sketches." The Stanislaus, having its sources among the springs and snows of the Sierras, was a clear and sparkling stream before the miners muddied it by digging its banks and its bed for gold. It cuts its way through a wild and rugged region, dashing, foaming, fighting for its passage along narrow passes where the beetling cliffs and toppling crags repel the invasion of a human foot. It seems in hot haste to reach the valley, and fairly leaps down its rocky channel. In high water it roars and rushes with terrific violence. But it was behaving quietly as we passed it, keeping within its narrow channel, along which a number of patient Chinamen were working over some abandoned gold diggings, wearing satisfied looks, indicating success. Success is the rule with the Chinaman. He is acquisitive by nature, and thrifty from necessity. He has taught the conceited Americans some astonishing lessons in the matter of cheap living. But they are not thankful for the instruction, nor are they disposed to reduce it to practice. They are not yet prepared to adopt Asiatic ideas of living and labor. The contact of the two civilizations produces only friction now. What the future may bring forth I will not here prophesy, as this has properly nothing to do with the camp meeting.

An expected circus had rather thrown the camp

meeting into the background. The highly colored sensational posters were seen in every conspicuous place, and the talk of the hotel keepers, hostlers, and straggling pedestrians was all about the circus. The camp meeting was a bold experiment under the circumstances. The camp ground was less than a mile from Vallecito, a mining camp, whose reputation was such as to suggest the need of special evangelical influences. It was attacking the enemy in his stronghold. The spot selected for the encampment was a beautiful one. On a gentle slope, in the midst of a grove of live oaks, a few rude tents were pitched, with sides of undressed redwood, and covered with nothing, so that the stars could be gazed at during the still hours of the cloudless California summer night. The "preacher's stand" was erected under one of the largest of the oaks, in front of which were ranged rough, backless seats for the accommodation of the worshipers. A well of pure water was close at hand; and a long table, composed of undressed boards, was spread under clustering pines conveniently situated. Nobody thought of a tablecloth, and the crockery used was small in quantity and plain in quality.

During the first day and night of the meeting small but well-behaved audiences waited upon the word, manifesting apparently more curiosity than religious interest. The second night was a solemn and trying time. The crowd had rushed to the circus. Three or four preachers and about a dozen hearers held the camp ground. The lanterns, swung in the oaks, gave a dim, uncertain light, the gusts of wind that rose and fell and moaned among the branches of the trees threatening their extinguishment every moment. One or two of the lights flickered out entirely, increasing

the gloom and the weirdness of the scene. It was a solemn time; the sermon was solemn, the hearers were solemn, and there was a solemnity of cadence in the night wind. Everybody seemed gloomy and discouraged but the irrepressible Cannon. He was in high glee. "The Lord is going to do a great work here," he said at the close of the service, rubbing his hands together excitedly.

"What makes you think so?"

"The devil is busy working against us, and when the devil works the Lord is sure to work too. The people are all at the circus to-night, but their consciences will be uneasy. The Holy Spirit will be at work with them. To-morrow night you will see a great crowd here, and souls will be converted."

Perhaps there were few that indorsed his logic or shared his faith, but the result singularly verified his prophecy. The circus left the camp. The reaction seemed to be complete. A great crowd came out next night, the lights burned more brightly, the faithful felt better, the preachers took fire, penitents were invited and came forward for prayers, and for the first time the old camp meeting choruses echoed among the Calaveras hills. The meeting continued day and night, the crowd increasing at every service, until Sunday. Many a wandering believer, coming in from the hills and gulches, had his conscience quickened and his religious hopes rekindled, and the little handful that sung and prayed at the beginning of the meeting swelled to quite an army.

On Sunday Bishop Kavanaugh preached to an immense crowd. That eloquent Kentuckian was in one of his inspired moods, and swept everything before him. For nearly two hours he held the vast concourse of people spellbound, and to-

ward the end of his sermon his form seemed to dilate, his face kindled with its pulpit radiance, and his voice was like a golden trumpet. Amens and shouts burst forth all around the stand, and tears rained from hundreds of eyes long unused to the melting mood. California had her camp meeting christening that day. Attracted by curiosity, a Digger Indian chief, with a number of "bucks" and squaws, had come upon the ground. The chief had seated himself against a tree on the outer edge of the crowd, and never took his eyes from the Bishop for a moment. I watched him almost as closely as he watched the Bishop, for I was curious to know what were the thoughts passing through his benighted mind, and to see what effect the service would have upon him. His interest seemed to increase as the discourse proceeded. At length he showed signs of profound emotion; his bosom heaved, tears streamed down his tawny cheeks, and finally, in a burst of irrepressible admiration, he pointed to the Bishop, and exclaimed: "*Capitan! Capitan!*" The chief did not understand English. What was it that so stirred his soul? Was it the voice, the gesture, the play of feature, the magnetism of the true orator? The good Bishop said it was the Holy Spirit—the wind that bloweth where it listeth.

The Sunday night service drew another large audience, and culminated in a great victory. The singing and prayers were kept up away beyond midnight. The impression of one song I shall never forget. The Bishop was my bedfellow. We had retired for the night, and were stretched on our primitive couch, gazing unobstructed upon the heavenly hosts shining on high.

"Hark! listen to that song," said the Bishop, as a chorus, in a clear, buglelike voice, floated out

upon the midnight air. The words I do not clearly recall; there was something about

The sweet fields of Eden,
On the other side of Jordan,

and a chorus ending in "hallelujah." I seemed to float upward on the wings of that melody, beyond the starry depths, through the gates of pearl, until it seemed to mingle with the sublime doxologies of the great multitude of the glorified that no one can number. "What opera can equal that? There is a religious melody that has a quality of its own which no art can imitate."

The Bishop's thought was not new, but I had a new perception of its truth at that moment.

One of the converts of this camp meeting was Levi Vanslyke. A wilder mustang was never caught by the gospel lasso. (Excuse this figure—it suits the case.) He was what was termed a "capper" to a gambling hell in the town. Tall, excessively angular, jerky in movement, with singularly uneven features, his face and figure were very striking. He drifted with the crowd to the camp ground one night, and his destiny was changed. He never went back to gambling. His conscience was awakened, and his soul mightily stirred, by the preaching, prayers, and songs. Amid the wonder and smiles of the crowd, he rose from his seat, went forward, and kneeled among the penitents, exhibiting signs of deep distress. An arrow of conviction had penetrated his heart, and brought him down at the foot of the cross. There he knelt, praying. The services were protracted far into the night, exhortations, songs, and prayers filling up the time. Suddenly Vanslyke rose from his knees with a bound, his face beaming with joy, and indulged in demonstrations which necessitated the suspension of all other exercises.

He shouted and praised God, he shook hands with the brethren, he exhorted his late associates to turn from their wicked ways—in fact, he took possession of the camp ground, and the regular programme for the occasion was entirely superseded. The wild Vallecito "boys" were awe-struck, and quailed under his appeals.

Vanslyke was converted, a brand plucked from the burning. No room was left for doubt. He abandoned his old life at once. Soon he felt inward movings to preach the gospel, and began to study theology. He was a hard student, if not an apt one, and succeeded in passing the examinations (which in those days were not very rigid), and in due time was standing as a watchman on the walls of Zion. He was a faithful and useful minister of Jesus Christ. There was no backward movement in his religious life. He was faithful unto death, taking the hardest circuits uncomplainingly, always humble, self-denying, and cheerful, doing a work for his Master which many a showier man might covet in the day when He will reckon with His servants. He traveled and preached many years, a true soldier of Jesus Christ. He died in great peace, and is buried among the hills of Southern Oregon.

An episode connected with this camp meeting was a visit to the Big Tree Grove of Calaveras. Every reader is familiar with descriptions of this wonderful forest, but no description can give an adequate impression of its solemn grandeur and beauty. The ride from Murphy's Camp in the early morning; the windings of the road among the colossal and shapely pines; the burst of wonder and delight of some of our party, and the silent, yet perhaps deeper, enjoyment of others as we rode into the midst of the Titanic grove—all this

made an experience which cannot be transferred to the printed page. The remark of the thoughtful woman who walked by my side expressed the sentiment that was uppermost in my own consciousness as I contemplated these wonders of the Almighty's handiwork: "God has created one spot where he *will* be worshiped, and it is this!"

THE TRAGEDY AT ALGERINE.

HOW Algerine Camp got its name I cannot tell. It was named before my day in California. The miners called it simply "Algerine," for short. They had a peculiar way of abbreviating all proper names. San Francisco was "Frisco," Chinese Camp was "Chinee," and Jamestown was "Jimtown." So Algerine was as many syllables as could be spared for this camp, whose fame still lingers as one of the richest, rowdiest, bloodiest camps of the Southern mines. Situated some seven or eight miles from Sonora, if in the early days it did not rival that lively city in size, it surpassed it in the recklessness with which its denizens gave themselves up to drinking, fighting, gambling, and general licentiousness. The name suited the place, whatever may have been its etymology. It was at the height of its glory for rich diggings and bad behavior in 1851. Lucky strikes and wild doings were the order of the day. A tragedy at Algerine ceased to excite more than a feeble interest—tragedies there had become commonplace. The pistol was the favorite weapon with the Algerines, but the monotony of shooting was now and then broken by a stabbing affair, of which a Mexican or native Californian was usually the hero. It was a disputed point whether the revolver or the dirk was the safer and more effective weapon in a free fight. Strong arguments were used on both sides of this interesting ques-

tion, and popular opinion in the camp vacillated, taking direction according to the result of the last encounter.

With all its wickedness, Algerine had a public opinion and moral code of its own. The one sin that had no forgiveness was stealing. The remaining nine of the Ten Commandments nobody seemed to remember, but a stand was taken upon the eighth. Men that swore, ignored the Sabbath, gambled, got drunk, and were ready to use the pistol or knife on the slightest pretext, would flame with virtuous rage, and clamor for capital punishment, if a siuice were robbed, or the least article of any sort stolen. A thief was more completely outlawed than a murderer. The peculiar conditions existing, and the genius of the country, combined to develop this anomalous public sentiment, which will be illustrated by an incident that occurred in the year above referred to.

About nine o'clock one morning a messenger was seen riding at full speed through the main street of Sonora, his horse panting and white with foam. He made his way to the sheriff's office, and, on the appearance of one of the deputies, cried—well, I won't give his exact words, for they are not quotable; but the substance of his message was that a robbery had been committed at Algerine, that a mob had collected, and that one of the supposed robbers was in their hands.

"Hurry up, Captain, or you'll be too late to do any good—the camp is just boiling!"

Capt. Stuart, the deputy sheriff, was soon in the saddle, and on the way to Algerine. Stuart was a soldierly-looking man, over six feet high, square-shouldered, brawny, and with a dash of gracefulness in his bearing. He had fought in the war with Mexico, was known to be as brave as a lion,

and was a general favorite. On a wider field he has since achieved a wider fame.

"There they are, Captain," said the messenger, pointing to the hill overlooking the camp from the north.

"My God! it's only a boy!" exclaimed Stuart, as his eye took in the scene.

Stripped of all but his shirt and white pants, bareheaded and barefooted, with a rope around his neck, the other end of which was held by a big, brutal-looking fellow in a blue flannel shirt, stood the victim of mob fury. He could scarcely be more than eighteen years old. His boyish face was pale as death, and was turned with a pleading look toward the huge fellow who held the rope, and who seemed to be the leader of the mob. He had begged hard for his life, and many hearts had been touched with pity.

"It's a shame, boys, to hang a child like that," said one, with a choking voice.

"It would be an eternal disgrace to the camp to allow it," said another.

Immediately surrounding the prisoner there was a growing party anxious to save him, whose intercessions had made quite a delay already. But the mob was bloodthirsty, and loud in its clamor for the hanging to go on.

"Up with him!" "What are you waiting for?" "Lift him, Bill!" and similar demands were made by a hundred voices at once.

In the midst of this contention, Stuart, having dismounted, pushed his way by main strength through the crowd, and reached the side of the prisoner, whose face brightened with hope as the tall form of the officer of the law towered above him.

The appearance of the officer seemed to excite

the mob, and a rush was made for the prisoner, amid a storm of oaths and yells. Stuart's eye kindled as he cried: "Keep back, you hounds! I'll blow out the brains of the first man that touches this boy!"

The front rank of the mob paused, keeping in check the yelling crowd behind them. The big fellow holding the rope kept his eye on Stuart, and seemed for the moment ready to surrender the honors of leadership to anybody who was covetous of the same. The cowardly brute quailed before a brave man's glance. He still held the rope, but kept his face averted from his intended victim.

Stuart, taking advantage of the momentary silence, made an earnest appeal to the mob. Pointing to the pale and trembling boy, he reminded them that he was only a youth, the mere tool and victim of the older criminals who had made their escape. To hang him would be simply murder, and every one who might have a hand in it would be haunted by the crime through life. "Men, you are mad when you talk of hanging a mere boy like that. Are you savages? Where is your manhood? Instead of murdering him, it would be better to send him back to his poor old mother and sisters in the States."

The central group, at this point, presented a striking picture. The poor boy standing bare-headed in the sun, looking, in his white garments, as if he were already shrouded, gazing wistfully around; Stuart holding the crowd at bay, standing like a rock, his tall form erect, his face flushed, and his eye flashing; the burly leader of the mob, rope in hand, his coarse features expressing mingled fear and ferocity; the faces of the rabble, some touched with compassion, others turned upon

the prisoner threateningly, while the great mass of them wore only that look of thoughtless animal excitement which makes a mob at once so dangerous and so contemptible a thing—all made a scene for an artist.

Again cries of "Up with him!" "Hang him!" "No more palaver!" were raised on the outer ranks of the mob, and another rush was made toward the prisoner. Stuart's voice and eye again arrested the movement. He appealed to their manhood and mercy in the most persuasive and impassioned manner, and it was evident that his appeals were not without effect on some of the men nearest to him. Seeing this, several of the more determined ruffians, with oaths and cries of fury, suddenly rushed forward with such impetuosity that Stuart was borne backward by their weight, the rope was grasped by several hands at once, and the prisoner was jerked with such violence as to pull him off his feet.

At this moment the sound of horse's hoofs was heard, and in another instant the reckless daredevil, Billy Worth, mounted on a powerful bay, pistol in hand, had opened a lane through the crowd, and quick as thought he cut the rope that bound the prisoner, and, with the assistance of two or three friendly hands, lifted him into the saddle before him, and galloped off in the direction of Sonora. The mob was paralyzed by the audacity of this proceeding, and attempted no immediate pursuit. The fact is, Worth's reputation as a desperate fighter and sure shot was such that none of them had any special desire to get within range of his revolver. If his virtues had equaled his courage, Billy Worth's name would have been one of the brightest on the roll of California's heroes. At this time he was an *attaché* of the sheriff's

office, and was always ready for such desperate service. He never paused until he had his prisoner safely locked in jail at Sonora.

The mob dispersed slowly and sullenly, and, as the sequel proved, still bent on mischief.

The next morning the early risers in Sonora were thrilled with horror to find the poor boy hanging by the neck from a branch of an oak on the hillside above the City Hotel. The Algerine mob had reorganized, marched into town at dead of night, overpowered the jailer, taken out their victim, and hung him. By sunrise thousands, drawn by the fascination of horror, had gathered to the spot. And now that the poor lad was hanging there dead, there was only pity felt for his fate, and detestation of the crime committed by his cruel murderers. The body was cut down and tenderly buried, women's hands placing flowers upon his coffin, and women's tears falling upon the cold face.

A singular fact must be added to this narrative. The tree on which the boy was hanged was a healthy, vigorous young oak, in full leaf. *In a few days its every leaf had withered!* This statement is made on the testimony of respectable living witnesses, whose reputation for veracity is unquestioned. The next year the tree put forth its buds and leaves as usual. This fact is left to the incredulity, superstition, or scientific inquiry of the reader. The tree may be still standing, as a memento of a horrible crime.

THE BLUE LAKES.

IT is not strange that the Indians think the Blue Lakes are haunted, and that even the white man's superstition is not proof against the weird and solemn influence that broods over this spot of almost unearthly beauty. They are about ten miles from Lakeport, the beautiful county seat of Lake County, which nestles among the oaks on the margin of Clear Lake, a body of water about thirty miles long and eight miles wide, surrounded by scenery so lovely as to make the visitor forget for the time that there is any ugliness in the world. The first sight of Clear Lake, from the highest point of the great range of hills shutting it in on the south, will never be forgotten by any one who has a soul. After winding slowly up, up, up the mountain road, a sharp turn is made, and you are on the summit. The driver stops his panting team, you spring out of the "thorough-brace," and look and look. Immediately below you is a sea of hills, stretching away to where they break against the lofty rampart of the coast range on your left, and in front sinking gradually down into the valley below. The lake lies beneath you, flashing like a mirror in the sunlight, its northern shore marked by rugged brown acclivities, the nearer side dotted with towns, villages, and farms, while "Uncle Sam," the monarch peak of all the region, lifts his awful head into the clouds, the sparkling waters kissing his feet. I once saw "Uncle Sam" transfigured. It was a day of storm. The wind howled among the gorges of the