

a short distance from the place. they looked well to the priming of their rifles, and to their other arms, and sat in silence to await the commencement of the battle. the moon set in golden radiance behind the wooded hills. in the eastern sky the first rose red showed that dawn would shortly break. looking towards the hill, the little band saw that movement had already begun there. they rose to their feet, and looked from the moving shapes amid the brushwood towards the still sleeping, silent town. the lord of hosts is with us, spoke charles, in a solemn voice; he will deliver the enemy into our hands. let us quit ourselves like men and be strong. let us do unto them even as they have done. let not the wicked escape us. the lord do so to me, and more also, if i reward not unto yon cruel chieftain his wickedness and his cruelties. if he leave this place alive, let my life pay the forfeit a murmur ran through the little group about him. each man grasped his weapon and stood still as a statue. this little company had posted themselves upon a knoll which commanded the house of the bloodthirsty chief. it was their business to see that he at least did not escape from the day of vengeance. the moments seemed hours to those men waiting and watching; but they did not wait in vain. a blaze of fire, a simultaneous crack of firearms, and a wild shout that was like one of already earned victory, and the assailants came charging down the hillside, and across the open fields, firing volley after volley upon the sleeping town, from which astonished and bewildered savages came pouring out in a dense mass, only to fall writhing beneath the hail of bullets from the foe who had surprised them thus unawares. but there were in that community men trained in the arts of war, who were not to be scared into non resistance by a sudden thats like the first, cried the doctor, bending forward to pick it up, a skull looking whiter than either of the others. certainly this is of a different race, bourne, and the owner died in the same way, the brow crushed. look at that. the rest were already looking, and saw what caused the doctors abrupt exclamation, for as he took up the skull the back portion fell away and the front dropped apart into so much crumbling dust. were looking down at the remains of a desperate fight, sir, i should say, said griggs thoughtfully. its just as if there had been a stand made here. come on into the next place, said the doctor eagerly; but keep close to the wall, following my steps. ah its impossible to avoid crushing the remains, he continued, as he sidled along, leaving his footprints in the soft dust which lay thick. i say, chris, isnt this very horrid whispered ned, as the boys followed last towards the low doorway opposite to that by which they had entered. Yes, i suppose so, said chris thoughtfully; but it makes one think of ever so far back when all this dust must have been alive all fierce men, fighting, some to kill, others to save their lives. i dont know; it doesnt seem so very horrid, though i dont like treading on all their dust and and bones, suggested ned. no; because theyre not bones now, only the shape of bones. see how that all crumbled away when my father picked it up. dust and ashes, we ought to call it. do you want to go back n no, i think not. i say, what a fight it must have been yes, said chris, with a deep breath that sounded like a sigh. one seems to fancy one can see the men who had the white skulls being driven back from this cell into that one, and i shouldnt wonder if we find that yes, came the doctors voice from the next place, its wonderfully interesting. the civilised men must have been making a desperate stand here, and i fully expect that we shall find that they were driven back from of the horsemen once or twice pentaur and his companion§ had had to defend themselves against hostile mountaineers, who rushed suddenly upon them out of the woods. when they were about two days journey still from the end of their march, they had a bloody skirmish with a roving band of men that seemed to belong to a larger detachment of troops. the nearer they got to kadesh, the more familiar kaschta showed himself with every stick and stone, and he went forward to obtain information; he returned somewhat anxious, for he had perceived the main body of the cheta army on the road which they must cross. how came the enemy here in the rear of the egyptian army could rameses have sustained a defeat only the day before they had met some egyptian soldiers, who had told them that the king was staying in the camp, and a great battle was impending. this however could not have by this time been decided, and they had met no flying egyptians. if we can only get two miles farther