

had elapsed from the time that the yellow hunter and his companion had started on their expedition. those who sent them were beginning to grow impatient for some news of them. they did not allow themselves to doubt of the zeal of their employes, the reward would secure that, and scarce did they doubt of their success. the latter seemed to all three robledo, vizcarra, and the padre but a consequence of the former. still they were impatient for some report from the hunters if not of the actual capture, at least that the outlaw had been seen, or that they were upon his trail. on reflection, however, both padre and officers saw that it would not be likely they should have any report before the hunters themselves came back, either with or without their captive. no doubt, suggested the monk, they are after him every hour, and we shall hear nothing of them until they have laid hands upon the heretic rascal. what a startling piece of news it was to this charming trio, when a hatero brought the information to the settlement that he had seen two dead bodies upon the plain, which he recognised as those of the mission hunters manuel and pepe. his report was that he had seen them near a grove upon the pecos, that they were torn by the wolves and vultures but that what still remained of their dress and equipments enabled him to make out who they were for the hatero had chanced to know these men personally. he was sure they were the mulatto and zambo, the hunters of the mission. at first this mysterious murder, as it was termed, could not be explained except upon the supposition that the indios bravos had done it. the people knew nothing of the duty upon which the hunters had been lately sent, who was not ten yards away from him, laughed mockingly as he got his block to the edge first and sent it down with a crash. but the noise made by the one sent after it by chris formed as it were an echo, and he stood for a few moments gazing down in wonder, for huge pieces had been forced off the shelf by wilton and bourne, to lie gathered so closely together that already the way was blocked sufficiently to make it impossible for any horse to pass unless at a flying leap, for which there was neither take off nor landing at the end. dont shout. dont cheer, panted the doctor. work steadily and well, and we shall soon have them fast. i hope there are no more to come and have us, panted wilton as he slaved away, making chris and ned both glance excitedly away through the gulch towards where the gully struck off. but the enemy seemed to be all within the trap, and the stones were forced down till nearly all available on the shelves had been sent thundering down, and both parties climbed some fifty feet higher before they continued the work, beginning with the highest blocks that were loose, and having the satisfaction of seeing the heaviest block there, which took two or three to move it, go roaring down, sweeping with it others nearly as big. they worked for fully half an hour, to look down at last in wonder to see the great success of their work, the gap being piled high, and, leaving horses out of the question, forming a barrier that it would be hard work for an active man to climb. stop now, said the doctor, and all gladly rested, to stand wiping the perspiration from their streaming faces. no horses can possibly pass by here. mind quick down with you shouted wilton, and as he spoke an among the things that are done, and cannot be undone. the nomarch chief of a nome or district. of suan, in the southern part of the country, asked for funds for a necessary, new embankment. the regent listened to his eager representation with benevolence, nay with expressions of sympathy; but assured him that the war absorbed all the funds of the state, that the chests were empty; still he felt inclined even if they had not failed to sacrifice a part of his own income to preserve the endangered arable land of his faithful province of suan, to which he desired greeting. as soon as the nomarch had left him, he commanded that a considerable sum should be taken out of the treasury, and sent after the petitioner. from time to time in the middle of conversation, he arose, and made a gesture of lamentation, to show to the assembled mourners in the court that he sympathized in the losses which had fallen on them. the sun had already passed the meridian, when a disturbance, accompanied by loud cries, took possession of the masses of people, who stood round the scribes in the palace court. many men and women were streaming together towards one spot, and even the most impassive of the thebans present turned their attention to an incident so unusual in this place. a detachment of constabulary made a way through