

Now the hardship begins. The trail is a very narrow and difficult one, and our friends are not partial to horse riding. After a very tedious ride of several hours we finally reach the sheep rancho in question, and find that the proprietor was just about to start in pursuit of "Bruin" himself, he having lost another sheep during the previous night. Seeing so many hunters together, he concluded to join the party, we leaving our horses and guide at the house. After an hour of anxious searching we came upon the bear's tracks. Our friends having several hundred pounds of avordupois to carry in the hot sun, already high in the heavens, desired to sit down for a while, we continuing to follow the tracks. Fearing to lose us in the dense undergrowth they almost immediately followed, and after a fruitless search of four hours we came to the conclusion that "Bruin" had taken an extraordinarily long after-breakfast walk. Our corpulent friends now vehemently protested against further climbing for the present, and we were also tired; so it was agreed to take a rest and prepare a little lunch.

We sought out a favorable spot on a little knoll, divested ourselves of coats and vests, placing them together with our arms, like inexperienced and badly-schooled hunters, under a tree about 20 yards distant. A fire was kindled, and soon the fragrance of our coffee was mingling with the resinous odor of the pines. Pipes were brought forth, and we were enjoying a quiet smoke while awaiting the announcement that luncheon was ready. We had just seated ourselves preparatory to an attack upon the viands, when a cry caused us to look up. We beheld the largest gentleman of the party, who had just absented himself from our midst, closely pursued by a large Grizzly, which had already succeeded in removing the most necessary portion of his nether garment. Our ally, the Rancher, with a presence of mind to which our friend owes his present well-being, seized a heavy stone with which he dealt the bear a powerful blow, diverting the attack to himself. The entire party now scattered, the motto for the moment being "*Sauve qui peut!*" The desire of each was now two-fold—to avoid the bear and reach the weapons. Meanwhile, being somewhat bewildered by our number, not knowing whom to follow, his Bearship was making rare sport of our domestic arrangements. At length one of the party reached the guns and hastily snatched one, leveled it and fired. Nervousness or inexperience with the use of the weapon prevented accuracy of aim, and with an angry growl and a slight limp, denoting the trifling nature of the wound, the bear started in the direction of the shot.

The leader of our party, whom our readers will understand to be the Rancher, was running for his gun, having had no previous opportunity, the bear having been between him and the place of its deposit. He was yet some distance away, when the bear, smarting from his wound, and growling ferociously, turned in his direction. Our leader was consequently between the guns and the bear, closely pursued. He had, however, a good chance for escape, being unusually active, when his foot came in contact with a root or running vine, and he was precipitated to the ground. How every heart beat at that moment! Paralyzed with horror, each stood rooted to the ground, unable to move. Before he could possibly arise, the bear would be upon him, and one blow from that powerful paw would end his existence or lacerate him to such an extent as to render him a cripple for life. But just as the bear is about to close with him, a man without coat, vest or hat, and showing signs of having himself been roughly handled, rushes forward with a rapidity which affords us no time for recognition. Hesitating not a moment, he throws himself before the prostrate form, and ere the bear can clasp him, buries his knife in the animal's heart. With two or three rapid plunges of his keen knife, he finishes the encounter. Both go down together; the hero and our rescued leader are stained with the blood of the victim. We all approached to see the man who had done this noble deed, when what was our surprise to see our own comrade and friend, the brave W., who had no fear on the battle-field of Sedan and did not flinch to-day, but awaited the favorable moment to approach our common foe. We were glad to see no one hurt beyond a few scratches, and promptly proceeded to skin the bear, which, under the guidance of the rancher, was soon accomplished. In a short time, our cooking utensils and hastily abandoned luncheon were once more arranged, and a bear steak was added to the choice morsels in course of preparation. Everything in readiness, we partook of a hearty meal, in the course of which Mr. W. explained to us that he had acquired this mode of finishing his game on the occasion of hunting the boar in Europe. Toward sundown we returned to Cahto and passed a very agreeable evening, marred only by the fact, that although Mr. W. had secured a magnificent bear skin, his wearing apparel was defective in one essential point, so that he would be obliged to remain at Cahto until a messenger could be sent to Ukiah to procure from his valise a garment, for none sufficiently ample could be obtained here. We tried to patch and mend and even called to our aid the services of a good tailoress, (there being no tailor in the neighborhood), but to no avail; the cloth was literally torn into shreds and could hold no stitches. Our friends informed us that they would remain here for a few days and then proceed to Santa Rosa, where, upon our return, we would meet them.

Before continuing our journey we will describe Cahto Valley and Long Valley:

Cahto Valley is small, but very beautiful. It is well adapted to the growth of cereals and fruit of all kinds. We had an opportunity to try some strawberries and gladly admit that they were among the best we ever tasted in California.