

I ascended to the narrowest part of the valley, crossed and re-crossed it, and made a minute examination, but there was no indication that the caravan had been there. This was exceedingly disappointing, and made it necessary to change my course. I was now tired, somewhat footsore, and very hungry, but, to avoid frostbite and other evils, I was obliged to continue my exertions. I had then, as always, the chronometer watches in my belt, but I never carried a compass lest it should affect the watches. I had therefore to guide my course by the stars, but, as the night was clear, I had no difficulty in making sure of my direction. My only physical comfort was the water-bottle; its contents were muddy, but to a parched mouth an occasional sip was refreshing. I felt thankful to Providence that my fellow-traveller, Pike, was a man worthy of absolute confidence, whom I knew nothing would induce to leave the neighbourhood till I was found. This assurance kept up my spirits, and I sought a shortcut over the hills to the point from which I had started at dusk. The moon was often hidden behind mountains, then it disappeared altogether; the way was dark and rough, but I stumbled on, generally only half-erect, sometimes falling over stones or sudden inequalities of the ground. Occasionally I had to rest for a few minutes, but the cold wind chilled me to the marrow. The minimum temperature registered at the camp on that night (August 28th) was 22° F., a temperature low enough to cause keen discomfort to one thinly clad, hungry, and facing a stiff mountain breeze. I have often, in other circumstances, watched for daybreak, and welcomed the rising sun, but never before with such anxiety as on that morning. In the grey dawn I reached the spot whence I had set out to search for the caravan, and, resting a few minutes, I looked down the broad valley and thought I could discern through the morning haze the smoke of our camp-fire. In