

## CHAPTER XIII

### INDIAN CEREMONIES

Although we returned to our former camp the next morning, we did not intend to remain there, for our flour was almost gone. So critical was the situation that I told Durr it seemed advisable for me to stay behind while he went down to the valley and bought several hundred pounds more of it. He agreed; and arranged to leave the next morning. By using four horses he believed he could make the round trip in one day, but it was at least forty miles from our camp to Sacramento, and if he expected to return that same day he would have to travel eighty miles and would require at least four horses for riding and packing. Durr left camp early Saturday morning, saying he would be back that night without fail.

The day passed as quietly as our days usually did. Evening arrived, but Durr was not in sight, although I expected to see him appear any moment. Finally some Indian boys from the neighboring village came into camp. One of them spoke quickly to Konnock; the conversation was in a mountain dialect and I did not understand it very well, but I thought I heard something about death or killing. Konnock looked grave, then questioned the boy once more as if he wanted to be sure he had heard correctly. "Konnock," I asked, "didn't this boy say something about killing?"

"Yes," he replied, "some white men who were washing gold further up the river killed my uncle and another Indian, scalped them, and took their heads."

"Have your uncle and the other Indian been buried?"

"No, but they will bring his body back soon. This is his home. They will cremate his body, and bury the ashes."

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"Do you mean to say," I went on, "that your relatives will bring the body here, burn it, and then bury the ashes the same evening?"