A Night Walk in the Catskills.

Two weeks before I had quarreled with my girl, and, in consequence, she had not said a word to me all the evening, but had sat there with one of the boys on each side of her, leaving me out in the cold. I had tried to make her jealous by pretending deep devotion to Sally Benton; but Molly was not going to be outdone in that way, and went down cellar with one of the boys, after cider, and a long time they took about getting it, too. Then I had—like a big fool—rushed out of the room, and home, long before any one else had thought of going. Of course they all knew what was the matter; and, as I trudged along, I heartily wished that I could have the pleasure of thrashing them all.

My road led up over a high pass between two round-topped, forest-covered mountains. It was steep, winding, and lonely, most of the way, through thick woods. In some places there were breaks and clearings, from which I looked down into the narrow, deep valley, jet black save for the shadowy white mist along the stream, and the twinkling lights in the village, and the scattered farms.

I thought about the time that Molly and I drove down that road one Sunday afternoon,—our country way of announcing our engagement,—and how much more pleasant that drive was than my present walk. Then I thought of the cider, and swore at myself for being such a fool. "Dang it all!"

It suddenly occurred to me that, though my words were forcible enough, I had not expressed myself in a very loud tone. Could it be that I was afraid that the trees would hear me, and tell tales to the minister? Hardly; but when I realized for the first time that I was three miles from a house, in thick woods, on an extremely dark night, it gave me a queer feeling up my spine.

"Brace up, you idiot!" I exclaimed; but my voice sounded like that of a ghost, and it made my teeth chatter to hear it. I swore inwardly, for I dared not speak aloud, and started on again, when a branch stirred in the woods behind me.

I jumped about ten feet and turned around. All was still and calm, but I had a creepy feeling that something was looking at me out of the bushes; where it was or what it was I could not imagine. At any rate I must get out of those woods, so I turned and started off at a great rate. I had not gone a hundred steps when I again heard a bush sway and crackle behind me. I spun around like a top, but there was nothing there but thick black trees, and the blacker hole where the road went down between them. I turned to go on. Scarce fifty steps and the bushes crackled again. I was too scared to turn, but glanced over my shoulder, still walking on mechanically; there, glaring at me, were two eyes of shining green.

My nerve began to come back in some measure. I at least knew with what I had to deal; there was no longer that vague feeling that something was going to claw my spine while I was looking ahead. I knew then that there was something behind me, just what it was, and I went on. Every two steps I glanced back, and there in the bushes I saw those eyes gleaming; but if I turned they vanished as if they had been snuffed out by the wind. I went on, but they followed, and were nearer at every step. Escape seemed impossible; I was unarmed and two miles from a house, and now with a soft thud I heard my pursuer leap into the middle of the road.

I turned at bay. As I turned I snatched up a large stone, but I well knew that that