TO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS The Superintendent of Public

schools of Franklin county will be in Lauisburg on the second Thurstay of February, April, July, Seprember, October and December, and remain for three days, if necessary. por the purpose of examining applicouts to teach in the Public Schools difficulty. I will also be in Lonishing on Saturday of each god, and all public days, to attend to any business connected with my

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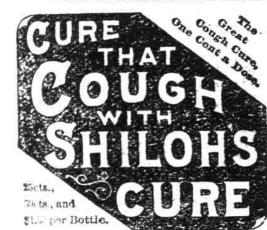
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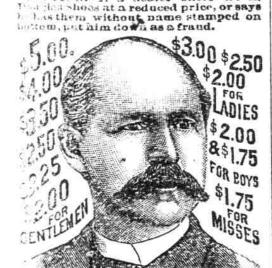
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By A. CONAN DOYLE.

PART II.

The Country of the Saints. CHAPTER L

ON THE GREAT ALEALI PLAIN. In the central portion of the great North American continent there lies an arid and repulsive desert which for many a long year served as a barrier against the advance of civilization. From the Sierra Nevada to Nebraska and from the Yellowstone river in the north to the Colorado upon the south is a region of desolation and silence. Nor is nature always in one mood throughout this grim district. It comprises snow-capped and lofty mountains and dark and gloomy valleys. There are swift-flowing rivers which dash through jagged canyons, and there are enormous plains which in winter are white with snow and in summer are gray with the saline alkali dust. They all preserve, however, the common characteristics of barrenness,

inhospitality and misery.

There are no inhabitants of this land of despair. A band of Pawnees or of Blackfeet may occasionally traverse it in order to reach other hunting grounds, but the hardiest of the braves are glad to lose sight of those awesome plains, and to find themselves once more upon their prairies. The coyote skulks among the scrub, the buzzard flaps heavily through the air, and the clumsy grizzly bear lumbers through the dark ravines, and picks up such sustenance as it can among the rocks. These are the sole dwellers in the wilderness.

more dreary view than that from the your mother." northern slope of the Sierra Blanco. As far as the eye can reach stretches the great flat plainland, all dusted over with patches of alkali, and intersected flecked with snow. In this great as though we've improved matters. people." stretch of country there is no sign of There's an almighty small chance for life, nor of anything appertaining to us now!" life. There is no bird in the steel-blue heaven, no movement upon the dull, grav earth -above all, there is abso- her sobs, and raising her tear-stained lute silence. Listen as one may, there face. is no shadow of a sound in all that mighty wilderness; nothing but silence -complete and heart-subduing silence.

It has been said there is nothing appertaining to life upon the broad as long as we die we'll be with mother plain. That is hardly true. Looking again.' down from the Sierra Blanco, one sees a pathway traced out across the desert. which winds away and is lost in the of many adventurers. Here and there glisten in the sun, and stand out llow long will it be first." against the dull deposit of alkali. Apof those who had fallen by the way-

Looking down on this very scene. there stood upon the 4th of May, 1847. was such that he might have been the death. very genius or demon of the region. An observer would have found it difficult to say whether he was nearer to omened forms, and clapping her hands forty or to sixty. His face was lean to make them rise. "Say, did God and haggard, and the brown, parch- make this country?" ment-like skin was drawn tightly over the projecting bones; his long, brown hair and beard were all fleeked and dashed with white; his eyes were sunken in his head, and burned with an unnatural luster, while the hand which grasped his rifle was hardly more fleshy than that of a skeleton. As he stood, he leaned upon his weapon for support, and yet his tall figure and the massive framework of his bones suggested a wiry and vigorous constitution. His gaunt face, however, and his clothes, which hung so baggily over his shriveled limbs, proclaimed what it was that gave him that senile and decrepit appearance. The man was dying-dying from hunger and from

He had toiled painfully down the ravine and on to this little elevation. in the vain hope of seeing some signs of water. Now the great salt plain stretched before his eyes, and the distant belt of savage mountains, without a sign anywhere of plant or tree, which might indicate the presence of moisture. In all that broad landscape there was no gleam of hope. North and east and west he looked with wild questioning eyes, and then he realized that his wanderings had come to an end, and that there, on that barren crag, he was about to die. "Why not here, as well as in a feather bed, twenty years hence," he muttered, as he seated

himself in the shelter of a bowlder. Before sitting down, he had deposited upon the ground his useless rifle, and also a large bundle tied up in a gray shawl, which he had carried dimpled flats.

voice, reproachfully. "Have I though?" the man answered, penitently; "I didn't go for to do it." As he spoke he unwrapped the gray shawl and extricated a pretty little girl of about five years of age, whose both skept the same deep and dreamdainty shoes and smart pink frock, with its little linen apron, all bespoke

than her companion.

towsy golden eurls which covered the distance, but gradually growing | her. No one will take her away from back of her head.

with perfect gravity, shoving the in- continued to increase in size until it jured part up to him. "That's what became evident that it could only be mother used to do. Where's mother?" raised by a great multitude of moving

her before long." 'most always did if she was just goin' been away for three days. Say, it's awful dry, ain't it? Ain't there no water nor nothing to eat?"

"No, there ain't nothing, dearie. You'll just need to be patient awhile, and then you'll be all right. Put your head up agin me like that, and then apparition revealed itself as being a you'll feel better. It ain't easy to talk great caravan apon its journey for the when your lips is like leather, but I west. But what a carava. When the guess, I'd best let you know how the cards lie. What's that you've got?"

'When we goes back to home I'll give them to Brother Bob."

"You'll see prettier things than them soon," said the man, confidently. "You just wait a bit. I was going to tell you, though-you remember when we left the river?" "Oh, yes."

other river soon, d'ye see? But there was somethin' wrong; compasses, or up. Water ran out. Just except a little drop for the likes of you and-"And you couldn't wash yourself," in-

ing up at his grimy visage. "No, nor drink. And Mr. Bender, he was the first to go, and then Indian

Pete, and then Mrs. McGregor, and In the whole world there can be no then Johnny Hones, and then, dearie, "Then mother's a deader, too," cried the little girl, dropping her face in her

pinafore and sobbing bitterly. "Yes, they all went except you and by clumps of the dwarfish chaparral me. Then I thought there was some another. bushes. On the extreme verge of the chance of water in this direction, so I horizon lies a long chain of mountain | heaved you over my shoulder and we peaks, with their rugged summits tramped it together. It don't seem will not now abandon His own chesen than thirty years of age, but whose

> "Do you mean that we are going to die, too?" asked the child, checking

"I guess that's about the size of it." "Why didn't you say so before?" she said, laughing gleefully. "You gave me such a fright. Why, of course, now

"Yes, you will, dearie." "And you, too. I'll tell her how awful good you've been. I'll bet she extreme distance. It is rutted with meets us at the door of Meaven with a wheels and trodden down by the feet | big pitcher of water, and a lot of buckwheat cakes, hot, and toasted on both are scattered white objects which sides, like Bob and me was fond of.

"I don't know-not very long." The proach and examine them! They are man's eyes were fixed upon the northbones; some large and coarse, others ern horizon. In the blue vault of the smaller and more delicate. The for- heaven there appeared three little mer have belonged to oxen, and the speeks which increased in size every latter to men. For fifteen hundred mement, so rapidly did they approach. miles one may trace this ghastly cara. They speedily resolved themselves into van route by these scattered remains | three large brown birds, which circled over the heads of the two wanderers, and then settled upon some rocks which overlooked them. They were buzzards, the vultures of the west. a solitary traveler. His appearance whose coming is the foregunger of

"Cocks and hens!" cried the little girl, gleefully, pointing at their ill-

"In course He did," said her companion, rather startled by this unex nected question.

"He made the country down in Illinois, and He made the Missouri," the little girl continued. "I guess somebody else made the country in these parts. It's not nearly so well done. They forgot the water and the trees." prayer?" the man asked, diffidently.

"It ain't night yet," she answered. "It don't matter. It ain't quite regular, but He won't mind that, you bet. we was on the plains." "Why don't you say some yourself?"

the child asked, with wondering eyes. "I disremember them," he answered. "I hain't said none since I was half the height o' that gun. I guess it's never too late. You say them out, and choruses."

"Then you'll need to kneel down, and me, too," she said, laying the got to put your hands up like this. ft makes you feel kind of good." It was a strange sight, had there

been anything but the buzzards to see it. Side by side on the narrow shawl knelt the two wanderers, the little, prattling child and the reckless, hardened adventurer. Her chubby face and his haggard, angular visage were both turned up to the cloudless heaven in heartfelt- entreaty to that dread being with whom they were face | body of men and of beasts. His face to face, while the two voices—the one slung over his right shoulder. It ap- thin and clear, the other deep and peared to be somewhat too heavy for harsh-united in the entreaty for mercy hand over his eyes. "This is what they his strength, for, in lowering it, it and forgiveness. The prayer finished, call delirium, I guess," he muttered. came down on the ground with some they resumed their seat in the shadow The child stood beside him, holding on ittle violence. Instantly there broke of the bowlder until the child fell to the skirt of his coat, and said nothfrom the gray parcel a little moaning asleep, nestling upon the broad breast ing, but looked all round her with the cry, and from it—there protruded a of her protector. He watched over wondering, questioning gaze of childsmall, scared face, with very bright her slumber for some time, but nature hood. brown eyes, and two little speckled proved to be too strong for him. For "You've hurt me!" said a childish allowed himself neither rest nor re- that their appearance was no delusion. the tired eyes, and the head sunk hoisted her upon his shoulder, while lower upon the breast, until the man's grizzled beard was mixed with the golden tresses of his companion, and

less slumber. Had the wanderer remained awake | are all that's left o' twenty-one people. a mother's care. The child was pale for another half-hour a strange sight The rest is all dead o' thirst and hunand wan, but her healthy arms and would have met his eyes. Far away ger away down in the south." legs showed that she had suffered less on the extreme verge of the alkall plain there rose up a little spray of one. "How is it now?" he answered, anx- dust, very slight at first, and hardly to tously, for she was still rubbing the be distinguished from the mists of the deflantly; "she's mine 'cause I saved

higher and broader until it formed a me. She's Lucy Ferrier from this day "Kiss it and make it well," she said, solid, well-defined cloud. This cloud

"Mother's gone. I guess you'll see creatures. In more fertile spots the observer would have come to the con-"Gone, eh!" said the little girl clusion that one of those great herds "Funny, she didn't say good-by; she of bisons which graze upon the prairie land was approaching him. This was over to auntie's for tea, and now she's obviously impossible in these arid wilds. As the whirl of dust drew nearer to the solitary bluffupon which the two castaways were reposing, the canvas-covered tilts of wagons and the figures of armed horsemen began to show up through the haze, and the

the mountains, the rear was not yet "Pretty things! fine things!" cried visible on the horizon. Right the little girl enthusiastically, holding across the enormous plain streteued up two glittering fragments of mica. the straggling array, wagons and darts, men on horseback and men on called recollections to John Ferrier. foot. Innumerable women who staggered along under burdens, and chil- mons.' dren who toddled beside the wagons

head of it had reached the base of

or peeped out from under the white coverings. This was evidently no ordinary party of immigrants, but rather some nomad people who had been com-"Well, we reckoned we'd strike anpelled from stress of circumstances to seek themselves a new country. There thim. He shall say what is to be done rose through the clear air a confused map, or somethin', and it didn't turn clattering and rumbling from this great mass of humanity, with the creaking of wheels and the neighing horses. Loud as it was, it was not sufterrupted his companion gravely, starabove them

At the head of the column there rode a score or more of grave, iron-faced men, clad in somber, homespun garments and armed with rifles. On reachthe base of the bluff they halted and held a short council among themselves. pushed on, followed by a great crowd clean-shaven man with grizzly hair.

and pointed up at the rugged crag | two castaways. above them. From its summit there fluttered a little wisp of pink, showing, solemn words, "it can only be as beup hard and bright against the gray lievers in our own creed. We shall rocks behind. At the sight there was have no wolves in our fold. Better far a general reining up of horses and unslinging of guns, while fresh horsemen came galloping up to reinforce the vanguard. The word "redskins" was on every lip.

'There can't be any number of Injuns here," said the elderly man who appeared to be in command. "We have passed the Pawnees, and there are no other tribes until we cross the great mountains."

"Shall I go forward and see, Brother Stangerson?" asked one of the band. "And I," "And I," cried a dozen

"Leave your horses below and we will wait you here," the elder answered In a moment the young fellows had dismounted, fastened their horses, and were ascending the precipitous slope which led up to the object which had excited their curiosity. They advanced rapidly and noiselessly, with the confidence and dexterity of practised scouts. The watchers from the plain rock until their figures stood out you come with us on these terms?" against the sky-line. The young man who had first given the alarm was leading them. Suddenly his followers saw him throw up his hands, as though restrain a smile. The leader alone rejoining him they were affected in the same way by the zight which met their

On the little plateau which crowned the barren hill there stood a single giant bowlder, and against this bowlder "What would ye think of offering up | there lav a tall man, long-bearded and hard-featured, but of an excessive thinness. His placid face and regular breathing showed that he was fast asleep. Beside him lay a little child, You say over them ones that you used with her round white arms encircling to say every night in the wagon when his brown, sinewy neck, and her golden-haired head resting upon the breast of his velveteen tunic. Her rosy lips were parted, showing the regular line of snow-white teeth within, and a playful smile played over her infantile features. Her plump little white legs, terminating in white socks, and I'll stand by and come in on the neat shoes with shining buckles, offered a strange contrast to the long, shriveled members of her companion. On the ledge of rock above this strange shawl out for that purpose. "You've couple there stood three solema buzzards, who, at the sight of the newcomers, uttered raucous screams of disappointment and flapped sullenly

The cries of the foul birds awoke the two sleepers, who stared about them in bewilderment. The man staggered to his feet and looked down upon the plain which had been so desolate when sleep had overtaken him, and which was now traversed by this enormous assumed an expression of incredulity as he gazed, and he passed his bony

The rescuing party were speedily three days and three nights he had able to convince the two castaways pose. Slowly the eyelids drooped over One of them seized the little girl and two others supported her gaunt companion and assisted im toward the wagons.

"My name is John Ferrier," the wan-

"Is she your child?" asked some

Who are you, though?" he continued, glancing with curiosity at his stalwart, sunburned rescuers. "There seems to be a powerful lot of ye." "Nigh upon ten thousand," said one of the young men. "We are the per-

secuted children of God-the chosen of the angel Merona." "I never heard tell on him," said the wanderer. "He appears to have chosen a fair crowd of ye."

"Do not jest at that which is sacred," said the other, sternly. "We are of those who believe in those sacred writings, drawn in Egyptian letters on plates of beaten gold, which were handed unto the boly Joseph Smith at Palmyra. We have come from Nauvoo, in the state of Illinois, where we had founded our temple. We have the Louisiana lottery, but the come to seek a refuge from the violent man and from the godless, even though it be the heart of the desert."

The name of Nauvoo evidently re-"I see," he said; "you are the Mor-

companions with one voice. "And where are you going?" God is leading us under the person of

our prophet. You must come before

They had reached the base of the hill by this time, and were surrounded by crowds of the pilgrims-pale-faced, meek-looking women, strong, laughing ficient to rouse the two tired wayfarers | children, and anxious, earnest-eyed men. Many were the cries of astonishment and of commiseration which arose from them when they perceived the youth of one of the strangers and the destitution of the other. Their escort did not halt, however, but "The wells are to the right, my of Mormons, until they reached a wagbrothers," said a one. a hard-lipped, on which was conspicuous for its great size, and for the gaudiness and smart-"To the right of the Sierra Blanco- ness of its appearance. Six horses were so we shall reach the Rio Grande, "said | yoked to it, whereas the others were furnished with two, or at most, four Journal "Fear not for water," cried a third. | apiece. Beside the driver there sat a "He who could draw it from the rocks | man who could not have been more massive head and resolute expression troubled with neuralgia and rheumamarked him as a leader. He was lead-They were about to resume their crowd approached be laid it aside and gree, appetite fell away, and he was Ask yourselves if you can afferd for the journey when one of the youngest and listened attentively to an account of terribly reduced in flesh and strength, sake of saving 50 cents run the risk keenest-eyed uttered an exclamation the episode. Then he turned to the Three bottles of Electric Bitters cured and do nothing for it, one know from

"If we take you with us," he said, in



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"Guess I'll come with you on any

terms," sail Ferrier, with such empliasis that the grave elders could not overcome with astonishment, and on tained his stern, impressive expression. "Take him, Brother Stangerson," he said, "give him food and drink, and the child likewise. Let it be your task al-

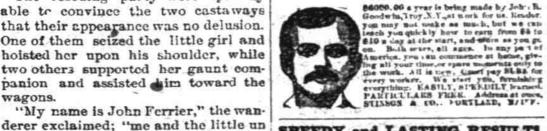
> Gn, on to Zion!" "On, on to Zion!" cried the growd of Mormons, and the words rippled down Trial bottles free at Aycocke & Co.'s the long caravan, passing from mouth drng store. Large sizes 50e and \$1.00. to mouth until they died away in a dull murmur in the far distance. With a cracking of whips and a creaking of wheels the great wagon got into motion, and soon the whole caravan was winding along once more. The elder to whose care the two waifs had been committed led them to his wagon, where a meal was already awaiting home. It gives the latest information

"You shall remain here," he said. ered from your fatigues. In the meanyou are of our religion. Brigham Young has said it, and he has spoken with the voice of Joseph Smith, which is the

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tawba, O., had five large forer sores on is leg, doctors said he was incurable ne bottle Electric Bitters and one box Bucklen's Aruica Salve cured him entirely. Sold by Ayeocke & Co., drag-

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