

BOOK FOUR

# OVER TRAILS OF YESTERDAY



STORIES OF  
COLORFUL CHARACTERS  
THAT LIVED  
LABORED  
LOVED  
FOUGHT  
AND DIED IN

## THE GOLD AND SILVER WEST



PUBLISHED BY THE HERMIT  
ARBOR VILLA VIA SALIDA, COLO.

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The Hermit of Arbor-Villa  
F. E. Gimlet



DEDICATED TO THE TRAIL  
BLAZERS AND BUILDERS OF  
THE GOLD AND SILVER WEST



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## INTRODUCTION

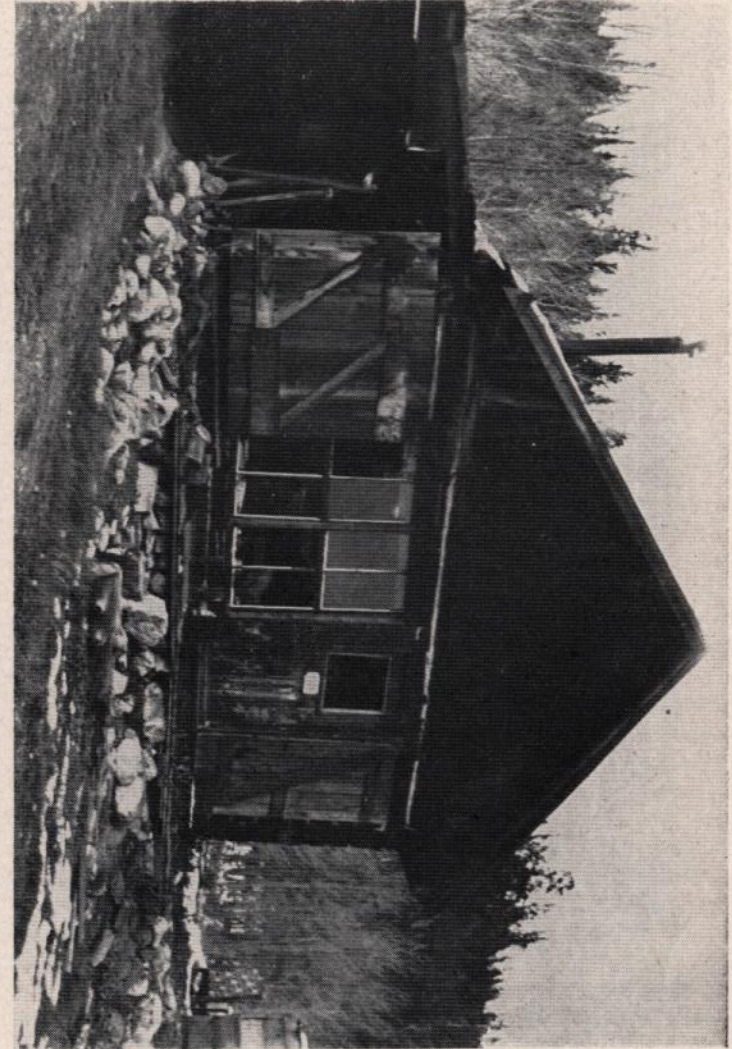
The writer attempts to pay tribute and eulogize those great characters that blazed and built the trails, added to the glamour, that made the GOLD AND SILVER WEST what it used to be and what it is today. The stories, the characters and their past are true to life and real names omitted only when there are descendants left behind. The heroes and heroines, renegades and bandits, bad men and wicked women carried on under no masquerade and to call them such caused no comment while living and certainly would be no insult after they are dead. I would extoll their virtues, record their works on the walls of the tunnels and shafts beside our mighty peaks. Their errors I will let drift on with the shifting sands of the Golden Arkansas, Platte and Colorado rivers veritably ribbons of gold from their source to the deltas.

### THE HERMIT OF ARBOR-VILLA

Per F. E. Gimlett.

## CONTENTS

	Page
General Store of Tabor.....	3
A Prospector's Bier.....	4
Just A Log Cabin Where Dreams Abide.....	5
A Spanish Arasta.....	6
Via Old Spanish Trails.....	7
Fairplay, Colorado.....	19
The Gold Gravel Banks at Alma, Colorado.....	29
A Letter To Our President.....	35
Squibs.....	39, 47, 64
To the Mountain Chief Mine.....	40
The Mountain Chief Mine, Monarch, Colorado.....	41
Summer Comes To the Rockies.....	43



Still standing and repeatedly referred to as general store of Tabor, Buckskin, Colo.





A PROSPECTOR'S BIER. From within these crumbling walls an age old letter tells the story of unfulfilled dreams.

## JUST AN OLD LOG CABIN WHERE DREAMS ABIDE

An old prospector's log cabin, at the foot of Aetna's peak  
Marks the spot of shattered dreams, hopes and defeat  
The door of split shakes rusty hinges hold in place  
And roof of once round lagging, has fallen into space.

Log bunks in the corner, still covered with boughs of pine  
Where old miners would dream of gold and silver mines  
The chinking is loose, the wind through the crevices blow  
Of what was once a man's castle, in the days of long ago.

An old sheet iron stove, the battered kettle still there  
Tells the old, old story of men that would do and dare.  
I move a piece of lumber from a shelf still on the wall  
And find a yellowed, thumb marked letter explaining all.

Longing, loneliness, of wife and children in Indiana State  
Begging, pleading for a wanderer's return ere 'tis too late  
The call is unheeded as year after year rolls quickly by  
With the old prospector, more determined to conquer or die.

He kept the faith, had sworn to family and friends of old  
To never return without Midas fortune of silver and gold  
Alas, fate deals the cards, many draw only deuces and trey  
And thus another great soldier, gambled his life away.

We buried him on the trail between the cabin and his mine  
The place unmarked and forgotten by the passing of time  
But nee'r fear when Gabriel's trumpet issues the call  
My friend from this grave of solitude will be the first of all.

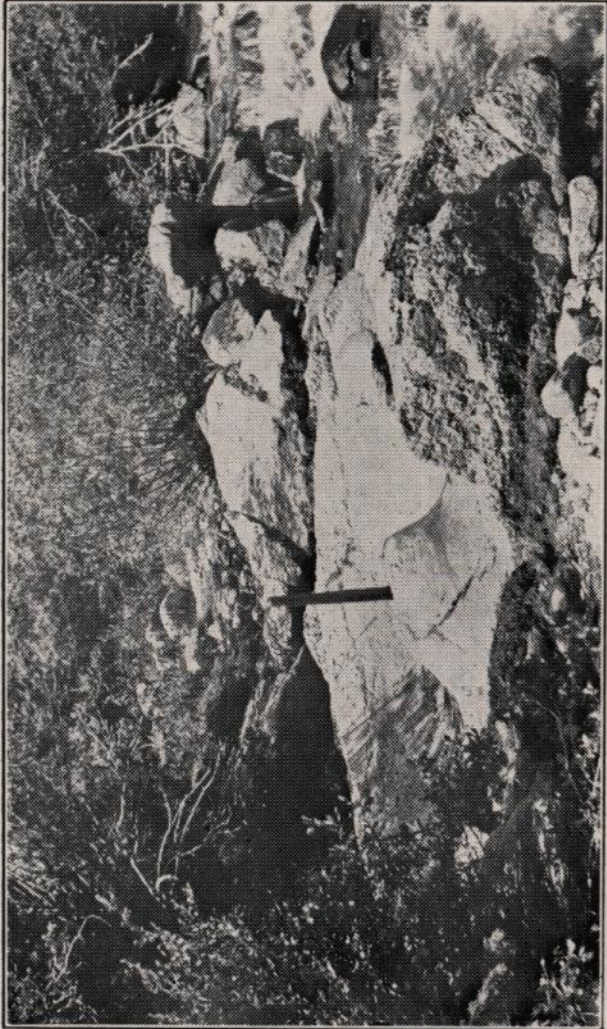
I sit today on a bench beside the sagging cabin door  
In the very same spot where fifty-nine years before  
The old prospector pointing to his mine on the hill,  
Told of the wealth he could wrest from nature's till.

Fulfill desires, wife, children and friends again meet  
Another vision shattered, another dream that met defeat  
I walk back again over old trails, now so feint and dim  
Calling to mind other old timers, that also failed to win.

So I offer a tribute to these old soldiers of toil  
To those who would venture, belong most of the spoils  
To those who now live in security, never take a chance  
A meager existence is due, the code in gambling parlance.

—The Hermit.





The Spanish Arasta  
The oldest ore mill known to man, Buckskin, Colorado.

## To Alma and Fairplay Via Old Spanish Trails

The year was 1737, or thereabouts, as the first caravan of exploring Spaniards with heavy laden pack mules, horses and Indian slaves, camped at the forks of Horseshoe Mosquito and Buckskin Gulch, and alongside the South Fork of the South Platte river, at or near where Fairplay now stands. Ever in fear of Indian raids and ambushes, a sentry stood guard on Lookout Point, while trusty muskets were laid within arms reach as the tired men rested beside the camp fire.

### Where Sunsets Turn To Gold

As the sun slowly sinks behind the Mosquito range in a sky of golden hue, they bow their heads in supplication to the Almighty for their safe arrival. The tall green forests of spruce and pine trees protect them from the chill west winds that sweep from the still heavy snow-capped peaks, as they tumble at an early hour into their blankets, and with saddles for pillows, soon drop into a well-earned slumber.

Awakening the next day they gaze at the wonders about them, and with that never dying dream of the prospector, they hope to discover the long searched for gold and silver treasure.

Yes dreams in connection with prayers many times come true as proven by this find to be made by the Spaniards which exceeded all their expectations.

### Co-operation, The Keynote

One group under the leadership of Ferdinand De Valeria spread out over what is now Horseshoe, North and South Mosquito Guches, while another group under Don Valesque covers the territory where Buckskin, Montgomery, Alma and Park City later came to life. One other group under Juan Sebastian prospected the Beaver and Tarryall creek section, at the foot of now Silver Heel mountain.

### Old Prospectors Unafraid

Taking council and comparing notes that night, locations were selected and next day these brave soldiers of fortune, were drilling a hole for the heavy iron stem (imported from Spain) into a huge, thick, wide and flat-surfaced stone of hard granite, and later soldering the stem in with high content gold and silver lead. So came into existence the first arasta, ore crushing and grinding mill, and no doubt the first in the state or even in the U. S. A.



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

### **Gold and Silver For the Digging**

This lead ore used for solder was impregnated with gold and silver, and was even in those days, retorted in crucibles over a draft blown by foot bellows, hot charcoal fire. Now they chisel a groove in the hard granite arasta, for the moving stone attached to each side of the sweep to rotate in, with smaller V-like grooves to hold the mercury that in turn collects the gold and now they are ready for milling.

### **Rivers Like Ribbons of Gold**

They were also at this time panning and washing gold from the river beds, as the finding of long buried in the wash, sluice boxes made from split logs, smoothed by ax without the sign of one nail in construction, was sufficient evidence that they knew the art of sluicing, but even as today the loss of fine gold has always been the problem of the placer miner. Yes the old prospector can thank the Spaniard for much of the knowledge gained in placer and lode mining, even to learning what ore was worth saving, by looking at the rejected material cobbled from the quartz.

### **Time Passes All Too Quickly**

Within the week and for six month to come, mules and horses are busy packing in the plentiful deposits of rich gold and silver float and ore from outcroppings. Yes, here was milling in the primitive and during the summer months for years to come the gold and silver, sometimes in amalgam, concentrates, often in retort, was loaded in the maletas, and on the mules for the long trek south to the Gulf of Mexico, thence over the seas to Spain.

Yes, the lure of gold and silver has called all nationalities to and from the four corners of the world, and civilization always follows the pick, no matter who does the wielding. The dreams, visions and the initiative of the prospector have ever been kept alive by the dominating thought, or esthetic desire to possess shiny gold and silver money, and today if that so-called (illusory by its enemies) but rather inherent, sentimental, or spiritual thought is to be finally destroyed by an unwise congress, I doubt if the nation or entire world will ever see confidence or initiative restored again.

### **Veritably a Treasure Vault**

Now passes from the picture Coronado's children and the wealth of this district that once passed on to Spain to enrich the coffers of that nation, will now from the year 1859 have been taken over by our own American adventuring prospectors (really the worst of the tenderfeet) of that

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

time, who hail from the south and east and who will in turn now deliver this future treasure to the U. S. A.

This soldier of chance now begins to locate placer claims, and later stake the rich lode veins on the mountain sides, and then he really begins to mine and sluice the treasure that he finds about him everywhere.

### **When Ignorance Was Bliss**

We must understand most of our early prospectors knew nothing of even the simple rudiments of geology or mining, in fact the prospector was made in this day of history as he finally did learn something of the ores, and formations that contained them, mostly by observation and experience, so in the early days of mining the American started in where the Spaniard left off, but with Yankee ingenuity he soon built and used water wheel power, instead of slave and horse power to run the arastas, but it was to be many years later before the stamp, roller or ball mill was to be in evidence.

### **Progress Comes Slowly**

For several years the American must use the old Spanish arastas and build others himself. The base stone sometimes was of quartzsize, schist, lime or granite, and he must also build his sluice boxes with the ax as his only tool. Truly the method of mining was crude to the extreme. Small wonder that in those first days of prospecting with a dearth of chemists, metallurgists and geologists, the miner with little or no education, the early mills and smelters failed in both the separation and extraction of metals from the ores.

### **Civilization Comes West**

The year is now 1860, new boom towns are springing up like mushrooms overnight. The first meeting of commissioners was held at Tarryall, but thereafter in Buckskin where already was built Buckskin Joe's log cabin, that was to be the first court house in the district.

The recording book of 1861, size 6 by 8 inches by 1-2 inch thick, is still on file in the new stone structure at Fairplay, itself the oldest court house in Colorado from point of continuous use. The simple long hand recording contained therein is a wonder of simplicity, compared to the modern and complex sized volume of today with its typewritten pages. So comes to life the towns of Laurette (Buckskin), Horseshoe, Dudley, Montgomery, Tarryall, Hamilton, Park City, Alma and Fairplay and all are to be short-lived except the latter two which have not only held their own but are growing in population.



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

### Each Day a Changing Panorama

The year is now 1863 and the 14 stores, 15 saloons, theaters and several dancehalls at Buckskin are going full blast. Si Turner's saloon and dancehall is open for business as usual.

Just arrived are two full barrels of Kentucky bourbon that are hastily being unloaded from the freight wagons in from Denver. The stock would not be diluted or spiked in those days, and there would not be the usual plugs of tobacco dropped through the bunghole to give the old prospector an additional kick that ended in a knockout as was customary in later days.

Yes, even the game of faro, poker and roulette were on the square (if any gambling games are on the square) and the players always got a run for their money. Meanwhile a few of those beautiful 40 inch busted dance hall gals were dancing around with, or rather dodging the hobnailed boots of the old sourdough, while the exchange of gold and silver dust with now and then some shiny gold and silver coins passed back and forth across the split lagged and smooth hewed log topped bar.

### An Angel, Or Is She? Comes To Town

Now stepping into the picture as she alights from the overland stage, is a real gal of the gold and silver west, with natural beauty unadorned and a joy to behold, the cynosure of 5,000 hungry eyes, to be ever after respected and defended by the shabby dressed whiskered prospectors, full dress suit gamblers and buckskin clad scouts and trappers.

Truly here enters a saint into an environment where even the angels would fear to tread. Yes here in the flesh and before man's vision was beauty in the rough, beauty to be ever after talked about, recorded and worshipped and paradox tho it be, it was a few short years until a multitude of admirers were searching and prospecting through the crags and forests of the Great Divide seeking unknowingly for this same face, form and being, they knew by sight, the heroine of that day, that in reality a populace now knew only by name.

### Silver Heels, The Gal Of Mystery

So began the story of Silver Heels, a figure in the historical annals, records and sagas of the gold and silver west, the story of romance, mystery and tragedy, the story of a martyr to early western civilization that reaches beyond

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

the belief of skeptics, yet truly stranger than fiction and minimized in the telling.

Who was Silver Heels? It has been said she was the daughter of an old prospector unsuccessful in the quest for gold. To enrich the family exchequer this gal conceived the idea of digging gold where gold is, and inasmuch as only beauty and mystery can capitalize on depravity, she chose the latter, and by wearing a mask, she did succeed in amassing gold and maintaining her reputation as well.

### Mystery In The Air

There was a hushed expectancy prevailing among the patrons of the dance hall as the night wore on, all awaiting the arrival of Silver Heels (the gal of mystery.)

The regular girls, always a little envious of her popularity, hoped she might definitely be delayed, while each sap of a man wished otherwise, each expecting to win her exclusive smiles for the evening. Yes she was there to add spice to the program, and undoubtedly to charm and clean out not one, but several gullible prospectors of their bag of gold.

### Men But Babes in the Woods

Well Silver Heels (like other designing females) might have had her moments as an angel of mercy (history says she did) and no doubt she would give a drop of water to a pint-thirst man, or even throw a drowning man a straw, but believe the Old Hermit, those gold diggers of the good old days (same as now) wouldn't waste much time on sentiment concerning a mere man, but ever ready to pay tribute to those consorts that followed the soldiers of chance in those days of dangerous undertakings, I'll grant she did possess great virtues, did on occasions gently stroke the fevered brow of many old sourdoughs, after first emptying his money pouch, the cause of his fever, but there is this to say of those gals, while they were mighty stingy with their caresses and kisses, at least they did not waste them on pet chows, pekes, pugs and poms as they do today.

### Constancy Was Still A Virtue

We grant that her victims got little for their money, and right now let it be known if Silver Heels would have married every old sourdough she promised (in order to do her gold digging) she would have been the most married woman in the world, not even barring our present many short married and divorced movie stars. Yes women are strange creatures, yet hold the destiny of men and nations in the hollow of her



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

hand, it is she who wills if civilization is to rise or fall, if morals are to be high or low, and at her bidding nations live or die, and men tag along with her tho the trail lead toward heaven or hell.

### **A Toast To A Queen**

Now coming through the door steps a female of divine proportions (May West style) her feet fairly skip across the split log polished floor, with that sweet come hither seductive voice natural to most women during courtship and before marriage, but disappearing right after the honeymoon is over.

She sings a how-de-do everybody, as immediately a new odor from her intoxicating personal perfume (man bait) permeates the atmosphere, drowning out the familiar smell of stale booze and tobacco fumes. A rush is made to the bar, every old sourdough hoping to be the first one to give the thirsty maid her first eye-opener, and to hog as much of her company as possible for the rest of the evening. Now she sings Little Brown Jug that brings a shout of hilarity amid great applause, and later to the accompaniment of One Leg Thompson's heart-touching fiddle, she sings I'll Take You Home Again Katheleen with such pathos, the noise quickly subsides and the tremulous voice bringing back memories, that soon have the old sourdoughs shedding tears in their schooners of beer.

### **Eve As Ever Satan's Handmaiden**

All eyes have been centered on the mysterious creature with the immense flowery and floppy hat, and then drop to the pink mask, and through the eye slits, one not carried away with her charms fancied they could detect a pair of devilish blue-grey eyes.

A delicate shade of sachet powder (the only cosmetic used) did not hide a few outstanding freckles on the lower extremity of each cheek that added to rather than detracted from her beauty, the heavy cupid shaped, natural tinted, untainted and unpainted lips were surely enticing, while a well protruding chin bespoke determination. The two braids of soft brown hair (woman's crowing glory) falling gracefully from a regal shaped head to her knees, each tied with a wide silver bow ribbon, reminded one of the Biblical picture of the Queen of Sheba at the court of King Solomon.

### **Deception Well Ornamented**

A description of Silver Heels' wearing apparel is in order as she was for the moment the arbiter of fashion among

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

the "Who's Who" in the district. One noticed a delicate fringe of white point lace around a swan like beautiful pink skinned neck, from which hung suspended a necklace of gold nuggets attached to a heart shaped locket with diamond center, while dangling from pierced ears were ear-drops of diamonds and shiny gold coins. High shoulder puffs (the vogue of the day) was in evidence, with the sleeves of the tight fitting waist gradually coming in to a close fit on a wrist heavily ringed with gold coins and silver clasp bracelets.

The high collared, unbuttoned, neat fitting jacket left open to view the heavy protruding bust line, disclosing an open space between promontories (called the safety bank) and looked as though they might be genuine bumps with no padding.

### **Dresses But Add To Mystery**

The waist ornamented with silver rosettes was cut on the bias, flaring outward and rearward at the belt line, overing what one would presume to be a medium stuffed bustle, and the whole held together and up by a multiple of beautiful pearl buttons extending from the neck down. From the lower extremity of the waist, the skirt puffed out over the hip line adding to the curved effect (unnecessary we men critics thought) and now gently sloping to a world of tucks, pleats and flounces at the heel below the ankle line. The solid color dress of rusty gold satin with a beautiful wide silk sash of silver tone, carried out the general idea of what the fitting colors should be for the place and occasion.

### **A Swain in the Offing**

Among the lady's many admirers was Hank Gleason, true he was only a prospector with the ups and downs that followed in the wake of that risky profession, yet nevertheless he knew real gold, whether in women or metal, when he saw it, and because of an incident and the quickness of his trigger finger in saving the lady from the clutches of "Patch Eye Pete", the two-gun bad-man, whose slogan was, "Take what you want and ethics be damned." In gratitude she always refused to dig from him, his gold, perhaps gave him a good night kiss now and then, reciprocated his kindness in other various ways, but not to the extent of using the marriage license that Hank always carried to meet, as he said, the expected and eventual finale.

### **Another Mere Man**

Buckskin Joe, a close affinity to Silver Heels, was a character in his own right and exemplified the trapper and



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

hunter, rather than the prospector, but fitted in the picture on that day when the country was changing over from the primitive to civilized state.

He had, which was common, the long spreading Texas steer style mustache, with long pointed beard (generally tobacco stained and matted) long flowing hair, with fur cap made from the skin of the martin. The clothes of Buckskin, which he tanned himself, were in reality the work of an artist, with the collar line and waist belt, fringed and stitched, or embroidered in various designs and ornamented with colored beads, while the boots on his feet were made by the old shoe-maker of that day, these too were of many colored decorations and were the envy of the camp.

Of Moccasin Jim, another product of the good old days, he too was buckskin clad, and on most occasions wore the Indian moccasins (hence his name) which could be purchased for as little as a quart of whiskey. Moccasin was the most genteel stage robber I ever met. In chiding him about his profession he used that same old alibi, "If I don't do it, someone else will."

Si Turner, the saloon keeper and Slicker Jim and Bill Duck, the gamblers, were of the general type bunco artists that followed the gold and silver rushes. These four men seemed to fit in or be closely associated with the days and life of Silver Heel, and I doubt much if the mask she always wore on her public appearances deceived any of them, and no doubt she might even split the swag with them for the protection they gave.

### Modesty Always At A Premium

Of course women of both classes, in the good old days, were modest and mysterious and the mask only added to the mystery, but give a fool man a mystery to unravel or a game of intrigue to play, and sap that he is, he will put a lifetime of exploring and detectivating to solve the riddle, and chump that he was and is, woman is one puzzle that never was and never will be solved.

I would but add to the glory and glamour of Silver Heels, even though she might be but the daughter or wife of some old prospector or miner, and simply chose the make-up as an easy way to dig gold from the simple (what man isn't, where women are concerned) illiterate sourdough, and any promise she might make to gain her ends was again fair play, for the victim should know he was playing with dynamite and did know he could not get revenge, or identify her in her natural habitat.

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

Yes, after all a woman as clever and sympathetic (which she proved to be) well earned and was entitled to the beautiful and nationally known snow-covered, eternally frozen monument SILVER HEELS MOUNTAIN, dedicated to her memory.

Yes, woman's middle name should be deception, she will diet, dope, defy nature and deny herself the necessities of life to attain a streamlined figure, then used plastic and metal imitations to restore the bust line, even to the protruding nipples, thus adding to that womanly attraction so appealing to men, yet within their being lies dormant, an element of goodness that springs into action when occasion demands.

But not for a minute did they fool the old dance hall floor manager who served time in those gay days of the 1880's, picking out the 40-inch busted feminine dancing stars for the old time theatres and dancehalls. Yes, even in those days when padded busts were permissible in all sorts of women, the undersized would try and crash the gate by adding to the natural attraction a little extra padding, but a gentle pinch soon exposed the trick. Because of their many virtues these little deceptions are forgiven by the writer, yet who stands eternally on guard against the three perils of life, hells fire, women and dynamite.

### Woman Ever A Dilemma

Time moved quickly in those glamorous days of the old west, si in the wee hours of the morning Silver Heels, glamour gal of the 1860's, 70's and 80's, pretty well danced out but still sober, shoulders her bag of gold, the efforts of just one night's gold digging and fades away in the early dawn, for there are none among the soundly drunks (including Sandy, the bartender) to say nay, but Saturday come she will like the maid of the mist, be there again in all her silks, finery and captivating way to ply her trade, and to say the least she was the most successful prospector in the district. How good she was, or how bad she was will ever remain a dark, deep mystery, and as far as I know or ever heard about, Silver Heels, her silver heels was the only part of her pedal extremities she exposed, and few if any could ever swear she had even an ankle.

### An Angel Sometimes

Yes, Silver Heels did believe in Fairplay and perhaps if not an angel of mercy out of sentiment, she did do her bit in extracting the gold from the prospector in the shortest possible time, and truly this did prevent him from wasting it on booze or losing it over the gambling table, thus saving



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

both time and a headache, and but for these kind of gals, every mine and mill would have been short handed each week after payday, so for this boon in aiding the industry, let us thank the feminine gold digger.

Just once again and for the last time was Silver Heels to show up as an angel of mercy, and that was during the smallpox epidemic in the camp. True, there were only a few hundred women in camp and they superstitious and afraid along with thousands of weak men ran like rabbits from the plague and dare not risk nursing the victims, but here a girl from the underworld (and it has happened before) not afraid of death, undertakes the task.

So with 300 patients afflicted, she makes the rounds of camp. Hennesy's Gaiety theatre serves as improvised hospital, with sympathetic heart and willing hands she nurses the living, and administers a prayer to those about to pass down the sunset trail, aided only in her work by a bare half-dozen men immune to the disease, who also buried the dead.

Only a scarce 300 of the 5,000 population of Buckstein now remained of this once boom town, where it was only a short time before, day time all the time and there was no night there.

Yes, this one act alone, gave Silver Heels a place in history equal to that of Joan of Arc, Helen of Troy, Florence Nightingale and other feminine martyrs. For her reward she contracted the dread disease herself. Was she ever beautiful as Silver Heels. The world never knew, but now that her features were pitted and pox marked, they were never to know.

Woman, thy name is vanity and but for this we would still be living in caves. Yes, she is cruel enough to have men skin the beasts so she may preen and parade, and end in skinning her own man if he obeys not her moods, she will die in the attempt to attain a beautiful face and figure and likewise die if she loses these attributes, so one look in the glass at beauty dethroned and replaced by ugly scars, she determines her course. For the last time she would don the silks, satins and silver slippers and attired thus, she wandered unconsolable and alone, yet unafraid in the mountains she loved so well, and history records she was never to be heard from again.

### **The Mystery Never Solved**

Eclipsing in intensity the search for the Holy Grail, was the search prosecuted for a human soul, a heroine by deeds,

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

yet unknown by face or figure, so even unto this day, the prospectors are wandering the hills, turning over the bleached and rotted bones of other long lost humans and beasts in the eternal search, and still remaining unclaimed to the credit of Silver Heels in a Colorado bank, lies a fund of \$4,000 with 60 years of compounded interest, a gift from an appreciative people.

### **The Sourdough A Superstitious Soul**

Old Sandy MarGregor says: "Sure I 'heard' her once a singing 'Carry Me Back To Old Virginia'"— and Loco Bill swears he saw her plain as far up on the cliffs of Mt. Lincoln a month after she disappeared. Jimmy Stevens of the Old Moose Mine thought many times in the quiet of the night he heard crying, only to find it to be the whimper of a mountain lion.

The prospector of the good old days was himself afflicted with much superstition, but this you may believe, from that day on the old sourdoughs and the still remaining few miners left, are ever on the search for two things, gold and silver lodes, and Silver Heels in the spirit, form or skeleton and the still standing reward of \$1,000 offered by the committee was to be the least consideration. Sure they can identify the skeleton by the necklace of gold nuggets with the name Silver Heels engraved on the locket attached, or even by the bracelets or other articles of gold jewelry (indestructible) that might be found nearby.

### **A Knight to the Rescue**

No more had the news circulated of the disappearance of Silver Heels than Hank with the aid of his constant and faithful companion (Samson, the burro) wandered high up on Pennsylvania Peak, and along a spruce needle covered, and nearly obliterated trail, where he once upon a time, traveled with a beautiful gal beside him, and coincidental with his disappearance also, what follows purely a friends conjecture.

Upward and onward he climbed, peering down the abandoned shafts and into the caved mine tunnels, he sought her among the crags and crevices of steep cliffs and after days of fruitless search he came upon the still breathing form of Silver Heels, ragged and torn was the dancing gown, and the silvered slippers were but shreds of leather. Recoiling from his glance and weak though she was, she would discourage any attempt to thwart her in her purpose and like the wolf in trap cheated of its freedom, she still willed to die, and only because of the now pitted face, hideous scars and blasted



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

future. The word suicide held for a terror, and she had for many days hesitated to throw herself headlong from the high cliff or jump down the deserted mine shafts. What a blessing that love is ever blind, and sensing her feeling Hank smiled, hesitated not a minute as two arms were extended toward, and soon were around her. "Silver, I thought you were lost to me or perhaps dead, and if that were true life would hold no further appeal and I would die with you. To me you were ever and still are the most beautiful creature on earth, and if you so will, our life here in the valley of the Platte may be finished, but just over the Divide a new world awaits us." Then gently placing the emaciated form of the now amendable woman on his sturdy steed, they slowly climbed down the mountain side to the prospector's cabin in the forest glade of Lonesome Gulch. Here, after weeks of patient and devoted ministrations, Silver regains her physical health, and not without some lines of natural beauty as the looking glass reveals.

### Who Was Silver Heels?

This chapter in the life of Silver Heels is not recorded in history, and the marriage certificate entry in the old courthouse of the now ghost gold mining town of Granite has long since been erased by fire, it might perhaps throw some light on her disappearance, and revealed a strange ceremony between a silver-haired, black veiled lady, and gray-bearded prospector who were traveling hand in hand down the sunset trails of yesterday.

The story has been told of a strange couple who dwell on Porcupine ridge on Engineer mountain in the far away silver San Juans, living in a world centered around two people truly in love, who are content to live in their crude log castle as King and Queen.

A smile is ever on her face as she sweetly sings "Silver Threads Among The Gold," while the old man who but seldom comes to the general store, trading gold for womans gowns, and smiling says for a beautiful woman, a queen happy within her domain, bounded by a heart full of compassion, held secure for words of praise and devotion and fenced in by the love-light of worshipping eyes, a bond that endures, and far beyond human understanding.

Yes, Silver Heels is lost to the nation and hears no more praises or plaudits of the multitude, but love is all, and outside of this, the world holds for her no more appeal.

FAIRPLAY, COLORADO. On the trail blazed by Spanish Cavaliers and where "Prunes" the burro, monument occupies a Main St. stand.





## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

### **A Martyr Unhonored by Bars, Stars or Medals**

So ends the story of Silver Heels, a martyr to the gold and silver west, her sacrifice brought neither medals, distinguished crosses, stars or bars, and her decorations consisted only of scars for valorous feats performed, but Colorado has long ago honored this angel of mercy, by naming one of its most beautiful peaks atop the Continental Divide of the Rockies, Silver Heels.

Truly a more fitting and lasting monument could not be given, a marker that will endure for thousands of years when granite headstones and mausoleums will have eroded to dust. There she stands today, Silver Heels with cap of snow white looking over the wide expanse of the great South Park of the Platte where the buffalos, Indians and Spanish prospectors once did roam, and where she herself trod the trails of yesterday. Truly one of the greatest women of all time was she who would sacrifice beauty in service to mankind, and accept no medals or rewards in dollars tendered.

What matter if today the great dredges with hungry jaws are slowly eating up the South Plate valley, eliminating all trace, landmarks and memories of days gone by, finally engulfing into its hungry jaw, the log cabin itself of Silver Heels, but long after civilization has died, Silver Heels mountain will still stand as a monument to guard a domain made famous and hallowed by one woman's bravery.

### **The West Still In Its Infancy**

Now the strenuous decade of the 60's have passed and those unrecorded and hazy years of the 70's leave little for history's archives. The lode mines are mostly inactive due to the unsettled metal market and the costly problem of milling and smelting which was still in an experimental stage. Fairplay, if not advancing in the limelight is at least holding its own. Who gave the city its name or how is perhaps of no moment to our present careless and unthinking generation, but you must accept the record, that city and the people thereabout were disciples that stood for Fairplay, whether as the story goes, the name came about by the prevention of a murder on account of a girl's betrayal, or in defending the prospector against the claim jumper, defending the cattle and horsemen against the thieves and rustlers, or the law abiding citizens against the lawless element of the good old days.

There was one outstanding event that called for Fair-

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

play and that was when the vigilantes (or was it a mob) decided to take the law in their hands, did break in the jail doors and because of the dearth of trees thereabouts, tied one end of the rope to the judges desk and then did suspend the guilty culprit from the second story window until he was dead, dead, dead. The action indicated it was not only to serve as an example to the other lawless varmints, but to be a warning to the judge and jury that procrastination was not to be tolerated in Fairplay.

### **A Gold and Silver Fan**

So the Fairplay district, lying fan-like at the foot of Horseshoe, Pennsylvania, Sacramento, Loveland, Bross and Silver Heel peaks, might be likened to the gold and silver fan in relief. The city of Fairplay, the golden handle, while the streams and ridges that lead to Horseshoe, Park City, Alma, Buckskin, Montgomery and Tarryall resembles the ribs and leaves. The Mosquito range, including part of the Continental Divide, with those intermittent, symmetrical peaks along the sky line and rugged snow pocketed crest, with the veins of shiny gold and silver, could be likened to the fringing edge, and with this description I wish to convey the thought that it really has proven to be a fan-shaped district, underlaid with gold and silver.

### **Transportation At Great Cost**

What a task that must have been to export this gold and silver metal from Park county in the new world by horse and mule pack, via Trout Creek Pass and the old Ute Indian trail, across the Arkansas river near Buena Vista and Salida, thru Poncha, the old Indian winter and summer camping ground, thence across Poncha Pass, down the San Luis Valley, along the Rio Grande river to Santa Fe, on to the Gulf of Mexico, then across the water to Spain.

### **Settings For Crown Jewels**

Proud should be the people of Park county and the state of Colorado to know that many of the crown jewels of the kings and queens of Spain were set in gold and silver metal that had been crushed and refined out of the ore from the arastas of Buckskin, Mosquito and the headwaters of the South Platte.

Yes, if Colorado and the U.S.A. want evidence of its first touch of mining activity that pertained to gold and silver extraction, look to the arastas, the only permanent monument left to the achievements of the earliest prospectors and trail blazers.



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

### **The First Prospector Unknown**

While the story of gold and silver gives the year 1829 as the first production of gold in the U.S.A., as a matter of fact the Spaniards were crushing ore and placer mining in Park county more than 100 years before this era, ante-dating even the first production of gold in California by the Spaniards and Americans by 100 years.

No doubt that gold strike in Georgia and North Carolina, was the first made by the American colonist followed 20 years later by the 49'ers in California and the 59'ers in the Central City, Colo., gold rush, but truly Park County (at one time no man's land) the home of the buffalo, where the deer and antelope played, was and is, the oldest producing district in the UNITED STATES.

### **Gold and Silver Under Feet**

While there was very little evidence of much actual lode mining being done by the Spaniards, they did have many crude tools made of metal at the time and did have knowledge of using black powder for blasting. No doubt the first arasta (now worn and broken) lasted for many years, considering the short season of really workable weather in which it could be used. The broken and the perfect arastas are still lying in the creek bed at Buckskin in a good state of preservation, except for the iron stem (of Spanish iron) which could be easily restored, and with the addition of a new sweep, we could once again (if we so desired) go back to the primitive art of grinding out the gold and silver with slaves or horse power as in the days of old. Using man's power of deduction, I really think horse power was used in the operation of these old arastas, as feed for horse power during the summer months was cheaper than food for slaves.

### **The Venture Worth the Price?—Always**

History tells us of the Spanish explorers with pack trains being waylaid on several occasions by the Indians, and the unearthing of a perfect petrified body at Junction City, Colo., with the solid gold ear rings still in the petrified ears, along with the solid silver ring still on that now stone finger with coat of arms engraved thereon, proving his Spanish descent, gives evidence to the story. This freak or relic was a side show attraction in the Barnum and Bailey circus for many years. No doubt the massacres were many, and we presume at this time the Indians knew something of the value of gold and silver, or at least worshipped and

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

desired the bright and shiny metal for their own adornment. In any event, the cavalcades were often driven far back into the hills, there to be starved, frozen or destroyed by the wild beasts.

Yes, no doubt there are several treasure caches buried in the buffalo and mule skin panyers along the old Spanish trails, and none but the eye of old Shavano (Peak) who, as in the days of old, stand watchful, silent, and serene could point out the treasure spots. But every year for the last 75 years the treasure hunters with their old dog-eared yellowed maps, and divining rods, rakes up the ground in the Arkansas valley in search of gold and silver Spanish treasure, and some day, who knows, they may be found.

### **Nature Gives, Yet Demands Toil**

Knowing of the richness, it is not hard to understand why it was unnecessary for the Spaniards to mine ore from the lodes when erosion itself had done so much of the hard work by spewing the fabulously rich float from the North and South London, Kentucky Belle, Hill Top, Fannie Barrett, Home Sweet Home, Oliver Twist, Great West, Magnolia and Philips veins (the latter being the oldest mine in the district) over the entire valley. So in those days and for hundreds of years to come, prospectors will still be digging the rich ores from the open mine pits, gathering together the rich float, as well as panning, sluicing and dredging the gold from the sand and gravel far below the present river bed, to say nothing of the yet undiscovered lodes on the mountain sides. Yes, truly this district as well as all the other gold and silver districts in the Rocky Mountains, has you might say, been barely touched.

### **Man Dies But Dreams Still Live On**

The time is now in the 70's and the mines and towns are taking on new activity, the jackass pack trains are carrying the ore from the Moose mine to Dudley, there to be picked up by ox team and taken to Omaha, then via New York and across the water to smelters in Swansea, Wales. Hundreds of Chinamen have settled along the river bank, and while the white man found the washing unprofitable according to his standard, the Chinaman was satisfied if he only received as little as 50 cents per day, always hoping and expecting, and it often came true, to find a nest of really big gold nuggets.

Now comes the first stamp mill to the valley and out goes the arasta, so from the 500 pounds of rock milled in a



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

day. we go to 10-25-50-100 and even 200 tons. With the mining excitement growing, and the towns feverously booming, we enter into the 1880's. Several smelter and mills are in the building. The Denver, South Park and Pacific railroad reaches the valley and proceeds up to Fairplay. Alma and on to the North London mill in North Mosquito gulch. The little narrow guage trail blazer later extending over Boreas Pass to Breckenridge, then over Fremont Pass to Leadville, while another line extends down the South Park, over the Trout Creek Pass into and across the Arkansas Valley, and finally over the Continental Divide to Gunnison, this little railroad actually crossing the main divide at three different points.

### Service Without Dollar Profit

There is a touching story in connection with the last days of the railroad operating between Fairplay and London. The panicky days had reduced both the freight and passenger business to almost nothing, so we find the company ready to discontinue service, but Jim Dinwoodie, the conductor, and Fat Sunbry, the engineer, prevailed on the company to let them operate the branch themselves.

First they dispensed with the brakeman, later the fireman, the train now had been reduced to engine and combination coach and baggage car with occasionally an ore or box car, but traffic became even less and less. Poor old Dinwoodie has passed over the Divide, and now Fat Sunbry serves as engineer, conductor, brakeman and fireman, and his remuneration has dropped down to one dollar a day (the lines entire earnings.) At the end of the line there is a Widow Higgins, who still sticks to her old boarding house, and from several cooks and waitresses that served 50 boarders, there is now neither help nor boarders.

It was believed there was an element of romance between Fat and the Widow, as he insisted on running the train, even shoveling the snow off the track himself, and paying for the fuel out of his savings, and without one cent of remuneration the last six month, just so as he said, to keep old Mrs. Higgins from starving and freezing to death. But now she too must vacate the abandoned camp and move to Fairplay, and believe it or not, faithful old Fat Sunbry was to be her star boarder for the few remaining years of his life.

She said she owed it all and more to him for services rendered, and Fat said to him, that turned out to be the most

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

profitable railroad in the U.S.A. Yes, this story is literally true, and what America needs today is a few more of these characters that can look poverty and misfortune in the face, still thinking life gave them a darn good deal.

### Science Creates Tools Both Good and Bad

The mills are soon turning out the pure quill. The famous London Mine still producing on its continuous run of more than 65 years. What a find that mine proved to be for the Jewets (now presented to the university), and what a find for the high-graders, who it is claimed, secured more millions from the mine than the owners themselves.

Yes, miners were scarce in those days, and at one time the camp found it necessary to import from Cornwell, England 100 Cornishmen (Cousin Jack's), to do the tough mining. Later on miners came from all parts of the world empty-handed, without so much as a trunk or a suitcase, but many (a small number of the whole) would depart with several well-filled heavy cases and chests. Filled with what? You guessed it,, "gold and silver" so they too became rich on the other fellows' gold.

These miners with some element of right, claimed that as long as nature had planted the gold, they in reality had a rightful claim to it. Of course the fallacy of that reasoning is apparent when they had at the same time accepted wages from the other fellow for digging it out. The alibi had holes in it much like the army of feminine gold diggers that followed the gold rushes, they also excused themselves in robbing the simple-minded sourdough under the alibi, that they were doing him a kindly act, and facts often proved they were Thru the history of the gold and silver west and by years of experience and observation I am convinced that more lode and placer companies failed by highgrading, than from the fault of the mine itself.

### Panic Takes the Spotlight

Now the year is 1893 and the 53rd congress, traitors to silver has sounded the death knell to the white metal. Down go the mines, mills and smelters and thousands of families are forced to leave the district and scatter to the four corners of the globe. The old Chinese settlement is also passing from the picture. Chinese Mary the lone woman, and the 100 Chinese placer miners are departing with their bags of gold to the land of their ancestors, and no doubt much of it, has now come back to the hole in the Kentucky hills.

Yes, a tribute to the Chinese, he came, he labored, he de-



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

parted, not owing a dime to the many storekeepers in the district. Honesty is one virtue we Americans might copy from this lowly son of toil, and take it from the Hermit, we are going to learn this lesson if democracy is to survive. Just one old Chinaman was left to walk the streets of Fairplay, and let it be said to his credit, he expected and asked no favors from anybody.

### **Never Live Again But In Memory**

The towns of Buckskin, Montgomery, Horseshoe, Park City, and Dudley now are deserted and slated to be but ghostly reminders of boom days in the valley. Porphry Johnson has passed from the picture, while Mrs. Johnson finds rest in the old Buckskin cemetery. The daughter still carries on the mining on Pennsylvania Mountain and still possesses the largest and most beautiful gold nugget ever mined in Colorado.

Fairplay and Alma only survived the crash and even today are holding their own and growing too. Now the last smelter at Alma gives up the ghost, this could be laid to the activity of bigness or monopoly, and some day when miners wake up to the danger of big business, the little smelter will come back, and then only will the prospector again reappear on the scene.

Yes, many of the mines of gold and silver are down and have been for 50 years, but never fear when once again gold and silver coin becomes the foundation of dreams, and when congress quits tinkering with the honest to God money of the realm, this district will boom as never before.

### **Memory My Companion**

The year is now 1941 and once again I travel over these sanctified trails blazed by the Spaniards and kept open ever since by the Americans, and here before my eye as in the days of yore, they are still mining ore from the open pit deposits at Buckskin and extracting therefrom the rich metals as the Spaniards did 200 years ago. But thanks to modern machinery, they now mill 200 tons per day, against the 500 pounds crude ore, ground out with the Indian slaves and horses in the old primitive arastas.

### **They Too Did Their Bit**

As I pass through Alma I see the old straddle or double-tired ore wagons in evidence and I doubt if they have rolled a wheel for 2' years, and I am sure the bones of most of the horses that powered these old relics, are now scattered along the many old mine trails. As I reach Buckskin but one cabin remains of the 14 stores, 15 saloons, theatres, dancehalls and

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

hundreds of log cabins and dwellings, the rest have entirely disappeared.

The souvenir hunters and vandals have even moved away the old fireplace stones, one by one from the old Tabor store, and what few remaining logs are left, are so rotted that a picture would be mostly barren space. So today as ever, modern America destroys the very markers that tell the story of the achievements of great men, that not only built our state, but their lives and history remains the most valuable asset the state, as the playground of America, possesses.

### **Ever Enduring Monuments**

Yes, but strange and satisfying are the long lasting monuments commemorating the work of the Spaniards, made of stone "The Granite Arastas" that still stand in the creek bed, while later and more modern markers of only 80 years ago have entirely disappeared. Buckskin Joe's cabin that once served as county court house has been removed to Fairplay. Originally a two-story log structure it has now been reduced to one. The second story joist mortises are still in evidence, and the reconstructed building itself now serves as a home on Fairplay's streets.

### **Historical Events Unrecorded**

Yes, history does go back in Fairplay beyond the memory of man and authentic records, but changes are yet to come beyond the wildest imagination of present man, for you may be sure they will still be digging gold and silver around these yere parts for the next 500 years. Yes, here was simplicity aggrandized, simple living, by simple men, carved from the natural foundation of crudeness a great empire, this I notice as I pass up on the gulch and by the Paris Mill. Yes, here on this great mine dump is simplicity glorified, here simple living men, drove this long tunnel with simple tools, every hole made by the single and double jack, and every pound of muck lifted by two hands and a shovel, all this I am made to realize as I gaze skyward among the crags and cliffs, and see the thousands of dumps and mine cabins abandoned and in a state of decay, with the forgotten and nearly obliterated trail leading to them.

And here enters Old Prunes (the burro or jackass who did his bit) dragging the lumber, timber, rails and packing the provisions and supplies to the old prospectors, and here again Fairplay honors his name by erecting a monument to the memory of a lowly packass, who in his way did more for the district than many a man.



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

### Initiative Kept Alive By Dreams

Yes, many of the dreams were envisioned in the east, and here among the peaks of Mosquito range they ended for that particular dreamer, but finished? "No" and while the prospector toiled on with the dominating thought of needing just one more foot to go today, one more foot to drive tomorrow, one more next week, next month, next year and for 50 years then after running tunnels and sinking shafts not one but thousands of feet, he died, still firmly believing that if he had lived so he could have gone one more foot, he would for certainty strike the glory spot.

### The Dreamer Dies But Not the Dream

But again the dream itself is not yet finished and perhaps who knows (it has happened before) one more foot will uncover the treasure chest, so in truth the old prospector that sat beside the old rough board table, and reading the month old magazines and papers by the dim glow of the old tallow candle did his bit if he never discovered a mine, for he proved the ground for the other fellow, and his work was no more wasted, than if he had drilled one of the 14 dry oil well holes, in order to find one pumper.

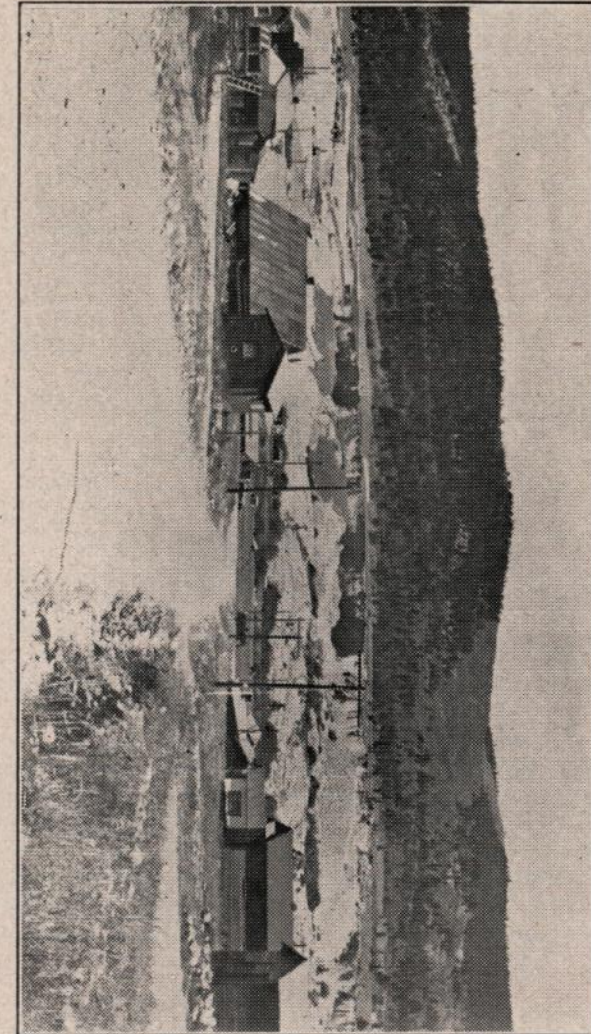
Yes, there is a human life story full of pathos, of every old prospector and his mine, and I am sure the one I am now looking at, abandoned for more than 60 years holds such a story, the greatest one perhaps that could ever have been told, but it too died with the old sourdough, and there are none of his pals left to tell the tale.

### The Desecration of a Marker

The rails have been pulled from the old South Park and Pacific, that trail blazer that reached Fairplay, passed on through to Alma and ending at the North London mill in Mosquito Gulch at timberline. Yes, it was a crime to junk that road, that was in fact a monument to some mans dreams, and some day they will wish it were back. What glorious dreams men had in the good old days, and what a loss to the state of Colorado and the nation when we have these dreamers no more. Yes, I grieve much when I look about me and see modern America nosing up to the public feed trough, depending on government for a living, with not enough initiative left in them to make one gambling venture.

### Where Great Men Held Council

The beautiful brick structure that served as depot at Como has escaped the junkers hand for the present, because of the dredge company taking it over and preserving the



The Gold Gravel Banks at Alma, Colo.



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

shrine. The old six-stall roundhouse but of stone and the turnpit outside are empty of engines, with the great doors agape and swinging to the wind, it serves now only as a shelter for range cattle, while the long 200-foot stone section house stands like a spectre, minus roof, floor and windows.

What monuments to leave to initiative and incentive and what a world of stories those walls could tell. From the windows of the historic depot we look out over the great area of South Park, and to the west see the background of the Continental Divide range of mountains. Here Baby Doe, the girl that gambled with riches against love, passed many a lonely hour, she won the riches but at what a terrible price.

Yes, memory takes me back to a certain day when this attractive piece of feminine dynamite stood impatiently tapping dainty foot on the floor with nervous fingers tracing designs on the frosted window panes, because the train was late (when wasn't it late), and who can blame her, when just across the two Divides was Prince Charming and a million dollars anxiously awaiting her arrival.

### Where Saints Have Trod

Yes, many of the great men and women, including presidents and Governor Evans, the dreamer himself, has at some time tarried in that waiting room and before it be too late this historical relic should be preserved by the district, or by the historical society of the state of Colorado, to show this modern apathetic cream puff generation what pioneers could and did do.

The town of Como still houses a few old-time railroaders and miners families, including Culligan, the old retired engineer who served a lifetime in pulling the little trains up, and breaking them down those steep mountain grades. The old dilapidated churches with rotting steps, falling banisters and broken windows still stand. The wind-shaken, leaning spires still point toward heaven with a last appeal, and seemingly reluctant to give up the ghost, but great men have occupied those old rough board pews, and even when these old board walls have gone back to dust, the fact will remain they did their work and did it well.

### Spectres of the Past

Tarryall and Hamilton are but areas where only ghosts roam about, and there are no monuments left to tell the tales of yesterday. The automobile, if nothing else tends to make the big town bigger and the small town smaller, and the latter's revival impractical. Yes, the small towns are moving

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

from the picture to come back no more, whether times be good or bad.

### Old Trails Hold Many A Story

I'm still traveling and pass over other historic trails of yesterday through Park City and head up South Mosquito Gulch. To the left is the old Alma mill now working on Phillips mine ore from Buckskin that the Spanish overlooked, on by the tailing dams of the South London Mill and now reach the mill itself.

I walk into the lower floor and see the streams of gold from the tables sifting into an iron-bound receptacle (vault) heavily padlocked against would-be thieves, the second stream of concentrates finds its way to another burglar-proof bin. On the second floor the oil flotation (a new process to us old timers) separates the metals and from here we go to the ball mill that is grinding out 200 tons of ore per day, using in the process 300 pounds of chilled steel balls every 24 hours.

On the next floor we find the terminal of the tram automatically dumping the ore, the whole procedure using but seven men in handling and milling this 200 tons over 24 hours, which you might say, is pretty close to being 100 per cent automatic.

### Dreams the Father of Incentive

At the head and in the bottom of the canyon the London Butte is working at both mining and milling, with seemingly enough ore to go on forever. The easterner thinks of mining as but a flash in the pan, but here are the Three Londons still producing after 65 years of activity, and will be still producing 65 years hence.

I retrace my steps back a mile, and take a trip up the North Mosquito Gulch, on by the American mill and follow along the old railroad grade to the North London mill. Here lie the tailings from 100 million dollars worth of ore, I wind around these and follow the horeshoe turn at the head of the gulch, soon pass above the old 65-year-old mill, now but a spectre of past glory, but still standing as a monument to industry and the gambler who won the fight against nature's obstructions

### Where the Winds Are Never Still

After a steep climb I finally land on the mine dump of the North London, rusted tram cables are even yet hanging from broken towers, as the whole structure is slowly falling back to earth, while the snow sheds that have held back the snows and blizzards for 65 years, are still serving their pur-



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

pose, although the rails and mine cars run through them no more. The rough board benches are in evidence around the old change room, with the big rusted now fireless heating stove in the center. It grieves me much and revives memories as I view this scene of desolation, for well I know most of the old miners that graced that room with their presence (creators of the nation's wealth) have passed over the Divide and down the no return trail, but the results of their efforts lives after them, and today, in the Kentucky hills lies buried the treasure they extracted and if I had my say in restoring the free and unlimited coinage of gold and silver, I will go farther, and insist that hereafter the name of the digger or creator be stamped on each coin as a tribute to these soldiers of chance.

### **Shrines of Solitude**

Just beyond the London and under the hill near the lake I find the workings of the Oliver Twist Mine, surely some English Cockney, Cornish or Welchman must have named both these mines. Yes, here is solitude again, as the mine like most other silver mines at present are closed down, and if anything adds to gloom, it is to see these mines and mills as lonely sentinels of past glory that stand deserted far above timberline, and when they are not operating they are indeed but the ghosts of unfinished dreams and the originator of that dream has long since passed down the sunset trail.

### **Over Trails of the Silver King**

My eye looks up and beyond at the winding rock walled road leading to the top of Mosquito Pass. Over this sanctified trail passed Haw and Augusta Tabor with her stuffed bustle and padded bust, filled not with excelsior, but gold dust from California Gulch. The pair were held up on numerous occasions by bandits and road agents. Tabor lost the money on his person including watch, chain and ring from his finger, Augusta lost her necklace of nuggets, locket and bracelets, but nary a bandit's hand was ungentlemanly enough to search in that forbidden territory of bust and bustle.

### **Honors Come Too Late**

Where and when again in this modern flexible unethical and complex world will you find such steadfast, sacrificing and constant women as these, and while we pay Tabor great tribute for his many gifts to the state, not one of his friends, or the state itself forgave him for his desertion of Augusta. Yes, he paid a terrible price and so did Baby Doe for in truth society never forgave either their transgressions, but now

## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

that the hurt has passed, why not be generous and let us eulogize the whole Tabor family, for if it were not for the like of them this trail may never have been blazed or built.

### **Saintly Women Live No More**

I lament the passing of these honest to God women and I decry the advent of these contraceptive complective modern dames, so promiscuously kissed they have callouses on their lips, so mussed up, mauled over and man-handled, that they could not respond to the thrill of an embrace from a real he-man, if they were ever fortunate enough to meet up with one.

Truly women of this modern world are artificial from the bleached hair, mascara'd eye brows and lashes, rouged cheeks, tinted lips, painted finger and toe nails, garbed in two-piece suits of brassieres trunks step-ins or what have you. with body fumigated both externally and internally with tobacco fumes and alcoholic juices throughout, but ever ready to give the devil and dames their dues, I do commend modern women for their refusal to nurse the babies in the old-fashioned way, so they will no more feed them polluted milks from mothers breast and will now for health's sake, create a nation of bottle-fed humans, but sad will be the day and respect lost for the mothers when men are grown up and realize that they have been cheated of the Rock-a-Bye Baby song and mothers milk. Of course, I make exceptions and reservations, and to you women who are not guilty of this nefarious act, the accusation does not apply, to others just a warning to change your ways.

### **Riches Beyond the Dreams of Croesus**

The wonders and richness of Fairplay district have never been told, billions have already been extracted, and now great dredges are here that will dig a hole two mile wide, 1,000 feet deep and 12 miles long, to say nothing of the machinery and mills that will level off the mountains in extracting the metal from the gold and silver lodes. As this is being done, the area will bring to light many more billions and true indeed under our present policy, the government will need dig several more and deeper holes, and will need secure several more big caves in the hills of Kentucky, if they are to take care of this additional tonnage of gold and silver from the (I repeat) yet barely scratched Alma, Fairplay mining district.

### **We Live Today From Yesterday's Pattern**

Yes, Park County is the daddy of them all as the first pro-



## VIA OLD SPANISH TRAILS

ducer of gold and silver in America, first by the Spaniards in the wake of the Cortez legions and later by the prospectors that followed. The old ghost towns of Horseshoe, Park City, North London, Laurette (Buckskin), Montgomery, Tarryall, Hamilton and Quartzite have filled their mission, passed from the picture and are of no interest to the reader until he learns for the first time that long before Pike discovered the Peak that bears his name, long before Kit Carson roamed the vastness of the Rocky Mountains, the Spaniards were trekking north from Santa Fe and disgorging the gold and silver from the trails and streets of Park County towns and districts.

### Sentiment A Costly Virtue

Alma, still a lively little city and will exist as such until the dredges reach its limits, then it will be for them to choose whether to sell the gold under their feet, or move the town elsewhere, or whether to refuse the gold and keep the city intact for sentimental reasons, for after all some romantic old-timer named the place after some dame (sweetheart or wife) and I presume if she be still alive perhaps she might, or should oppose the move. Yes, we men build our dreams on gold and silver, and we have no desire for either, except to pass it on to women the final beneficiary of finished dreams, and the results sometimes make us wish our dreams might have been nightmares.

### Tomorrow's Worries For Tomorrow

I shudder to think of the gaping hole to be made by the million dollar dredges and might hope they could level the top of the gravel pile, and cover with topsoil. So once again in the dark, dim future, the cattle may graze above what was once a colossal gold mine but of this I am sure it will take many generations to level down the gold and silver Mosquito range, so I'll just put the worrying up to posterity and let it go at that.

THE HERMIT OF ARBOR-VILLA

## A Letter To Our President

Arbor-Villa, Via Salida, Colo.

May 7th, 1940

Franklin Delano Roosevelt,

Washington, D. C.

Mr. President:

You have asked for a remedy to cure our present government ills, personally I have always been slow to censure or criticize, unless I might have a solution and now after 65 years of application and study, I will attempt to pass the fruits of this experience to you.

First, Mr. President, our rights under the constitution could only be exercised up to the time when a population had not reached the end of our now closed frontiers and opportunity, I would stress now that one of the lures or magnets called opportunity was that one, that drew adventurers from the old world to the new, from the east to the west and that was the illusive thing called gold and silver, and the creator seemed to smile on the west as he deposited most of the metals there.

As you know in the first rush to our new world, the fertile lands, timber, oil, iron and coal were secondary in the thoughts of man who by now was aroused to the fact that with the chance of discovering a mine, he might (and often did) rise from the state of beggary to that of riches overnight. This then was the motivating power that supplied the initiative, incentive and tenacity of purpose to those pioneers, that braved the danger of the plains, deserts, mountain perils and Indians, enduring great hardships to open to all this gold and silver west.

So for 2,600 years the story was told of this fabulous wealth and men did brave the perils of the wilds to reap the harvest of glittering metal, but now by some freak of fate (by your mistakes and others) this illusion has been destroy-



## A LETTER TO OUR PRESIDENT

ed. and with it goes the initiative, incentive, independence and hope of man.

The mistake by no means is all yours, for many years the Pagan East (those who strayed far from God, and are loath to have a reminder of him stamped on their money) have fought against an honest money of coin, knowing (and no doubt feeling guilty) that with their excessive profits, extravagant wages and salaries, honest money could not be used, so of course it was up to them to adopt a phony gummy shin-plaster medium of exchange, so the robbery of the masses could not be so easily detected.

I offer you this advice not as a democrat, republican or what not, (a wise man changes his mind and politics, a fool never) but as an American who believes in democracy first and refuses to be a horse thief because his father before him was one, and by this philosophy my opinions are unbiased.

I bolted the democratic party when Cleveland demonitized silver, I bolted the republicans in favor of William Jennings Bryan and his 16 to 1 platform, I have voice for neither party as a party, but rather for the man that I thought stood for my American idea of democracy, and I do not hesitate to say that today most men in politics, either democrat or republican are first individualists and disciples of greed, second for the above reasons they are partisan politicians, third and last they talk and say they support Americanism, but do they?

In my own case not asking or expecting honor, position or financial remuneration you may reverse the above order, and consider my first thoughts are for the perpetuation of democracy itself.

Mr. President, we are living in a new era, and you and 100 thousand other imperialists with your estates, town houses and castles, and I with my one room shack, dirt floor and 10 acres do not, unless we change our mode of living fit in a picture as advisors (by their works ye shall know them), in a land of no new frontiers, few opportunities and much poverty.

To elucidate I must go back 50 years to a day of freedom from regimentation, no restrictive taxes and law, with plenty wide open spaces and opportunity. Those were the days of 10 to 16 hour shifts of labor, and wages of \$1 to \$3 of honest money per day. These coupled with new resources and a tax of 1 per cent or less permitted us to build up an invested capital in cities, lands and factories of billions, and now with

## A LETTER TO OUR PRESIDENT

a 6 per cent tax structure, plus restrictions, we have, with the aid of short hours and high pay indeed confiscated \$200 billions of this invested capital. In the same 50 years we have depleted our resources another 200 billion, and to add to the debacle we have borrowed both government and corporate another 200 billion on posterity, so you can understand Mr. President with this total destruction of 600 billion, why shouldn't I worry about the future of America, and what has happened to it in the past 50 years, so both you and I, if democracy is to survive, must henceforth dispense with many luxuries so the poor may enjoy necessities.

Mr. President from this land of solitude, amid the ghosts of dead initiative and confidence, I do suggest the following points for your consideration and will for a minute revert back to the days of '79, when as a trapper we would trade our pelts for powder, shot or other substance in return for them, not an order or a check exchangeable for substance but the substance itself, so my first point is that you restore our gold and silver to circulation by devaluing gold to 20.67 per ounce and advancing silver to 1.29 per ounce, the old yardstick of value for 150 years. Secure all paper certificates (this phony money desired by the Paganized Easterners) by 100 per cent of coin. Reduce all salaries 50 per cent including your own until you have recalled a minimum of \$100 per month, and incidentally place a time clock in our halls of congress so we may know whether our elected servants are on duty or not. Revise the wage and hour law to a \$2 wage for an eight hour day, 7 days week and build all highways with the unemployed at this figure. Cease allotting money to construct city liabilities, but rather divert this amount to productive assets. Discourage union domination by class dictators and if we find democracy cannot survive for the sake of the unorganized let us have a national dictator.

Yes, Mr. President, our isolationists after we had fought a war to save democracy, then let that same democracy starve to death for lack of attention and support by our refusal to join the world court and League of Nations, so today I trust the isolationists can see and weep at their mistake and know that we in America are responsible for the world's present debacle.

I trust you will take the above suggestions under consideration, remembering the destruction of the aforesaid 600 billions in wealth that it has taken to keep up this asinine false front, and unbridled life of idleness and luxury of the



## A LETTER TO OUR PRESIDENT

minority while the masses go hungry. "No this attitude is far from Americanism." Truly we are brothers to those that speak our language, their troubles are ours, but we are still strangers to those that speak not our language, whether they live in ghettos of our cities, or abide in foreign lands.

So with a 3c stamp (my bread for the day) I send this message to you from the land of desolation along the barb wire fences of closed frontiers and highways of devastation, over the bridge of sighs to the post office in the city of gloom in the valley of despair this after having already done my 10 hour day's work. Worried with much deep thinking, I arose from my bed of spruce boughs at night re-entered the mine (a double shift so to speak) so that I may dig from nature's treasure chest another sack of ore for the robber barons (the smelter trust) in order that I may afford a holiday to mail this epistle.

Mr. President, I think the technical brain storm theorist is highly over-rated and over-paid, while the practical factuist is sadly under-rated and underpaid. Contrary to the accepted thought, the birth of an idea (new resources or frontiers so called) does not take the place of free enterprise or opportunity, when with but my two hands I could carve a living from nature's resources so mans' idea is for sale and not free to posterity, notwithstanding it is of no value until many men with muscle and sweat puts it into execution, even then 90 per cent of them are non-essential and unproductive.

I am enclosing a photo-plate of honest money, wherein the value is contained therein, a medium of exchange that is of substance itself rather than a phoney piece of paper that must be re-exchanged for a substance of value. Yes, 50 years ago a wage of \$3 a day was big money, a fortune of ten thousand dollars a lot of money and still is, and this in a nation of not yet depleted wealth while today with a loss of 600 billion we have a wage of from \$1 to \$100 per day. Fortunes of 100 thousand considered chicken feed.

Truly we are a people where the dominating thought is greed, so afflicted with a super amount of self and collective ego we have lost the power of straight thinking and true sense of values, so an income tax of 5 to 90 per cent with no exemptions would cure many of our ills and tend to a more equitable distribution.

I cannot concede the right of anyone to amass or stow away doubtful earned saving or profit while a nation itself

## A LETTER TO OUR PRESIDENT

must go in the red to care for the destitute, neither can I concur in the theory of short hours, high wages while a nation flounders in deficiency, and I doubt if the poor have, and I am sure the rich have not learned the art of playing intelligently, even if we as a nation could afford the cost, and again there is a close relation between idle times and our increase in crime.

Yours truly,

The Hermit of Arbor-Villa

## SQUIBS

Selfish people want what they want - others satisfied with what they earn.

Conservation and restraint twin brothers - safe civilization demands practice of both.

Liberty a close kin of license - so close that few men can distinguish between the two.

To profit by help of nature we commend - profiting at expense of human misery, condemn.

A sad commentary for man to enjoy luxury to day at expense of his posterity tomorrow.

—The Hermit.



## Over Trails of Yesterday to the Mountain Chief Mine

The year was 1878 and far back in Illinois State, word had drifted relative to the rich strikes of gold and silver being made in the upper valley of the Arkansas. The urge to get rich quickly prevailed on John Miner (real name) owner of an operating coal pit, to come west and investigate conditions for himself, bringing along with him Edward Gimlett, an employee of the coal mine to aid in the exploration.

Reaching Maysville in June of that year, Mr. Miner was already sold on and believed in, one of those infernal divining rods or gadgets that was supposed to agitate and draw toward any gold or silver deposits. So following in his wake, each time the fool thing took a spell, it was Gimlett's job to dig and uncover the lode. After several months of this futile prospecting with no results, Miner gave up the venture and went back home.

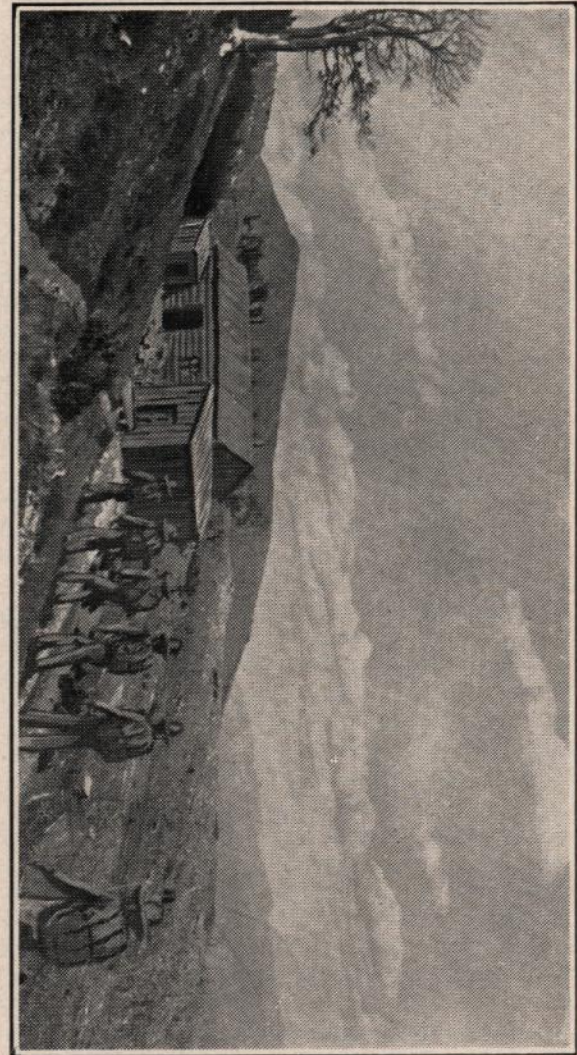
### Dollars Scarce and Buy Little

Times were hard in the valley and food was high, flour itself selling for \$1 a pound, with beans at 50 cents, and salt-side \$2 per pound, but even at this price there were no jobs to be had, so Gimlett, though still sold on the possibilities of the district took a long trek (mostly on foot) to the coal fields of Wyoming, stopping for a few days at Central City, Caribou, Ward and Georgetown, where he occasionally got a shift's work when some miner would lay off, and this same condition existed in the coal fields themselves, and it was several weeks before a new-comer secured a steady job.

### Back to the Land of Promise

In the following year of 1879, he came back to the valley and times were still plenty tough, and here enters old Bill Goard (and he was human, too) who was then boss of the Mountain Chief Mine. Sensing a deplorable condition he provided jobs for Gimlett and thirty other men in creating the first, last and only human pack train I ever saw. It is true these soldiers of misfortune, or industry, had no fancy trapping, gold braid or buttons, but were on the march, with more results than the finest uniformed army of war, as they parades in peace times down our city streets.

The Mountain Chief Mine, Monarch, Colorado  
The human pack train at Trail's End





## TO THE MOUNTAIN CHIEF MINE

### **Men Equal to Emergencies**

Too bad we have no men in the present day depression with the ingenuity of old Bill Goard, a man to meet the situation and solve the unemployment problem by providing work in productive enterprises. What matter if it cost \$60 per ton to pack the ore from the mine to Junction City? What matter if it cost \$30 per ton to freight it to Pueblo, when even then, there was still left over \$400 profit per ton for mining?

### **A Dream Comes True**

The strike of rich silver ore was destined to make a big shipper of the Mountain Chief, and as packasses were scarce and could not be obtained for love nor money, each day rain or shine, snow blizzard, these human pack animals would load 50 pounds of supplies on their backs at Junction City and carry up the two mile, 45-degree mountain trail, and bring back 50 pounds of silver ore, the hardest 10 hours work and man could do for a wage of \$3 per day.

### **Men As Beasts of Burden**

As the bewhiskered pack train slowly, foot by foot, made their way up and over the narrow trail, now close to the edge of a precipice where a slip meant broken bones or death, then past the ever-moving rock slide, on up the deep snow covered, shadowy canon, through the snow laden tall evergreen spruce and pine trees, now emerging into the open and over the dead fall, caused by great fires in times long past. Here the wind and drifting snow in all its fury soon freeze long icicles to the heavy beards. Would they perhaps be found frozen on the trail? This seldom happened for no man as well protected by hair as they, with a heavy pack to carry, need worry about that, unless perchance he tired, and would, in spite of all warnings, sit down and rest.

### **Trails Long, Long A Winding**

Now they reach timberline and the boarding house where hot coffee awaits their arrival, the packs are now reduced in weight, and as they crowd around the old box stove the icicles soon thaw from the long matted whiskers. Just another mile to go and with creepers on their heavy boots, they pass over the track of the Taylor Mountain snow slide (where a slip would telescope them down the mountain a thousand feet) and finally reach destination where after a short rest, they shoulder their pack of silver ore and are headed down toward home.

### **Jackasses Vs. Men**

But now the company has secured a jackass train, and

## TO THE MOUNTAIN CHIEF MINE

the now-discarded human pack animal feels much resentment, as they see modern methods relegating them to the background, much like the freighter, stage coach driver, and railroad men feel, now that the trucks are displacing them, but progress must go on, yet the company also has an additional capital investment, and if perchance a pack-animal goes over the cliff or down the slide, away goes \$50, and heretofore if the human pack animal broke a leg or neck, it never cost the company a dime.

Just how is industry to survive if each employer is to be actually the workman's keeper, when 19 out of every 20 employees themselves fail in every cycle of 20 years.

Little the present generation know of the difficulties encountered by the old pioneers to make Chaffee county and the gold and silver west what it used to be, and believe the old Hermit, before she ever comes back to her former glory, there will need be more hard work and perspiration than we see today.

### **An Old Soldier of Chance**

At this time as a leading figure in the Mountain Chief Mine and profiting greatly therefrom, I wish to call attention to this historical character, Old Bill Goard and his two creations that were made possible by the wealth of this mine. THE PALACE OF PLEASURE at Monarch, the finest up-to-date amusement resort in the county. The rustic interior fitted to the times and up-to-the-minute in details, such as real carpenter made chairs instead of the usual beer kegs, rough board tables with tops smoothly polished by the old jackplane, the floor of wide uneven boards, sprinkled with sawdust, spittoons placed here and there, used at times, but the big knotholes served the purpose better, and many of the habitués could expectorate tobacco juice and hit that hole six paces away.

Two gorgeous six-lamp chandeliers hung from the ceiling, trimmed with sparkling crystals that reflected the colors of the rainbow throughout the room. These with the usual reflector lamps fastened to the wall gave us old-timers the thrill of enjoying the so-called "white lights," the same as the moderns have today.

### **The Best None Too Good**

The outstanding feature that would be called a novelty and an up-to-date fixture even today, was the thousand dollar bar top made of bright, shiny, newly-mined silver dollars kept under the polished plate glass for protection against



## TO THE MOUNTAIN CHIEF MINE

dirt and thieves. Yes, over this bar Buffalo Bill, Wild Bill, Calamity Jane and Poker Face Alice took their whisky straight, wise in their profession but fools even as you and I.

The whole establishment was fully equipped with all kinds of games of chance including wine, women and song, that might and did intrigue and extract from the sucker his last dime in pursuit of any vice he might desire. This landmark has long since gone up in smoke for firewood, but it did serve one good purpose and that was in keeping women and children warm when our beautiful silver dollar was assassinated in 1893 and during the panicky years of the exodus that followed.

### **An Old Landmark**

THE SILVER WEST SALOON (the Grand Cafe now) still stands on the main street of Salida, Colorado, and the name that is painted on the old brick front signifies that he, the owner, believed in the gold and silver west, and gold and silver money, I honor him for aid given Edward Gimlett and other hungry prospectors in time of great need and I pay a tribute to Bill Goard, who in spite of many errors, had a heart of gold and let it be said no man ever spent his last dollar over those bars without a two-bit gift for breakfast next morning.

### **Sinners All, Or Were They?**

Here within the Silver West Saloon, gambling and dance hall has trod at one time or another the great and illustrious, including Deadwood Dick, Moccasin Jim, Munns and McManus, One Eye Pedro, Two Gun Spike Murphy, Cheyenne Em and Wyoming Kate, and through these doors passed Bob Ford (the killer of Jesse James) accompanied by Diamond Tooth Lill, on his one way trip with no return ticket, to Creede, Colo., there to meet death himself by one O'Kelly.

Yes, we remember the names of those glamorous characters, but only a few of the real builders of the gold and silver west, both men and women ever passed through those doors, their names and deeds are now forgotten, even the graves themselves are devoid of a headstone, and while I do pay them all a great tribute, the medals and honors due them for their constructive work must await the resurrection day, and at that time only will the scales of justice weigh us all, and many will be found wanting.

Yes, the deeds of the good and bad will be balanced, and the bad so much now glamorized, will receive the rebuke for acts ill done. Yes, if those old walls could speak, what stories

## TO THE MOUNTAIN CHIEF MINE

they could tell of tragedy, romance, poverty, riches and happiness, tales that would startle the world and in reality prove that the upper half of the people knew not how the lower half lived, and were as indifferent to their trials and sorrows, as they are now in this highly modern civilized day.

### **Saints Seldom Enter Here**

We must remember these old pleasure resorts so much publicized today were open to all men and questionable women only. Wives and mothers of the good old days must content themselves with the pots, pans and babies, with occasionally the privilege of attending a quilting party, church festival or a public dance about once a month. I do not wonder that women finally rebelled, and today arm in arm they go down the trail, through the night clubs to the ferry, over the river Styx to the infernal regions and oblivion.

### **Miles Reckoned By Hours**

What a long journey that was from the Mountain Chief Mine on Taylor Mountain via the human pack train to Junction City, via the old freight wagons to Pueblo, a round trip consuming two weeks of time, and you may believe the value of the ore was great to stand such high transportation costs, and yet leave a fabulous profit.

Through the winter of '79 the ore kept coming, and late in the spring the cook or some careless miner placed dynamite in the cook stove for thawing, and through oversight or some unforeseen cause it exploded, blowing the boarding house and bunk house to smithereens, but luckily with no fatalities.

### **One Dream Ends—Another Begins**

This shut down the mine and the next we knew of it, 'twas under the management of John L. Emerson and Newt Scott. By this time the railroad had reached Maysville and now that the jackass pack trains had replaced the human pack train and both replaced by wagons and trains, these two men extracted great riches left by the former operatives.

The treasure chest of the Mountain Chief built many homes and business houses in the city of Salida and the wealth left by Scott was a gift to the county of Chaffee, including the old Cleora cemetery, wherein Scott himself lies buried, free from all upkeep charges and attention. I do not know if there be a headstone to mark the grave, but this you should remember, a great builder of Chaffee county has passed over the divide, he himself perhaps seldom thought



## TO THE MOUNTAIN CHIEF MINE

of, but his work lives on.

### A Real American

Now as to John L. Emerson, a captain in the U. S. Army. His remains lie not in the Grand Army plot, but in an unknown grave in Fairview cemetery. WHAT PRICE LOYALTY? He gave his service to his country, and let it be said to his memory, not for a price of dollars, for during his entire life he refused to ask for or accept a government pension. No greater man ever lived than he, who valued loyalty and patriotism beyond any gift a nation might offer.

### Trail Blazers All

At this time I wish to pay tribute to three brothers, Edward, an assayer beloved by all the prospectors, who in more than half the cases, analyzed their samples of ore, receiving nothing in return; Charles, one of the west's early promoters, who sold the possibilities of the gold and silver west to the investors; John L., first as manager and engineer on the Sapho and Pawnoles at Leadville, later of the Mountain Chief and last a son William Emerson, a builder of mills.

Truly they were all trail blazers of the west and this family did actually leave millions in Chaffee county and asked nothing in return, and for this gift let us be duly grateful.

### The End of a Dream, Or Is It?

So today the Mountain Chief Mine lies abandoned on Taylor Peak. The buildings are rotted down and the caved tunnels and shafts but reminders of good old days. The gold and silver dollars created by the work of these men still circulate throughout the land, but the names of the extractors are not stamped thereon.

Many efforts were made to find an extension of the ore streak, and for many, many years other prospectors, including old Newt Scott himself, searched in vain to uncover the lost vein of silver, from the mine which made him rich.

Today I see a monument on the mountain side  
'Tis not polished marble, no inscription there  
But in the solid rock that cannot be effaced  
Are drill holes made by hours of work and care.

To the hieroglyphist those round chiseled marks  
Are nil, undeciphered by archaeologists of fame  
To me, a pioneer, the message reads very plainly  
Dedicated to posterity, my work, omit the name.

## TO THE MOUNTAIN CHIEF MINE

'Tis not of the wealth you leave behind you  
Nor of the mistakes in life you may have made  
But this mark is a symbol to encourage others  
With riches perhaps you too, this mine will lade.

Winter snows shriek and whistle over the dump  
The spring thaws open wide the old mine door  
Summers comes and goes, these names I remember  
Another year passes, and forgotten once more.

### THE HERMIT OF ARBOR-VILLA

#### SQUIBS

Yielding not to temptation the first time makes resistance much easier the next time.

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'Tis said the blind cannot lead the blind - then why should the weak support the strong?

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Progress by going ahead does not mean going ahead is always going right.

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Many ideas conceived, tarry but a moment - then pass on never to return again.

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Old age has vivid memory's of yesterday - quickly forgetting urgent problems today.

—The Hermit.



## Summer Comes To The Rockies And The Prospectors Too

Aroused by the first warm winds of summer after emerging from a long winter's hibernation I saddle my jackass, load him and myself with camp equipment and explosives, ready to again follow the trails of the yesterdays.

Have left the 20-year-old pickup (Samson's Pullman) at Junction City (now Garfield) and with an overload of kodak, field glass, full box matches "in water-tight can," a full portion of salt, eats, and buffalo (canvas) sleeping bags, including my automatic .22, "my meat gun," 50 rounds of ammunition and my trusty six-shooter, "24 rounds," the latter to keep the lions away and move the bears from the trails, turning West I follow up the canon road that leads to Middlefork and the top of the Continental Divide.

I pass by the old Sam Cope saw mill and think of those Amazonian angels, Alice and Annie, the best shingle packers in the district and I envy the men that got those old-fashioned, self-sufficient creatures for wives. Here and there the beavers have dammed the stream, washing out the trail and forcing us to climb the steep hillside. As we pass the old Columbus Mill, the ore tailings have made the soil thereabouts a dark red, otherwise I see only the wrecks and relics of 65 years of time, and here memory puts me in touch with friends that once trod over these now ghostly city streets.

From the rock foundations of houses and mill (destroyed by snow slide) the old bull rock chuck and mate (who for many years have supplied my table with roast chuck) emerge, busily rubbing their drowsy eyes after the long winter sleep, stand up on hind feet and take notice that a stranger is threatening their domain and with an angry bark retire from sight.

As I climb higher the snow is fast melting from the trail and the only evidence that humans once passed that way, are the tracks of steel shod hoofs, that were made before the last winters snow had covered them deep.

The only animated creatures to live out the winter on

## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

top of the snow were the Mountain Lion, Coyote, grey squirrel, martin, rat, grouse and camp robin, "robber we called him," with not an ounce of gratitude in his makeup, for if you attempt to make friends, he abuses the privilege by actually stealing the food from your plate, but even he is not so vindictive as the Mountain rat, who not only pilfers your substance, but will track over, urinate on, and destroy everything he touches. I walk with caution over the old corduroy bridges, now rotten and unsafe for crossing by jackasses or cars. The builders they too have served their time and have long since been erased from the picture. Truly if one is seeking solitude and desolation where the silence will not be broken by human sound, in the "Heart of the Rockies" is where you will find it.

As I pass below the great rock slide of Mt. Etna, I note there have been no snowslides over the regular trails through this winter, "unusual too," as the snow fall seemed to be of greater depth than common. In each clearing along the trail I see the little blue anemone and four leaf pina in full bloom, defying the early morning frosts that come each day in the high altitudes to level them down, while the black currant bushes are crawling from beneath the stones to provide the old prospector (if any left) with filling for his pie and sauce.

Passing Billy Lafevres' cabin I read again the notice on the door, "If you be cold or hungry, enter herein—otherwise pass on by." The warning is needed no more as the roof has fallen through and travellers in the future will find no shelter and no food. The old familiar stack of wood still stands against the wall, but the old prospector himself has these many years back, passed down the sunset trail. Now I stop at the Twin Cabins, Gimlett's folly (No. 1050), the rock chuck scurries beneath the floor, while the rat near the roof stands his guard. He eyes you with a look of distrust rather than rage, yet determined to hold his own against all comers.

Soon I pass Camp Summit, the Hampson Homestead, Hobb McGhee's Mohammed Mine, where Hobb himself lies buried beneath the dump. The mine never but a vision to him, but proving a reality to those that followed after. On past the Barrie Tunnel where once upon a time three prospectors and myself found it necessary to feast on the carcass of a faithful old friend (jackass) proving again that self-preservation is still the first law of nature, but to me it was the most unpalatable food ever eaten.



## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

At twilight comes on I find entirely hidden in the dense grove of silver spruce trees the cabin of The Hermit of Middlefork. But well I know I will not as in the days of long ago, hear that clear tenor voice singing "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia," the echo ringing from mountain peak to peak, and thoroughly enjoyed by the miners, as each evening they sit beside their bunk house door awaiting with pleasure, the evening rendition of many of the old sweet songs. At the foot of Chalk Creek Pass and near timber line, the trail junctions three ways, and I stop here to make camp for the night, threading my fish pole I step to the edge of the little mountain like and with but one cast of a spinner, I haul me in about a three-pound rainbow trout, and with a few slices of sowbelly "to add to flavor," and this liquidated with hot black coffee, constitutes a feast fit for Kings.

Cutting a few brushy shrubs for a wickiup and spruce feathers for a mattress, I am prepared for a long night of disturbed slumber, and well I know there will not be much sleep, and that the camp fire must be tended often through the chilly night. But with only the hoot of the owl, and the far-away cry of the coyote to disturb the silence, I do at least get some much needed rest in preparation for the long climb over the Silver Bell, Moose and Silver Dollar mine trails, the latter mine stands a lonely sentinel within 500 feet of the top of Monumental Mountain, another of Colorado's 14 thousand foot peaks.

I was glad to arise at daybreak after the pitiful attempt at sleep, but after breaking the ice in the little stream, and laving in the ice cold water, aching joints were soon forgotten and with the smell of sowbelly and fish frying in the pan my spirits revived quickly, and I was ready for another strenuous day. With an early start I pick up the nearly obliterated mountain trail, now and then fallen trees and huge stones that have rolled from the steep slopes block my path, causing some delay and forcing me to detour. The only sign of animation are the footprints of a few mountain sheep that are already making their way to the top of the peaks. The Coney with his chirp, and the rock chuck with his staccato bark gives warning that I am disturbing the peaceful tenure of their habitat, but to such infinitesimal creatures man never gives a thought.

Every once in a while I pass the bleached and broken bones of the jackass that has fallen from the trail with his pack. Weather worn and torn ore sacks still containing

## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

some indestructable gold and silver ore lie beside the bones, while remnants of splintered cases that once held dynamite are still visible, the powder after a drop from the cliff seldom exploded, because as a rule it was frozen so hard, that sometimes even percussion caps were not effective. While the poor old broken boned jackass was always relieved of his misery by a mercy shot, the pack was generally salvaged, whether it be ore or camp supplies.

As I pass there old departed friends that once carried me up and down those mountain trails, I offer a tribute to this faithful beast, stubborn, dumb and slow. Yes, and likewise you if kicked, whipped, spurred, cursed, underfed and always over-loaded. I come to the Daniel Webster Mine, "Cap Hampson's Vision," and soon reach what was once the Silver Bell cabin, now crushed into bits by the winds and heavy snows of 50 years ago, all falling back to earth again. I remember the tiers of bunks, and the remains of the old straw mattresses still there, but all the one-time occupants, including my sainted Father have passed on, seeking a new gold and silver mine in the sky.

Reaching the perpendicular cliffs I start climbing sure enough, the trail sometimes striking a grade of 45%. We pass the Silver Bell Tunnel, zig-zag up and up and on by the Moose Mine, and here find an immense drift of snow, that guards well the riches buried within those walls of stone. Part of the dump and only a few projecting timbers of a cabin mark the spot.

As the story goes the old Santa Fe trail could be followed by the mounds of stone, sun bleached skeletons of mules, horses, oxen, and the Indian burned wreckage of prairie schooners along the way. So to-day the bones of the unfortunate jackasses and the scattered ore packs are the main markers of a now nearly obliterated, but what was once a well travelled trail of yesterday. Now I reach the top of the Divide where the wind is ever restless, sometimes blowing with the force and noise of the hurricane, and again sinking to a gentle murmuring breeze, but never entirely at rest. Gazing about me not a human in sight as far as the eye can reach, truly I am for the time being Monarch of all I survey, with not a subject within call.

To the West I look up and up toward the top of Monumental Peak and the abandoned Silver Dollar Mine. To see the sublime grandeur of nature's work, fills one with awe and reverence, and as I slake my thirst from a little stream



## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

that flows to the Atlantic and again from another stream a few feet away, that flows to the Pacific, then indeed I feel the immensity of Gods work, and realize what infinitesimal creatures we mere humans are.

The fuel tank in my one man power motor is getting low, and that remaining thousand feet looks a long way up, but where there's a will there's a way, and with slowing steps and much puffing I finally reach my destination and the end of the trail. A stack of wood stands beside the old rusted stove, a few sticks poked inside the fire box awaits but a few shavings and the touch of a match, that soon turns out a welcome heat. Melting some snow I quickly brew a cup of hot coffee that revives the spirit and the consumption of my compressed lunch rebuilds the energy necessary for the long return trip, back down the trail.

Knowing the sacrifice and hard work that it took to pack those sticks of wood up the mountain in the good old days, (and yet to-day) you may believe I used them sparingly, for perhaps on some future day another traveller like myself, may come along this way.

I take a look at the weather eaten and broken timbers of the tunnel, the tunnel itself now filled with ice from portal to breast, and I doubt if there be incentive enough in the younger generation to ever remove this barrier from the workings, even tho it holds promise of a rich reward.

I am loath to leave the old cabin where more than 60 years ago the old miners well educated in the grade schools of experience, and graduates from the universities of hard knocks, and I a rapt and willing listener, were sitting at this same long table reading and discussing the problems of the day, particularly the right of the Government issuing gold and silver certificates, with or without a 100% backing of metallic coin, and acquiescing in the act only on the condition the coin be held in reserve and be surrendered to the holders of these certificates on demand. Those old-timers would rise from the grave, if they knew we of the present day are backing our currency with nothing but tax eating bonds of our Uncle Sam. So I wonder if our modern generation with all the advanced education are as well prepared to grapple with nature's destructive forces and man's blunders, as we of the old school, and if they really understand what it means to be disillusioned and denied the use of our honest to God, real gold and silver money.

Now the eve approaches and the sun is coloring the

## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

clouds with golden tints as it sinks behind the Elk Mountains 100 miles away, and my partner and I must travel back down the trail, retracing the steps of to-day and yesterday, leaving behind me to-day's scenes and harmonies, and but a short time hence winter will again come around the Peak and wipe out the footprints made "When Summer Comes to the Rockies."

Experience has taught me that old King Winter has never suffered defeat, but with nerve, hard work and perseverance we hold our own for a time, or long enough to extract some gold and silver from Monumental's Peak, so we of the mountains await impatiently year after year for the passing of winter and the advent of that wonderful vacation and prospecting time "summer in the Rockies."

Reaching timberline and a grassy spot amid the gnarled and stunted timberline trees, I pitch my tent, for with the dawning of the to-morrow I must be on my way toward the West and I was to learn more of the wisdom of the jackass, on this "to be" one of the most adventurous and unforgettable trips of my prospecting career, and I was to learn and respect more the cautious, fortitude, stubbornness and faith of the jackass.

As I skirted old Monumental Mountain to the North and just along the fringe of timberline I found the going rough and insecure because of the loose sliding rock, and many places I feared for our safety, as we stepped over and up and down on the loose stair-like stones, and where Samson might miss his footing and get his feet tangled or wedged in the many crevices. Only by confidence in his leader would he follow blindly over a trail never before trod by man or beast.

At one point by some freak of nature in shape of eruption or intrusion, a great gap was broken from the mountain-side, a horseshoe-shaped depression varying at the curved upper end from 30 to 40 feet in width and about 30 feet in depth, with precipitous sides widening out as it reached a near mile to the valley below. In this depression was a growth of tall and heavy limbed spruce trees, starting at the creek bank, and extending upward to top edge of gap, a tangled lot of short twisted, gnarled and sturdy branches were hugging the under edge of the craggy cliff, as though to hold it in place.

As I reached the top of the horseshoe I stopped and gazed somewhat fearfully at the danger of my surroundings.



## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

Straight across and not over 40 feet in length was a space of barren rock, ground and polished smooth by the sliding rock of ages past. For myself I might pass in safety but for Samson a doubt existed, and just a slip would plunge him downward and over the cliff with a fall of great depth. But go over I must, or blaze trail down the East side of the horse-shoe to the valley below and then, climb right back up another mile to within 40 feet of where I was now standing, for I must maintain the altitude to make the top of the pass a short distance ahead.

I called to mind the proverb, "the longest way round is the shortest way home," but I ignored this truth and so with time a wasting I decided to take the chance. With every foot advance my faithful beast followed with hesitant steps, knowing better than I the insecurity of his foothold, but now when too late to turn back, all of a sudden his tiny feet slipped from under him and down the 45% "degree" slope he slid and over the edge he went. The halter rope was jerked from my hands else I too would have followed. I cursed myself for my folly, hesitated but a second and stepped down to the brink peering over and expecting the worst, but glory be still near the top was Samson being held high in the air by a shelf of rock reaching to the heavy spradling limbs of the closely entwined spruce trees. Men think and act quick in times of emergency and in a moment I had stepped on the projecting ledge and from there made a short jump to one of the heavy boughs above the inert form of Samson, and no sooner thought than done I untied the 70-foot lariat rope from the saddle and with a quick turn round the forepart of his belly, tied the rope and made a double turn round the tree higher up and took a half hitch on the limb below.

I will always think Samson still had confidence in me, and seemed to sense his predicament by not making a struggle, which would have dropped him to the rock strewn earth below. So far so good but the jackass was still suspended 25 feet in the air and the next question, would the rope hold 600 pounds of jackass. With back braced I began pushing him by foot from the shelf and the down hanging limbs did much toward holding his weight in the lowering process. The last bough was finally reached, the rope had held his weight and with cautious maneuvering inch by inch he was soon standing on the earth below without scratch or bruise of any consequence.

## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

A miracle if there ever was one, and excited he, "not a bit," but discouraged was I for now it meant the long drag down hill and the climb back up the hill on the West side of the depression, the very thing I had tried so hard to avoid in the first place. But the damage was done, an almost impossible feat accomplished and late in the afternoon the jackass and I stood once again just 40 feet from where we were 5 hours previously.

My jackass indifferent to past danger still had faith in his master and followed me on unhesitatingly, but never fear no man would ever get him to try and cross that forbidden trail again, "So much for the wisdom of the lowly beast."

Crossing the pass (Chalk Creek) and climbing upward we are soon skirting the top of the Divide then dropping over to the West side we find the way is not too rough as we drop down into Alpine Park. A few deer and elk scamper from sight and the old black bear with 2 cubs ambles slowly and unafraid from my path. That bear smell is poison to Samson as he nudges me with his nose, and for the instant I am not hard put to lead him along, until the scent fades away, then he soon quiets down and again begins to grab at the bunch grass as we mosey along.

Jackass that he is I know he has but two thoughts in his head, food for his belly and a yearning for the Jinny he left behind him, but at that he is much smarter than Jack the prospector, he too thinks of but two things, food for his belly and the Jill he left behind him, with this difference when he gets his Jill he must work now and for ever after to feed her, adorn her with gold and silver ornaments, dress her in silks and fur coats, while Samson would only play a little, love a little, and each then go on their merry way rejoicing.

Late in the afternoon I arrive at the old Alpine Railroad and Tunnel Station, heavens what a world of solitude and devastation. I throw down the lariat rope and Samson without a care munches the knee-high lush grass. Stepping across the track (the only mile left) of what was once The Denver South Park and Pacific Railroad. I put foot on the rotted board platform of the hotel and enter therein. The exodus of scampering rats and a hollow echo at each step circulates through the empty rooms. Vandals has long since removed worth-while furniture, but climbing the rickety old stairs I find the big rooms still filled with the home-made two tier single beds, all on casters for shifting about at house



## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

cleaning time, and on many was printed the names "register like" of the former occupants, and many had the bed springs still on them, but could I sleep, when one need ward off the attacks of a hundred rats, and mid those many sad reminders, in truth vivid memories that appeared as ghosts of a long ago civilization?

The toilets "For Men" — "for Women" at the rear of the hotel," reminders of that day when it was considered immodest to even speak of such things, much less have them inside the house," were leaning perilously as if they were still hesitating to give up the fight.

I hastily leave the sepulchurian atmosphere and recross the tracks to the falling cut stone and trim station, and in a protected spot on the wall, the bulletin board has timed No. 6 at 3:30 P. M.—1910, 36 years ago and the last train to ever pass that station or through the tunnel. What a mockery that must have been, as the conductor says, "all aboard," and is answered for the last time by the echo of his own voice from across the valley, "all aboard."

One hundred yards down the track I came upon the old Stone Roundhouse with the old battered and leaky water tank still standing in one corner, the whole structure at one time under roof because of the deep snows, but now in the open, and still so full of snow from winter just passed, that I could not see if the turn-table had ever been removed or not.

Truly the abode of the dead, a gloomy place to camp but night approaching I chose to spread my bed in the dispatcher's office with a good roof and walls about me, but as always I knew my enemies the Mountain Rat would make the night miserable for me, but at times the old prospector must endure even that in lieu of a human voice or companionship, and being dead tired I was not in the mood at the present moment to balk at discomforts.

The night passed quickly after shooting two of the noisy rats, and the groundhogs under the floor quit their racket and dropped into slumber. Next morning the world looked brighter and for several days thereafter I made this my home, but now again all packed I headed up the track, passed some brake shoes spike pullers and fish plates, it seemed they were just awaiting the section man's hand to service the next train that would "we know" never come again.

I reach the old lever switch and was tempted "and did" throw it for a passing train, yet with a touch of reverance,

## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

to those friends who had done likewise more than 36 years before. Approaching the tunnel I could see the path of the snowslides from Alpine Peak that had removed about 100 yards of the snow sheds across the valley, and piling the lumber in heaps on the other side. What a boon that would mean to anyone wanting to build a new home in the solitude of the Rockies. I could see the curved stone arch of the tunnel now closed forever, and thought of the many of my friends that had died in the building and operating of that bore through the Mountain. Well, I knew there was no passing through that hole because of caves and ice, so I began to climb the old abandoned construction road that led to the top of William's Pass, and soon found myself down at the East portal. Here again mid the silence of the now gone primitive area and with Samson my lone and only companion, I look askance at the sagging and broken down doors of the ALPINE TUNNEL, no train has whistled in or out of that forsaken bore for many years, even the track-walkers and door tenders shacks beside the track has long since been flattened to earth by the heavy winter snows.

I camp here again for the night and late in the next afternoon I reach Alpine Pass where the highway crosses from St. Elmo to Tincup and Taylor river. Had hoped to pass the night in the shelter house, but this too had been torn from its foundation and blown down the mountain side. Time was getting short and I must make my way down grade "yet working North meanwhile" toward timberline.

Majestic Mt. Princeton looms up in the distance from the Divide and just so soon as the sun reaches its tip, daylight will begin fading away. Far down below me at timbers edge I see a small mountain lake and within the hour I am making camp beside its cool green waters. Samson is soon relieved of his pack and even now firmly anchored at the end of the heavy picketing rope that held him suspended in mid air, and from a tragic drop to destruction just a few days before, proving again that life does depend at times on but a silken thread.

The jackass, the prospector's faithful and necessary friend, but never forget if that rope ever becomes weaker than he, the trail blazer will find himself stranded far from human habitation, and it recalls also the old story—50 years a prospector and 40 of them spent in trying to find his jackass.

All about me stood the dry standing timber for campfire,



## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

with plenty green boughs from the still living trees for bedsprings. But first a fire, next the pitching of the tent, then the making of my bed and last but urgent, sowbelly beans, dough gods and coffee for inner man, but glancing for a moment at the riffling waters of the lake I see a fish rise for fly, and in haste I joint my pole, thread the line and cast a fly hook that barely hit the water, when zip, I have a strike and in seconds land a big rainbow at my feet. Forgotten was the sowbelly for the time being, with fresh fish for supper and plenty left over for breakfast.

A prospector lives on serenity, solitude and visions, and the great blessing, is that tired feeling that comes at the end of the day, that always brings appetite and sleep so soon as one hits the blankets. The unearthly yelp and whine of the coyote and the sometime pitiful whimper of the lion, while not relished is much more music to the ears than the ear splittin' blare of the juke box, and does finally lull one to slumber. So passes the nights, only humans sleep, while beasts are ever on the prowl. Above through holes in the tent I see bright stars shining through a sky of murky blue, but without the moon the land is ever shrouded in black darkness, but most of the night I am blind to all this and at the break of day, and far to the West I can see the quiet Taylor River Valley, where perchance some humans even now are arising in anticipation of a successful fishing or hunting day. Woe is me, for in this same valley 60 years ago, life was all about me and the hills were alive with prospectors, dotted with campfires and lights of the cabins shining through the darkness.

But I am now in Gold and Silver country and here I will stay for a few days and after an early breakfast I am blazing new trails where no human foot has ever trod before. From now on progress will be slow, for the geological formation indicates there is gold "in them thar hills," and at each step, stones will be turned over with the pick or tip of a cane to detect ore float.

I cross many dim trails "barely discernable" that lead to prospect holes higher up on the mountain, and now and then I follow them to see for myself what the prospectors had in view, and to see whether there be a chance for the revival of a dream that passed away with the original locator. Gold and silver leads I find along the way, but none rich or wide enough to spend labor on. A lunch of sinkers and corn beef takes but a few minutes at noon time, while Sam-

## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

son munches on the high bunch grass. Continuing on my quest, and in the distance of about two miles and at my own level I detect on the horizon, an abandoned cabin, the weathered boards glisten from the setting sun, and here will be my destination for the night and several days thereafter.

I am thankful always for the useful things and works the builders of the old Gold and Silver West left behind them, and pay a long overdue tribute for their foresight. Within a few hours from noonday I reach the place and am pleasantly surprised to find a well preserved log cabin, board roof, and within a rusty but still serviceable sheet iron stove. The fire is soon cracking and 'tis but a step to the spring. There were at one time two rooms in this domicile, but the partition had no doubt been removed by vandals in years past.

At times many of the prospectors wives would stay with them through the summer, and even throughout the year, even helping with work in the mine and many times in much worse places than this. Whether they enjoyed the life that was so dependent on hopes alone, with the chance of 499 to 1 against them I doubt, and if they were blessed with good sense they would never have married a prospector in the first place.

I soon detected the woman's presence by the woman's touch. A few ravelled strands of calico at the now paneless windows, a daub of paint on the casings and home made cupboard nailed to the wall. Outside on the trash I found as usual among the tin cans, rubbish and discarded apparel, a few worn out high button feminine shoes along with the hobnailed boots of the male. Even here on the highest peak of the Rockies, modesty prevailed, for within 40 feet of the cabin stood a privy built of logs on end, with roof, seat and door of split lagging, the door swinging on hinges of old leather, denoting the finer sense of woman's demand for refinement and privacy, for when man is alone, no two seater like this, just a convenient log or stone on the hillside sufficed in the expunging pleasure of man, free from all embarrassment, restraints and conventions, this inherited trait of nature dominates in every man, and here he finds peace and contentment mid the smell of the feces, and he views with receptive eyes the panoramic picture of the valley and mountains at their best, and here he relaxes, muses, and thinks sane thoughts, and is at peace with the whole world.



## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

The woman's touch I find again among the scattered cans that served as pots, pans, dishes and cooking utensils, some of them still clean after 40 years of non use. Supper is over and the sun is dropping behind Italian Peak and soon night settles over the land. Nights are always chilly in the high country, and for safety, and out of compassion I bring Samson inside the cabin for the night.

Work does bring on a weariness along with content, and generally I no more than hit the blankets on the floor, than I am in the arms of Morpheus, but my mind reverted to the little stone covered grave I had seen on the rise below the cabin, with the name, Joy Elliot, carved on the rotted and fallen face down headboard. Age 6 Mo.-5 days, Died Sept.7, 1898. I thought of a night beneath this same roof 40 years past, a mother in travail, no woman to comfort, no one to heed a cry "is there a Doctor in the house" and none in the district or county either for that matter, not even a midwife. A brave woman, YES - to go through this ordeal with only a husband to act as midwife (a common occurrence in the good old days) and dumb that men are, I could surmise her giving him instructions even at the moment when she herself was in that stage, on the border line that is a toss up, of life or death to all women. But evidently the wife survived, a bundle of joy came into the cabin for at least a few months, then passed on and if I think correctly, along with her going, the game lost its lustre and the old prospector and wife departs for other fields far away from sad reminders.

Where, Oh! where will we ever find women like this again, the modern womans' idea of achievement is to excell in the number of cocktails she can consume in one sitting, at the booths or bars of some night club, before she starts to being the life of the party by putting on a strip tease act. But America can never progress with people like this modern generation that practice not restraint, and do not fight against the moral, religious, civic and social decline, encouraging vices that could easily destroy the Nation.

There is this to be said of the prospectors life, no two minutes, hours, days, weeks or months, not even years are just alike and I became aware of this as I suddenly awakened when pandemonium broke loose. Samson was on the war-path, running to the far end of the cabin and back again and snorting to beat the band. When jackasses snort, look for an enemy, it was pitch dark and when fully awake, I could hear

## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

on the roof the heavy thump of paws of a beast, and now and then through the open cracks between the boards I could see the fiery eyes of what proved to be a mountain lion. -Samson also saw this and was afraid and averse to the smell of an enemy.

There was no danger and I waited for perhaps 15 minutes for the "run lion, run jackass" to terminate, but quiet must be restored, so I arose from my bunk, took the six-shooter from under the pillow and waited for the flash of an eye, then 1-2-3 shots in quick succession, and with a final blood curdling yelp I heard the beast tumbling from the roof. The cause of all the commotion was now no more but the smell remained, so sleep for the remainder of the night was to be disturbed by Samson's fear and activity.

Next morning I picketed the jack far from the cabin, else he would not eat, and after a hearty breakfast of sow-belly and flapjacks, washed down by the old stand by, hot black coffee, I proceeded to skin the 200 pound animal, but I wondered later why I did it, for I could not carry it on Samson's back, and so far as I know, it is still stretched on the cabin wall.

My stay at this beautiful spot on God's footstool lasted many days and strange as it may seem to these modern gypsies, when rugged man camps either in cave, dougout, tent or cabin, and packs to leave for other fields, he does so with many regrets, for after a few days in one place it feels like leaving home but with just another month of summer I must be on my way. Many times I climb to the top of the Divide from the East and then the West. Majestic Mt. Yale, Harvard and Elbert were often in view, and except for Mt. Majestic all were on short spurs apart from the main range.

Magic words "Gold and Silver," a lure to the adventurer and what fascination it has, and the persistence it builds up in the breast of men, who go on and on until the search becomes an obsession and incurable disease. A strike of gold or silver will ( or used to) start a rush or stampede for new fields, and often in the search for greener pastures, the prospector will leave a good thing behind. No better story was ever told than that of the prospector that called at the gates of heaven. St. Peter refused to let him enter because, as he said, heaven was crowded with that breed and were a general nuisance because they were forever digging holes in the golden streets. The prospector hastily speaking up said "St.



## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

Peter, if you will let me enter, I can promise you to mitigate this trouble." and with the gate keeper's assent, he began mingling with the old sourodughs, passing the word to each on the Q.T. that some other prospector had struck it rich in hell. No more said than each one shouldered his pick, passed through the gate down into hell. As St. Peter approached the prospector, he commended his sagacity, but puzzled to find the new number with pick on his shoulder on the way out. "How Come!" "Well", said the prospector, "there may be something in that report afterall, and I'm on my way to find out." So it is with the clan on earth, they like the jackass leave fields of clover, jump over the fence to the thistles on the other side.

Streaks of ore containing gold and silver was often detected on my daily journeys, including deposits of other low grade metals, and on some veins long tunnels had been driven and shafts sunk, but sufficient pay dirt was found lacking, but who knows, just one more foot and the glory spot may be within your reach and not one thousand miles away.

A streak of ore, one inch thick, worth two thousand dollars per ton, is much more desirable and profitable, than a 40 inch streak worth 25 dollars per ton, but I failed to find any rich or wide enough to meet my expectations and with but a few more days to go, and 3 months gone with never a sight of man, wherein if time could have been set back 50 years, one wouldn't have gone 200 yards without meeting up with a fellow prospector. Now I reached Italian Peak and I pick my camping place in a glade mid the thick surrounding brush and scrub spruce at timberline. I see just ahead and sticking above the scrub trees the outlines of a cabin, and the fallen down roof lagging, and rotted logs proved it to have been unoccupied for many years, but here too I was surprised.

Tying Samson to a tree I chopped away and pushed aside the tangled brush, a hole was cut in the logs, that served as a window, while the door remained shut with small part of latch string still hanging out. The lower layer of logs had long since rotted away leaving the whole structure sink until the door was squeezed shut, and less than 5 feet high.

I made an attempt at prying open the door, but climbed over the walls. A few rusty pans hung on the walls, while the top of the sheet iron stove had rusted away. I glance at

## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

the bunk in the corner, about half protected by the few remaining lagging on the roof and before my eyes lay the skeleton of a man, "a prospector of old." Bedding and clothes had been rotted or carried off by the rodents and var-mints, and only one shoe remained on the skeleton foot, this latter proving he died perhaps of some ailment or old age,, and in the day time. Above the bunk on a shelf was a worn out, weathered and rat-eaten Bible, no name within its few remaining legible pages that would lead to the identity of the owner or from whence he came. Near by, where his pockets would have been and hidden somewhat in the dried out, spruce needles, I detect the shine of metal and on examination I find a 1904 - 20 dollar gold piece "now my good luck charm," several silver dollars and a few minor coins, the latest date thereon would indicate the man had been dead for some 40 years. Treasure trove, you might call my find and honestly acquired.

Climbing back over the wall, I walk direct to the clearing, of high bunch grass, and I find as expected the skeleton of the jackass with dried parts of the leather halter still on his skull. Strange indeed, a jackasses sharp teeth could sever a 2 inch rope that ties him, if need be, yet he will die in his tracks rather than chew apart the half inch rope that holds him prisoner.

So passes on a soldier of chance and his companion, the tragedy has been repeated thousands of times and with the passing goes a story, one of the greatest stories of God's noblemen, that now will be forever untold.

Well, night is on; Samson pay no heed to the bones of a passing brother and I had not much time to grieve over the fate of my prospecting friend. Again it is pitch the tent, chop the wood, make up the bunk, all necessary for the well-being of man. But I wondered then and I wonder now at the futility of it all. To live and not create or produce in itself is not enough, to be a parasite on some other poor man's back all ones life is small satisfaction. Somewhere and at sometime one must return to another some substance or service he wants, in return for the sowbelly, beans, flour, coffee, and dynamite the prospector and other humans must have. So I wonder if all the things writers, musicians, scientists and public servants give are worth what we must give in return.

Before dropping off to sleep I reconstruct the story, and my first move in the morning after breakfast, was to find a



## SUMMER COMES TO THE ROCKIES

prospect hole. 'Twas but a couple hundred yeards away. Beside the caved portal of the tunnel was the pick and shovel with handles rotted away, and a few rust eaten drills lying about. The old, wooden wheelbarrow fell to dust as I grasped the handles. Yes, here was the end of an unfinished dream, and with the portal closed, and barren rock on the dump I am sure this dream will never be revived. This then is to be the fate of the prospector, he goes whither no one knows, and if he never returns, no one cares, and I think of myself, why should I be an exception? The story is told and for another 4 days and 75 miles, not as straight as the crow flies, by any means, I hope to arrive to the point of departure, and thus be not too far from human habitation When Summer Ends In The Rockies.

## SQUIBS

Practice does not make perfect in that which defies perfection.

We learn too little, too late by practice - much more and faster by observation.

It is mostly by observation we avoid 90 per cent of the pitfalls of life.

Our hearing, taste, smell and feel, all minor senses compared to sight.

To work each day of life adds to the years - to loaf any day of life subtracts therefrom.

—The Hermit.



