

BOOK SEVEN

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.

PRICE 50¢

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The Hermit of Arbor-Villa
F. E. Gimlett



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



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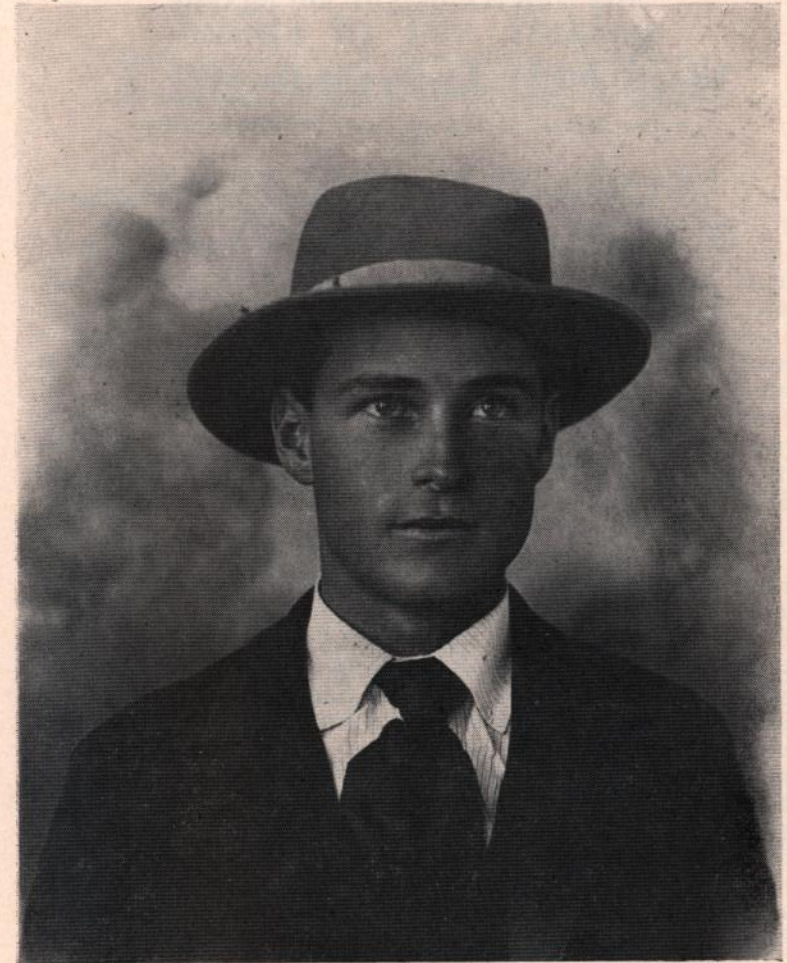
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INTRODUCTION

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 decendants 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 sources to their deltas.

THE HERMIT OF ARBOR VILLA.
Per F. E. Gimlett.



THE WRITER

A SOLDIER OF CHANCE

A GAMBLER - As was in the beginning
playing against natures many odds,
Sifting shiny gold dust from a pan
he must often lose and few times win
Collects tribute not from fellow man
In a game, where none commits a sin.

The Hermit

THE WHISTLE ON THE RIO GRANDE

Just a whistle, nothing more, that's what you think
To me an old timer, it is one connecting link
Between the 1880's-67 long wonderful years gone by
And now its 1947 to day, gee how the time does fly

Just a whistle, there is no chime, there is no tune
Only marks the passing of time, morning, night and noon
But it is music to my ears, as I clearly hear it say
Awake thou sluggard, meet the sunshine of another day

We fed our babies this way and that, made up our beds
Prepared the meals, or waste time otherwise instead
Wherever we might be, wherever we might choose to go
Always ready to step, when we hear the whistle blow

It summoned us to rise it called us to daily work
Sometimes at working engines, duty you could not shirk
With ever watchful blast, an alibi from you was nil
Just gave the warning, you had so many hours to fill

Just a whistle calling engineers on the 18's, 36's, 82's
And the old conductors, firemen and regular crews
Bid you follow the ribbons of steel over the hill
With cars of freight, passengers, lumber from sawmill

Then came the 168's, 400's and the unlucky 421
Getting larger and stronger, weighing many more tons
On division 1 and 2, those beautiful 1800's now play
Handle passenger train of steel like toys they say

When war was on, the whistle called many of us to arms
From the mines, railroad, store and away from the farms
Many awakened on that long ago unfortunate fatal day
Never came back to our little home town again to stay

Well I'm diverging and getting way off the track
It's the whistle I'm writing about, a long way back
It has called thousands and thousands, sent them away
Some never came back again, some are here yet to-day

When Gabriel blows the bugle, calls us to our fate
St. Peter admits worthy's, sinners cannot pass the gate
Why blame this or that, for folly we must always pay
Heaven knows the old whistle tried to point the way

Just a whistle, faithful sentinel, an old friend of mine
It set our clocks and watches, marks the passing of time
What matter if there be war in Spain, Japan or any land
All's well when we hear the whistle on the Rio Grande.

—The Hermit

Salida In The Making A City Underlaid With Gold



The Preamble—

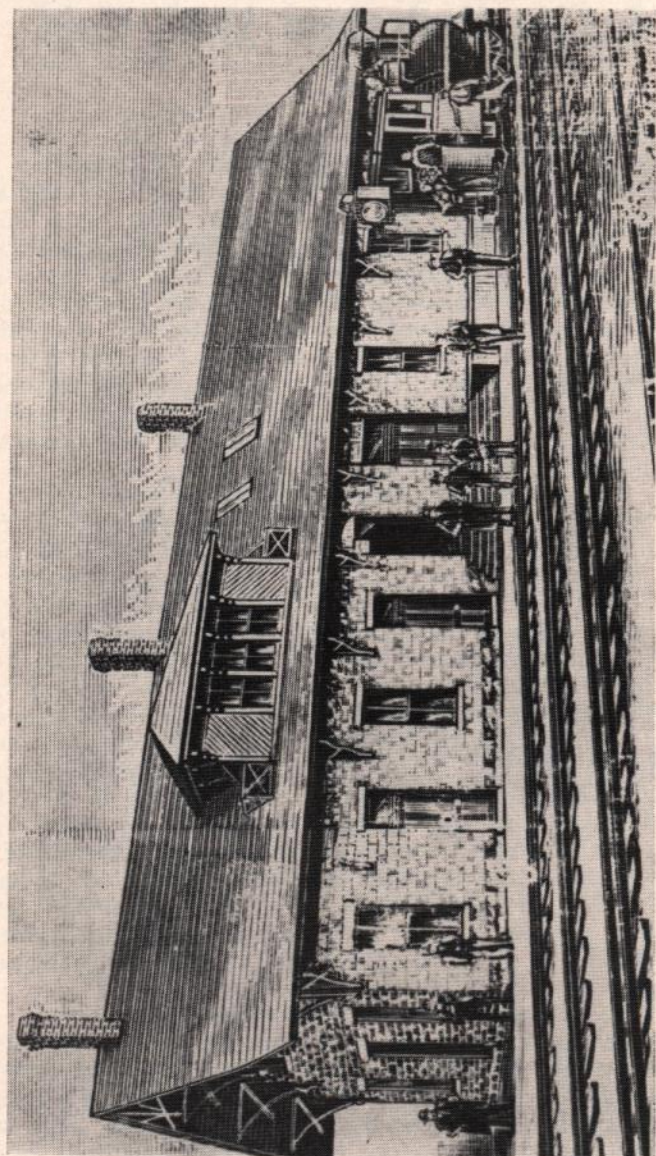
We must credit the geologist with the report on the location of where and how it existed eons of years ago. Turning back history's pages just 100 million years "more or less" and contrary to general thinking, we travel over a great expanse of Ocean, leaving behind us no visible trails, and swimming or travelling by boats "if at all" over this "to be" gateway, even then leading to Gold and Silver riches to the East, North, West and South. We are 3 thousand feet above where Salida now stands as we move through the water, that is sometimes quiet with the smoothness of a mirror, and again on the crests of the waves that are high and rough.

In the Days of Miracles

Sticking to the element of truth I speak of these first humans as we, but in fact they were and could be none other than our ancestors the fish or prehistoric man, "if the scientists are right on the creation of man or wrong on evolution". Adam and Eve my great grandfather and great grandmother many times removed had not yet been created, this I want to make clear, nor was I myself "tho pretty aged" here at the time. As far as the eye can reach and furthur, to the East, North, West and South nothing but water. Being cast on this sea with nothing, our first thought was of food, as we swam to and fro, Closely related to the finny tribe we were cannibalistic in our habits, and consumed our fellow fish, that could be had by simply opening our jaws or reaching out a hand, but as intelligence grew, from rib bones we devised a hook, and using smaller fish for bait, each catch would be larger size, each hook would be larger and stronger,, untill finally we could catch and hold a shark.

Necessity the Mother of Invention

Attaching a line made from the sharks skin to a hook made from its ribs, we soon had a good harpoon suitable for catching a whale. Still swimming around we finally spotted a school of these denizens of the deep, and with one great thrust we had our barbs firmly anchored in one of these big fellows and then came a race that was a race. Hanging on for dear life to the end of the line, all the while



Railroad Station and first Switch Engine, Denver & Rio Grande, Salida, Colorado

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being towed swiftly through the water, we itched ourselves forward hand over hand, and with a supreme effort landed on the whales back, it was but the work of several hours to thrust the shark spear into the heart of the victim, and with one last struggle that tossed us into the sea, the whale gave up the fight and victory was ours.

Crude Tools do the Work

Our knives made of fish bones were none too sharp and we were several weeks in skinning the top section from the whale, but by artistic and careful method we had made a perfect canoe about 30 feet long, big enough and strong enough to ride any wave. Slowly uplifting one side we turn it atilt in the sea and jump aboard as it rights itself, and tho the waves now toss this staunch canoe hither and yon as we ride on the crest and then sink into its furrows, we manage to stand upright. Then again we drift for days on a surface calm and smoth, while we "like Noah" were always praying for a sight of land. This kind of life went on for perhaps another 100 "more or less" million years and while we now had plenty food and few clothes "of a kind", we pined for a glimpse of terra firma.

A Change in the Weather

While cruising along one day, and here memory is hazy as to time (as we had no clocks or callendars), a great storm came upon the world, Lightning flashed and thunder roared and soon a mighty rift breaks through the 20 mile thick crust of the earth and a high range of Mountains appear, "THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE" reaching from the North to the South Pole. Simultaneously over parts of the earth, craters, volcanoes and earthquakes are erupting with a deafening roar, spewing hot ash and lava into the, then boiling waters of the sea. To the East we see another parallel range of Mountains with peaks reaching high up in the sky, and we hear the rumblings of the huge rock slides as the great mass of ignious and fluid rocks fall backward into the watery depths, this new upheavel to be known as the SANGRE DeCHRISTO RANGE. It breaks from the Continental Divide, forms the Mosquito and Cameron mountain section and extending far South into New Mexico. Another later eruption creates the Front and Greenhorn low altitude range, extending from Boulder, Central City, Lookout Mountain and including Pikes Peak, the Gold crater of Cripple Creek, and forming the East boundary of the Wet Mountain valley where lies the famous

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Bassick Mine at Silver Cliff, and melding into the Sangre De-Christo range near New Mexico. Where all was water before we now find mountains and valleys about us, with a great lake in the depression, reaching from Leadville and extending South through the San Luis and Rio Grande Valleys.

A Change for the Better

Still drifting on the water and after another million years (more or less) we see much green vegetation, high lush grasses, bamboos as tall as trees, and trees themselves reaching hundreds of feet heavenward. As we approach the shore we see many quadrupeds and mammals, some dart through the dense forest while others stand their ground, curious as to who and what the trespassers might be. A plenteous supply of mussels, crabs and clams are soon collected and now for the first time we see the smoke of a fire, as the Volcano, "known as the Salida Crater", spews its hot fluid into the lake, and near by what is now known as Buena Vista town.

Man the only Animal to Master Fire

For the first time in history so called humans enjoy a clam bake, while to one side a fowl and rabbit are sizzling on the spit over an open camp fire in readiness for the evening meal.

Near Buena Vista we made a permanent camp and from there on with our trusty stone axe, then bow and arrow "new armaments," our diet was augmented with many savory dishes, garnished with spicy roots and berries.

Another 25 million years (more or less) have passed and again sticking to the element of truth, we, I mean my Great grandfather and Great grandmother "countless times removed" can feel each year the weather getting colder and colder, and soon we see great banks of snow and ice forming on the Continental Divide and Sangre De-Christo range, and now find it necessary to wear the skins of animals (fur inside) to keep out the winters cold. The problem of sex had not entered into the picture and according to the scientists, procreation at this date seemed just a matter of laying eggs in the mud or sand by the female, with the male in turn expurgating enriching fluid on them, the eggs then on their own, to be hatched or otherwise. Thus propogation had no connection with romance and according to other researchers our first quadrupeds and Bipedes were reproduced in like

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manner, with both male and female taking turns on sitting on eggs until hatched, this then avoiding the headaches that comes with the eternal battle of the sexes as in this modern day.

The Earth in Peaceful Slumber

The Lake to the South is smooth as glass and we can glide through the gap into the San Luis and Rio Grande valley with ease, for we now have a large canoe hewed out of a giant tree, that took us months of labor in the making with the improvised and crude stone axes we had to use, but from now on we were destined to multiply and grow into great nations.

20 million years (more or less) again pass away and the crater from the North is still spewing ash and lava into the Salida Lake, while the great glaciers are also on the move from the high Peaks of Massive, Elbert, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Antero and Shavano. The Mosquito range has split the great strata of the Little Johnny and London Mines, the latter glacier moving down the Platte River valley toward Denver while the Leadville and the Little Johnny glacier moves down what is later to be known as The Arkansas Valley, both to merge with the glacier from Middle Fork at Salida. The site of Salida was then the same as it is to-day, but still covered with 2 thousand feet of water, but even then it was the outlet to the Royal Gorge and the gateway to Monarch, Poncha, Tennessee and Trout Creek Passes and to arrive at these points, one must go by submarine or surface craft, but the route and direction would be the same as it is up to this very day.

Gravity the Grandad of Erosion

Erosion now becomes a factor as a trickle breaks through the Sangre De-Christo range, getting larger and larger, and forming what we call the Golden Arkansas River "a ribbon of gold" along its entire length of 1500 miles from The Continental Divide to the Mississippi River. The master and slave of man "erosion" now at work, soon cuts a channel through the solid rock creating the Canon of The Arkansas and Royal Gorge, and buries deep the vegetation to the East of the Greenhorn Mountains, while the same action is taking place on the Gunnison, Silver San Juan and Colorado river on the West side of the divide. This same erosion years later will have melded the vegetation into great coal beds and seams, while the fish and animal life that have died for the millions of years, and those that have been cooked by

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the boiling water after the eruption have left their oil slowly trickle to the underground lakes, forming what we now call our great oil and gas wells. Deeper and deeper erosion cuts the valley channel and again after a few million years (more or less) all the water has been drained from the Salida and San Luis lakes while our lake bed, that was much deeper than now, has been filled to the brim with gold bearing sands and gravel from the golden mountain peaks.

Glaciers Builders and Wreckers

Those glaciers have done their work well and as they moved inch by inch, that invincible force carries everything before it, including those rich veins of Gold and Silver. The great stones in their slow movement mashes, shaves, whittles and crumbles those metal sheets of gold and Silver into smaller bits, depositing the whole into the Salida Lake bottom, creating a gold mine with riches beyond the wildest dreams of man.

Now you ask how we know these things, because the stones have told us so. The old original Lake bottom is still visible within two miles of the crater, again at the old ghost town of Maysville, again at the now vanished town of Newitt, and again on Silver Creek. The history of the past is recorded only on pages of stone and if you believe it not, and if you still doubt the story, the geologist will turn back those pages one by one as he travels to the Book Cliffs of Western Colorado, or down the Colorado River canon trail, and there let you read 5 million years of history for yourself.

No Ancient History Except On Stone

What has occurred here has occurred over the entire world. There are some secrets that men can never fathom, the origin or elements of Gold and Silver has ne'er been solved, so in our blind faith we must believe things as they are. We see the millions of planets like our own floating through space without colliding, so we must admit the existence of and the regulation of these are due to a supreme power and divine hand.

Within 25 miles below our own earth's surface we still have the melting furnace of gas and brimstone, yet each year the crust is getting colder and colder as evidenced by the infrequency of earthly eruption, and as the molten fluid or gas cools inside our world year by year, we must soon find ourselves a dead world like our brother planet "the moon", and now before we reach that state, perhaps

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less than a million years hence, let's get beneath our City "underlaid with gold" and extract therefrom the wealth of Midas and Croesus combined, pay off our National Debt, then take the balance with us as a free will offering to pay our entry through those pearly gates into heaven, provided of course we possess the credentials of clean living and righteous acts on earth as our own pass word. But I emphasize that Salida as far back as time records "before or after the upheaval" is the glory spot and is, and always was, the gateway to the region known as The Gold and Silver West "as we knew it", with all its wealth that has always been there, even tho buried under seas of water.

Our Old Time Resident "The Cave Man"

The cave man tho here ages ago is now extinct (or is he), leaving behind him in this locality a few caves and remnants in Indian, now Long's Gulch, but even at this late day he leaves behind him that female with that cave woman's inherent and dominating instinct, we must have furs, furs and more furs "even if they had nothing under them", but true they were more for utility than show so far as dress was concerned, this proving the point that the female of the specie, is reverting to the habits of her sister the ape, and soon to be robed in a fur covering of her very own that nature provides for the wild creatures of the earth, "and who would deny that present day women are wild", but there is this to say of always over-worked women, 'twas no trouble to keep them at home or in the cave, with the old stork depositing a baby every year and from thence on a flock of baby hands entwined about her neck and baby fingers clinging to her skirts to hold her in bondage. A far cry from today when this destructor of mankind "the scientist" discovers contraceptives that not only prevents the birth of babies, but devises a chemical to sterilize mothers against future birth, and this also removing the only power to keep women tame and at home.

Little Sex Or Romance In The Savage

Salida "the outlet in Spanish", so we find it in the days of the Ute and Navajoe Indians as they travelled through the cactus, sage brush and milk weed covered surface of the valley, and so today we are reminded that over these very same trails and areas (now made into streets) trod the moccasined feet of Colorow, Ouray and Chipeta and Chief White Horse of the Arapahoes. 'Tis not the roll of wheels that stirs up the clouds of dust, but the hoof of the

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Indian pony with the crude travoise (2 poles tied to the horse's belly strap) dragging behind camp equipment, and many small kids bundled together in the buckskin stretched across the frame.

The Preamble Continues:

The squaw (the worker of the tribe) rides the loaded pony, otherwise walks behind with papoose on her back while the brave, "lord and master" always rode in style. Thus a primitive people first built the trails, followed later by the booted foot of Coronada and his Spanish legions, prospectors with consorts, and Indian slaves.

The cavalcades come into the valley, down Silver Creek into Poncho Springs, down to the junction of the little and big Arkansas rivers, and across the open Park that leads up the Ute Trail and into the South Park Valley, once the hunting grounds of the Indians and now the prospectors Eldorado. Here a little romance, much tragedy, and necessary sex activity mixed with worlds of adventure in Indian life, came into the light, and in those cottonwood groves in this same valley and along the river banks, the Indian bucks were even as now, casting covetuous eyes towards the Indian maids, but even then modesty prevailed and many layers of blankets were worn by the shees', tending to subdue the passion of the males, and as a protection against the more persistent and daring among the he-wolves of the tribe. This hindrance along with many must gifts to the chief in the shape of horses, furs and personal service did much to dampen the ardor of the most offensive male.

History Begins To Record

In the years of the 1850's a few straggling white men settled in the valley of the upper Arkansas. History gives us little as to the activity in and about where Salida stands until along in the 1875's. No regular or open stage travel until the 78's tho many adventuring families in prairie schooner and horsemen passed by on the way to the West, South, or North to Leadville and South Park to the newly discovered gold and silver fields. The little town of Cleora came into being, "the Salida area still but a prairie" until the town of South Arkansas became established, and this because of the railroad survey stakes that marked a trail where iron steeds were soon to roll. Cleora was soon abandoned in favor of South Arkansas where the railroad was to branch out to the South, West and North, and now to be a permanent gateway when the latter city was to change

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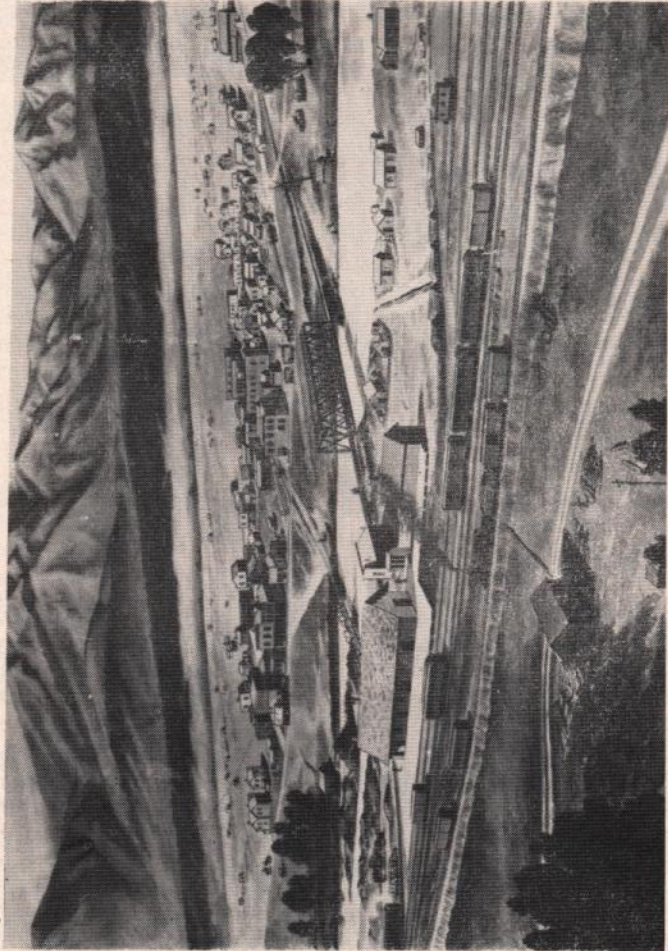
its name and Post Office to Salida "The Gem City at that time" but now the heart of the Rockies.

The Lad From Old Wyoming

If you are satisfied with but a glimpse of America, travel by train, bus, air or even stage coach, but if you would really see America, travel by jackass. So thought the new arrival in Salida and not content with the lack of bunking quarters, and with tales of big strikes of gold and silver, with the promise of adventure, he rolls up the blankets ready to head further West. In this spring of 1880 an acquaintance Hank Zilhaver was fitting up a train of 20 jackasses in this little settlement of South Arkansas (now Salida) "consisting of several hundred souls at the time" and joining him, we loaded them with supplies and headed up the South Arkansas river toward the mines. The going was not crowded until after we passed the City of Poncha Springs, this was a lively town at the time with some expectations of becoming the railroad center later on. From here West the travel was difficult as the one way road was congested with many spring equipped vehicles, from the two wheeled gig, to the buggy, spring wagon and stage coach, and solid wagons from the two wheeled carts, prairie schooner with mules, oxen or horses and including the 6 span mule freight wagon and trailer.

Traveling Slow, But Sure

To pass the stage coach was difficult, and if you have ever driven or rode a jackass you will understand they never go around anything but into it. Now as 12 thousand of the county's population lived in the 6 towns along the South Arkansas, you will realize that it took some engineering to pilot those asses in and around traffic on a one track road. Just outside Poncha Springs we passed the charcoal kilns and a mile further on other kilns were turning out charcoal for the Maysville smelters, supplying outside industries as well. In the archives of the old Orton log and dirt covered roof schoolhouse, "now Pinon Grove," you will find one Rosetta Bettis registered as teacher, receiving the munificent sum of 35 dollars per month, when and after the full 5 day week, and full month's work has been completed. Now on one occasion, the dirt roof broke through, breaking Zettas arm and necessitating a two weeks holiday, and this to be at her own expense, because it was an act of God "so they said", however, when she was able to resume her duties with one arm in a sling, the board "to say the least"



Salida, Colorado—1880
Stage coaches, Freight wagon and D & R G R R open wide the Gold and Silver West

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were magnanimous, and did pay full salary for a one-arm teacher. Truly everybody was captain of their fate and master of their soul in those good old days, and heaven was to protect the unfortunate and hindmost, as nobody else had time. A far cry from our present educational system that pays full time for 1 week spring holiday, 2 weeks Christmas holiday, 12 weeks summer holiday, 1 week conventioning holidays, numerous 1 day national and state holidays, to say nothing about the school sports holidays, Yes, some change and I wonder if for the best.

To The City Of Cities

Well, here we were, going up to the county metropolis, Maysville City, Chaffee County, Colorado, and now after 65 years of time we will be, and are going down to the metropolis of Salida, Chaffee County, Colorado. After 5 long and dusty hours and but 11 miles from the gateway (Salida) we just at noontime, reach the little "Pittsburgh of the West" Maysville. Here we found much bustle and confusion, and the noise of the hammer and hum of the saw were heard far into the night. The Billins Band were there to meet the stage that arrived about the same time as ourselves, dispensing music of the march and quickstep order, the musicians seemingly intent on filling the newcomers with enthusiasm and pep. Our late Tom Penrose was the last surviving member of that organization, and finished out a long and adventurous life at Salida. The stage coach with four and six horses, offered the speediest locomotion in those days while the rest of the horse drawn vehicles crept along at a snail's pace. All the travelers of that day seemed imbued with a purpose, and with a definite end in view. We passed the Randol store (grandfather of our present John), Shonyo Livery stable, Patridge and Shavano Smelters on our way to the far end of the mile long street. Here we found a toll gate barring our way, but after paying a fee of 25 cents per head, were allowed to proceed on up the canon. Ahead of us the canon was clouded by a blinding dust made by the iron shod hoofs of horses and tires of heavy ore wagons in a congested traffic that slowly wormed their way up and down the narrow road. A treat for any eyes were the 5 and 6 span of mules and horses with heavy wagons and trailers loaded with ore from the Madonna and Columbus Mines, and the pride of the drivers was to keep bright and shining the lettering on the hauns, and the silvered trimmings of the harness on those always well cur-

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ried steeds.

Into The Land Of Enchantment

Four miles farther on we entered the city limits of Arbourville with its smelter in the building. Store rooms and homes were being erected over night with no time off for sleep. Two miles West and Junction City came into view, here again we were met by the newly formed band. This city was the distributing point for Chaffee City, Columbus City and their 4 thousand inhabitants, and boasted of what was then considered a modern jail of two rooms, and "believe it or not" was always overcrowded with patrons from a wide open town, where it was day time all the time, and there was no night there (Warman). Well, anyone who has ridden 20 miles on a jackass has done as much legwork as if he had walked the same distance, and both he and his steed are dead tired at the end of the day. Next day, Hank and the train were headed for the mines and for several years he was one of the important links in the transportation system.

The Trail To The Rainbow's End

Now I have reached the end of the trail, and while I do not see the pot of gold at the rainbow's end, I do see where the clouds are fringed with silver and the sunsets turn to gold atop the great Divide. I see through the dusk of the evening the mines high up on the Mountains and the prospectors claim they are impregnated with silver and gold. Truly we new arrivals think we have reached that fabulous land of riches where people speak of millions as mere pocket money. Here lies the land of the whiskered prospector, and before I close eulogizing he and his ilk, I want to pay tribute to those old pioneer women who kept romance alive. How love survived and they ever succeeded in planting a kiss on the lips of those gnarled, tobacco matted, booze flavored, soup stained whiskered and long spreading 12 inch mustachiod prospectors has always been a mystery to me, and here and now I favor a statue be erected in the halls of fame, honoring these savers of romance under such terrific handicaps.

First Hand, On The Ground History

Education becomes a dominant factor and my stay in the Mountains was to be of short duration, so back from the high country comes a lad already sophisticated "far beyond his years" in the things he should not know, but ignorant as to the finer things of life. We marvel at the faith of

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human kind, what great plans are made by parents for the future of their offspring, forgetting that only 5 out of 100 are mentally fit to make the grade, but to slave and sacrifice for years and years to make something out of nothing, only paternal love could endure the strain, and thus remorse dogs my footsteps for every care, tear, sorrow and tribulation brought on dotting parents by me "one of the 95% of ungrateful sons". So with little ambition or technical learning, I came to Salida to absorb knowledge and acquire a better understanding of the 3 R's via the school room in the old Hunt building on E St., in a private school in a room off the New Presbyterian Church building on F St., under the tutelage of Miss Kate Smith, and later in the new school house on 3rd and D St. The school in the Mountains could not afford but a 2 or 3 month term during the year and as always dotting parents, ever interested in their children's advancement, supposed this move to be more advantageous, which it was, if pupils would apply themselves.

Rebellion In The Offing

But, boy like, I rebelled at the change, for I need leave a good job at 50 cents a day as water carrier (by jackass) to a mine on the hill, and why, I ask myself, the necessity of learning, as I was a success as a jack puncher, unless the unruly beast saw fit to lay down with his pack, this complicated things as I need walk either to town, or on up to the mine "which ever would be closest" for help, as I was not yet strong or big enough to reload the 10 gal. kegs of water. What a useless thing this education, says I, as I bungled through the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade under the tutelage of Miss Smith and Brewster. Girls were a great bane in my life, friends say I began dating girls at the tender age of 3, I emphatically deny this, for I never looked upon a woman with love in my eyes or gave her a thought until I was past 6 years old, but perverse creatures that women are and ever were, with their wiles and lures, I did get through the 4th grade in spite of their machinations and with but a few heartbreaks. But what a punishment to need sit (because of bad behavior) beside a girl you despised, and found later when that girl had grown into a sweet young miss, and your hate had turned to love, she wouldn't give you a tumble.

Dirty Dirt Of The City

I rebelled as a youth at the dirt about me, criticized the

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males not too much, but the girls more, who supposedly were akin to and with the purity of the angels) with tangled uncombed hair, soiled ribbons, mussed dresses, too much body odor and too little perfume with even mites now and then. Modest yes, with calico gowns far below the knees at ankle length while older ladies wore them below these male attractions, yet with all these virtues and impedimenta "so they said" they were inclined to be careless in appearance, and yet I forgive all this and blamed them not too much, as a bath in the wash tub came only once a week, with seldom a splash during week days because of the arduous work of pulling the old oaken bucket out of the well, heating it in the wash boiler and kettle, atop an old wood stove, which called for more and more fuel like the ogre it was. So I vowed "then and there" at some time to ameliorate this condition, but at the moment there was pressing work to do "that could not wait", and I had already wasted a good part of 7 years acquiring knowledge when I already knew "or thought I did" everything worth knowing, so back to the hills again and never to be imprisoned behind school walls again "freedom yes", but at what a price as I was to learn in later years.

New History In The Making

The writer now brings up the history from here and injects into the story the happenings of a new day, and eulogizes the characters that were so much a part in the building of the City. My friends were in reality but the leading players in life's drama, and have been in the shifting and changing scenes for 67 years of time in this City of South Arkansas, Arkansas and Salida — Salida "tis wonderful" said all the great soldiers of chance as they stepped from the little "big to us" new narrow gauge train, "Travelers were then not just tourists" as we know them, but men with incentive, initiative and purpose, and it would be futile to try and name them one by one, but on the record at the County Court House and in the files of the Mountain Mail and Record, you will find a registration of their achievements.

The Naming of a City

South Arkansas said the new builders, the name too long said the U. S. Post Office Dept' so it will be Arkansas, not suitable said the wife of Governor Hunt, so it is to be SALIDA, correct pronunciation Sah-lee-dah. Memory and the files of the first issue June 5th, 1880 of the Mountain

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Mail and subsequent issues, give us much information concerning the town in the early 80s. The caption under the title MOUNTAIN MAIL "in each issue" reads thus—"Colorado Produces Millions of Silver and Silver is King." The City has been surveyed into blocks, streets, alleys and parks, the choice lots, 10 thousand dollars worth being sold first week, inside lots at 200 dollars, and corner lots at 800 dollars. The houses and store buildings from the by passed, haphazard built town of Cleora now moving to this new location. A contract already given for a new bridge across the Arkansas, "old one 5 blocks too far West". Chaffee County Bank and Bank of South Arkansas already doing business, dealing in gold dust, foreign and domestic exchange, drafts and discounts. No fancy fixtures, no equipment except ledger, strong box and money till, and success even then, just a matter of always taking in more money than was being paid out. The census shows total population of several hundred this including 90 women and 24 school kids.

The Circus Follows the Pick

First circus (Coles) in Salida on the Main Arkansas River advertises its show for July 30th, with thrills galore and citizens coming down from the South Arkansas towns enmass. Contract for modern calaboose let for 260 dollars, carpenter work on Presbyterian Church let for 265 dollars. Salida still in its day of 1% taxes, tallow candles, new fangled kerosene lamps, wells and one and two hole privies, now votes to incorporate Oct. 9th, with Morgan chosen town marshal at 65 dollars per month. First fire dept' bucket brigade formed, and in case of fire all wells for use of dept' exclusively. Barlow and Sanderson stages for San Luis, Gunnison and Arkansas valleys load at Salida, but soon discontinued, and the loading point for West and South will be at Poncha Springs, stages for Tin Cup leave Buena Vista, for Aspen leaves Granite, and for Eagle River leaves Leadville.

Simple Amusements at Little Cost

Grand Masquerade Ball at the Hawkins Hotel, guests invited from all towns in the valley, and it really needed all the women "only 800 out of 20 thousand population, and not too many that were daring enough to make the ball a success, as many of the better and more religious women frowned on the art of dancing as sinful, and as for the theatre, that was considered the place for the devil to get

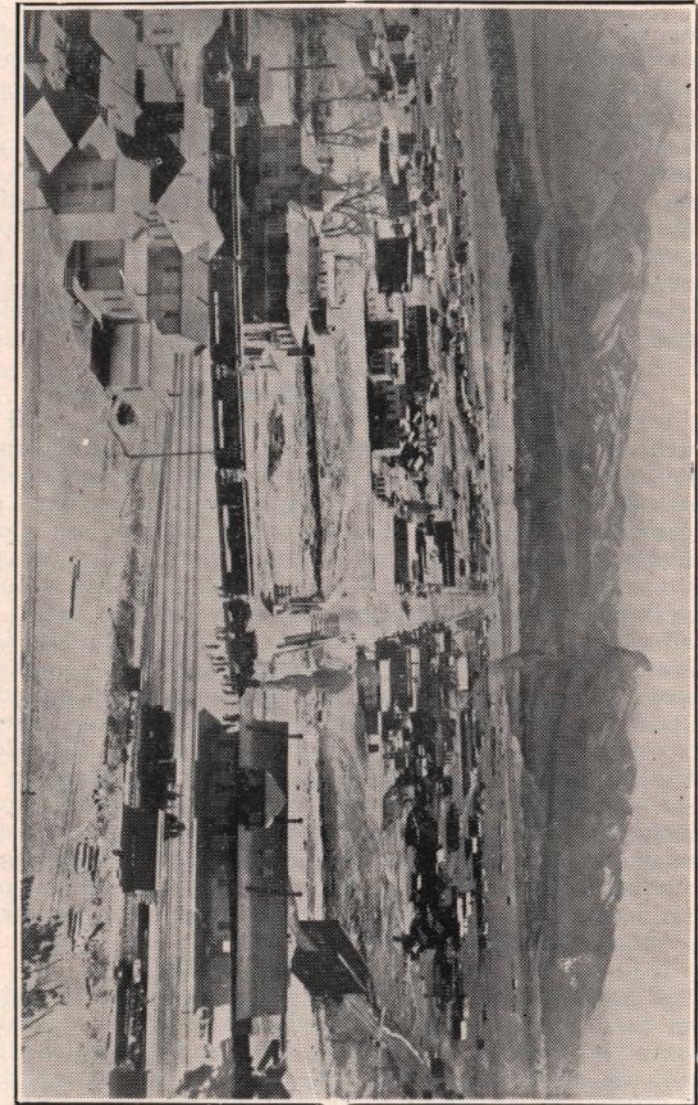
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his converts, "and, as I read of the happenings in the stage world" perhaps they were not too far wrong. All male guests requested to unmask for identification, park guns at door, and answer questions as to moral and social fitness to attend, no obscene language, vulgarity or indecent exposure on pain of forcible boot, fistic or gun play ejection. Mothers guarded their daughters well (more so than now) and kept them aloof from indecent companions, and none of the undercrust allowed, tho Timberline and friend (ladies of easy viture) crashed the gate at the masked ball at Dickmans Opera House, but were soon detected when one of the ladies' garters slipped from place to floor, and in trying to restore said ornament, exposing ankle and calf of leg, it did cause embarrassment and consternation among both the males and the gentler sex, and the offender "and pal" were speedily ejected from the hall by the alert floor managers, and in this same hall Sandow put on his strong act but instead of lifting the 800 pound weight up, he pushed himself down through the flimsy floor into the wine room below, and in this same wine room donated by a generous saloon keeper was started a new church with none other than the "was to be wife" of Rudyard Kipling as one of the promoters and the only requirement ask was that the spittoon be kept clean and shiny. What faith churches in the early days that were built by women of fine character, and what self denial and sacrifice it demanded, and but for the church influence we would have no civilization "but what are we doing now"?

Poncha Springs, Rival And Neighbor

Poncha Springs on the boom, a branch of the South Arkansas already functioning on the arrival of railroad, now building on toward Maysville, Gunnison and Alanosa. To celebrate the event the city gives a Grand Ball at the new store building of Cherry, Hustin and Co., dancing space 25 by 75 feet with music by the Salida Band. It promises to be a high class affair and of course the Three Dolls with their 40 inch busts will be there to give life to the party, with a come hither eye wink to the males, that brings a jealous look from the wives. The programmes will be full within the half hour after the opening, then heaven help the tardy swains, they won't even get a look in, and to cut in, would be suicide. A well behaved bunch of males, perhaps not from choice but for safety, and when Dora accidentally (so she said) let her garter "a gold buckle silken ribbon affair"

Salida, Colorado on the boom and new Truss Wagon Bridge across the Arkansas River - 1892



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drop, she, smart gal left it where it fell and for the adoring suitors to fight over, and knowing she, tho popluar, would not dare to try and restore it to place, on pain of vulgarly exposing a limb, which would mean ejection from the hall by modest floor managers, and there after brand her as a brazen immodest creature. Yes we had women of easy virtue, women of questionable virture and women whose virture was above suspicion, and to-day if we were to judge women by appearance, attire, manners and speech, how would floor managers pick the bad "or could they." Twas a swell affair with an acting citizenery to be proud of, but ending disastrously for the men with a loss of 11 pieces of headgear during the nights shuffle.

Ancient Tools In Artistic Hands Do Wonders

Ancient history can be tiresome reading so I will but touch on the steady growth of our new City of Salida all done under the direction of great men with simple tools to work with, in great contrast with to-day, and so many new mechanized dodads and men seemingly too careless and indifferent, to handle them safely or constructively. We pass then to the 1881's and into the 1882's and 1883. The influx of investors and income seekers are crowding the hotels and trains that are now reaching Leadville, Maysville and Gunnison. A new water main has been installed, a new volunteer fire department in readiness, with Chief dolled up in brand new red hat, new ladders and hose cart, all working under the direction of non paid Mayor and City Council. Yes we're going modern with milk delivered to our door and emptied in our own tin can for 5 cents a quart, the ice man he too is on the job, while the grocery clerk sets your goods on the kitchen table and here begins the downfall of wives, for history and the Courts claim the milkmen, iceman grocery man, to be responsible for the terrific increase in the divorce rate.

Still Worried About Filth

In the hills I was not concerning myself with dirt, we had there only gold and silver dust, and as it accumulated on the body we were in fact still clean and that much richer, but I was still allergic to dirt that blew up from the dirt and black mud paved street of Salida, and rebelled at the still old established custom of taking but one bath "or none at all" per week on the bare and sometimes dirty kitchen floor, in wooden wash tubs, beside the old wood stove. I worried about the pile of wood men must chop to sate the appetite

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of that ogre "wood stove" to heat the necessary water, even tho now the wells are passe and water could be had from the hydrant in the back yard, and I overlooked not the none too clean washing on the lines, and viewed with disgust the dirty bow ribbons on the girl's pig tails. I vowed again there would be a change some day, and we'd get more water and soap in action and get the people out of their slouchy and messy ways, install in all the houses of "high and low degree" new bath tubs, sinks, lavatories and toilets, with all the fancy trimmings, but many years were to elapse before this resolution became a reality, and many more years before we could eliminate the 2, 3 and 4 hole privy and thereafter expurge and urinate right in the house.

A Panoramic View Of A City As Time Rolls By

I reminisce as I walk along the trail, up and down diagonally across the blocks on Salida's main streets, and it was still only a trail as we walked across the old stage coach bridge to meet the first train on the Denver and Rio Grande. Salida, the mecca and the Junction where all trails lead to some rainbow's end, in direction of a real, (not mythical) pot of gold. From here we can still go by Indian or stage coach trail, but the iron horse and the ribbons of steel now diverge to the South and the Silver San Juans into the Telluride where lies the Smuggler Union Mine, West to Gunnison, including iron works and smelter, and on to the great coal fields of Baldwin and Crested Butte, then down the Black Canon to Montrose and Ouray City where we find the Camp Bird and other rich mines. North to Leadville and the Little Johnny with natural vaults filled with solid gold and silver, and through the Busk Ivanhoe Tunnel to Aspen and the Mollie Gibson Mine, South to Alamosa and the great Amethyst mine at Creede, then East to Silver Cliff and the famous Bassic Mine.

Enduring Dreams Built On Gold And Silver

I am stressing the importance of the Mines and if we would but remember back, we will find every man, miner or prospector, even the social select and elite of the land has at some time been our guests, residents or passed through Salida's gateway, and nearly all of them in search of the elusive **gold** and **silver** horde and not the black gold (coal), farms, timber and grazing lands, and always intent on following trails that led into the wilderness, to that land where veritable treasure chests lay undiscovered and are still to be found, "but they do lie buried deep in the bowels

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of them, thar hills". Yes billions of it, all gone say the doubters - no just awaiting the influx of new blood and men of vision and foresight, with the gamblers instinct to take part in the only honest game of chance, "Mining".

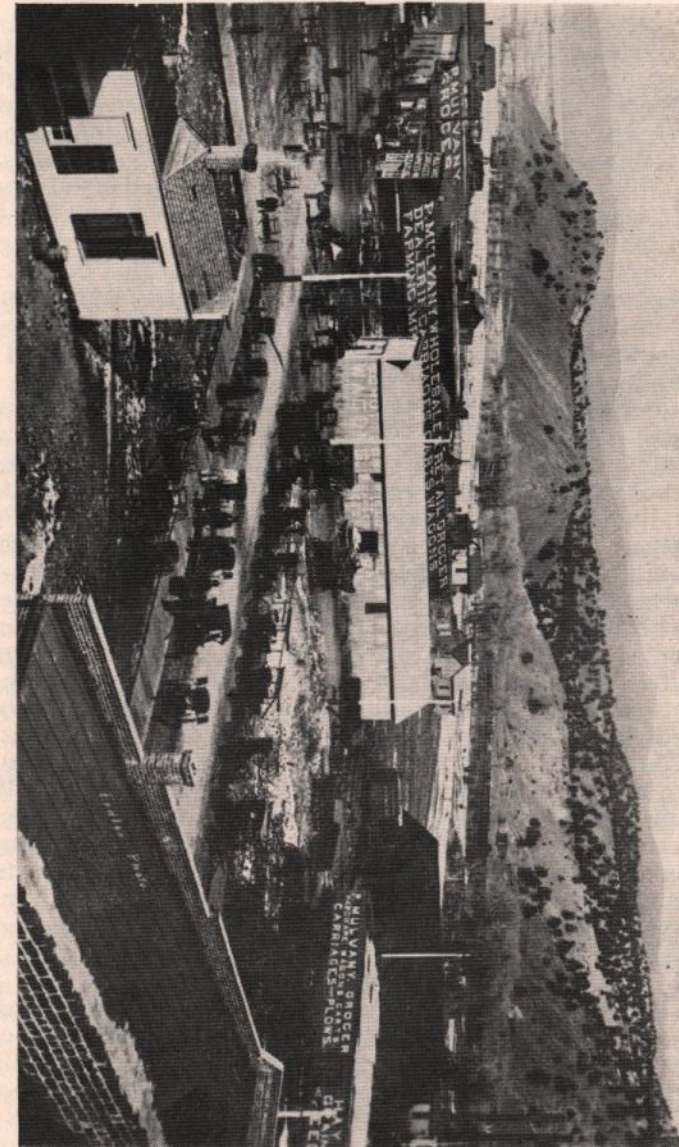
Progress Step By Step

We see building after building going up on our streets and later a new board walk materializes. If I could just for a day travel over those old board walks, hear the clatter and squeak of footsteps three blocks away, and even as they cross the new wooden truss bridge just finished, perhaps it would bring back to me the touch and enthusiasm that prevailed in the community in days past, and even a pessimist "such as I" might find life worth living again. Now I wonder what has happened to the 2nd and 3rd generation that they care not to construct, but rather to destroy, and lack the faith or initiative in any movement, that tends toward local and moral development, but seemingly would abstract and exist from to-days substance, with no thought of planting seeds or deeds for the tomorrows. As the boom began subsiding in the other towns along the south Arkansas the population began moving to Salida, bag , baggage and houses, and even to this day numbers of our present homes once graced the Streets of Maysville, Arbourville, Junction City and Monarch. In 1881 the Monte Christo Hotel was under construction and the grand new Windsor occupied the corner of 1st and Main Street with the Bender house a few blocks West. At this hotel a shooting fracas took place in the early '80's with the wounding of one policeman, several bystanders and two fatalities with no damage to the ringleaders. Now comes Arbours Dance Hall, the great log building with girls bars and gambling implements moved from Arborville to a spot West of the track on West First Street, and here our Chief of Police Baxter Stingly met his fate with his murder still unavenged, and let it be said to Salida's shame, the bones of this hero are now strewn along the highway grade by the road builders and cloud bursts of many decades.

Salida, A Peace Loving Town

As I think back Salida has always been a well governed town and was fortunate in selecting police that made it a point to maintain law and order, and I think history will bear me out when I state that outside of a few murders, death to one of the killers by hanging, shooting and dragging through the streets under mob disorder, there has been less criminal activity in our city than most any other town of

West First St., Salida, Colo., 1883, in its hey dey of Stage Coaches, Wagons, Buggies and 4 Legged Horse Power.



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like population in the U.S.A.

We had several lesser fires in the early '80's, but later along in the middle '80's a big fire occurred cleaning out all of West First Street business section and one half block North and one block South on Main Street, including the New Windsor with the bar that never closed, and the gaming tables where thousands of dollars changed hands every night, and where mines were bought and sold, and the bargain sealed by the shake of the hand. Those were the good old days when a man's word was as good as his bond, compared with today when one must give a surity bond to get a job as ditch digger, or to serve in the official capacity as dog catcher. Were they discouraged? No, reverses did not deter the rebuilding no more than when in an earlier day the crepe hangers said the town would die because Buena Vista had stolen all its glory. Even while the ashes were being cleared away the citizens decided they wanted an electric light plant, and in less than a week 50 thousand dollars had been subscribed for its construction, and Peter Mulvany said the town needed a new hotel and proceeded to build one on the corner of Second and Main. Here fate intervened and before the 4 story hotel was fully completed, another fire occurred that cleaned out East and West Second Street, one half block to the North and the same distance to the South on Main Street including Max Dickman's Opera House. Undaunted even by this second catastrophe a new hotel, the St. Clair, was soon under construction and at this same time the Arlington Hotel and half block east and west went up in smoke, and the Great Western on West Front met the same fate, and a year later the Germania and the East half of Main Street from 1st to Front burned down. Five fires in five years wiped out the entire business section of the City, except three buildings which still stand as monuments to the old Salida of the 1880's, the Salida Hotel, Club Reo, and the Old Ford Garage.

An Opera House In The Offing

In 1887 the citizens decided we were big and modern enough to support an Opera House, and the three man committee was more than successful in the drive. The Canvas of one half day is finished and the sum of 30 thousand dollars has been subscribed by civic-minded and generous citizens (couldn't raise 30 dollars now) to build the play house. Stone by stone, brick by brick the great structure has quickly taken shape and with what eagerness the whole City

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waited for its completion, and now the day of days has now arrived for the grand opening.

The old horse drawn wagon trucks have been hauling the baggage car full of props and scenery, while a private car of actors and actorines just unloaded were the cynosure of all eyes as they paraded down the old board walks. The opening of our Opera House was, to us, as great an event as the opening of the Tabor Grand Opera House was to Denver.

A Day For Youth And Not Old Age

Advance sales of reserved tickets (2 dollars a throw) were secured at Algiers Drug Store and the house was sold out long before the opening day. Ben Reeves, head usher and several assistants in full dress uniform were on the job, with Charley Gilham, stage manager, ready to raise the curtain. Now after a hectic and expectant day with no particular attention given to regular business THE TWO ORPHANS or Alone In London opened the doors, and from that day on Salida was on the regular booking circuit.

In came the elite of the City (yes, we had some of them then) men in full dress accompanied by beautiful, full busted, bustling women, dressed in yards and yards of silk, satin and ribbon with exotic perfume so intoxicating it would make a dead man sit up and take notice. The real notables occupied the 4 boxes - "no more in evidence," and high up social lights occupied rows D., E., F., G. and H., while we lesser fry filled up the balance of the parquet and dress circle. In the balcony were the pick and shovel brigade, while the gallery (nigger heaven) was taken up by the alley rats and slummers (including myself) and so the show was on.

Real Artists Like Real Men, Here No More

We gazed with delight, pride and wonder at the beautiful drop curtain, the painting - the work of a real artist depicting a natural scene on the street canals of Venice with the gondolier and the usual lovers (we had our moments too) paddling up and down the watery street, and now comes the overture, and the curtain rolls up for the first time in the Salida Opera House, and here is that new street drop with the great tall buildings showing the dreary drabness of any City street about 12 midnight, and boy, what a snow storm that was (on the stage) as the Two Orphans Cold, of course they were, and said so themselves and were huddled close to the chilly walls on a deserted London street.



AN OLD OPERA HOUSE

A thought, a vision, then a reality
 Thus a New Opera House takes form
 Miracles are but the product of mind
 Faith allows no time to wait and mourn
 Within these walls a dream was born
 In this show house ornate and grand
 Time passes, a dream still lingers on
 Held captive, it must in abeyance stand
 From stage hand to owner, an idle dream
 Behold springs to life by magic spark
 All mine, the gayety, music, bright lights
 Then movies come and scenes are dark
 In the Old Opera House, in Salida town
 A dream became a vivid, living thing
 Bro't gladness, sadness, now lights go dim
 Tragic yes, for silence no rapture bring
 Six decades pass and a dream conceived
 Came to life, truly lives and survives
 Sure 'twas real, else would not endure
 Ends only when memory and dreamer dies.

The Hermit.

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even then shivering under those ragged dresses and old worn thin paisley shawls. Well, the applause was deafening, and I wondered then and I wonder now, why with tears in the eyes and the signs of distress "so evident", how people could laugh and clap at so much suffering.

Well, the villain, dressed in Prince Albert coat, wide black sombrero with long up-curling mustachio, appears on the scene and made a proposition (or so we thought) - it must have been a surprise as one of the girls said "how dare you" ('tis common today and no surprise) but did those two half-frozen gals accept? They did not so the old villain moseyed on, hissing under his breath -Ha ha ha, we shall see my pretty maids, I will soon have ye in me power.

Males Short On Good Manners

As the curtain drops on the first act the gentlemen, conducting themselves unlike gentlemen, make a mad scramble from their seats, treading on the ladies patent leather shoes, bruising the toes contained therein, and break for the lobby to smoke a cigar, (cigarettes then taboo and called pimp sticks) or dart down the street, through the blind alley and into the rear of Jim Collins saloon, take a snort or two of booze, then back again pell mell, arriving just after the curtain raises, with the same indifference toward mashed toes, disarranged silk gowns or my ladies coiffure, as they finally locate their seats in the row. This is repeated after each act, and I wondered then and I wonder now, as I look at the average male and a jackass, if there can be any doubt as to the biggest jackass of the two.

The Show Goes On

Now along comes the bobbies (policemen to you) and even like to-day says move along and scarcely gives the orphan girls anything but a friendly look, while the society ladies draw their skirts closer as they swish by. But here comes somebody, the samaritan, a youngish sort of gent dressed like a vicar, and forthwith after being told the pitiful story, takes the gals home to his mother. Well, after so long ('twould be 30 minutes now) he falls in love with one of the angels, (most girls were angelic then) and gets married while the other orphan gets a job as schoolteacher to fill in time until another unsuspecting sap comes along, but anyway the show has a beautiful ending, and they all lived happily ever after. In close succession comes the Black Crook Burlesque where one half the modest minded ladies (God bless 'em) left the theater in disgust at the vulgar dis-

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play of female pulchritude, and even then they were dressed in black tights - mind you (not nude like to-day) while some of the more hardened sinners held back their dissapproval (or was there any) and saw the show out.

Next comes Evangeline, my heart goes pity pat even now, and boy what a show that was. I was delegated as man in waiting to one of the chorus girls and in the performance of my duties I pulled to hard on one particular fin "they dressed as mermaids" and I heard and felt a mighty rip, scared I'll say I was, but with the sweetest smile I ever saw she said, think nothing of it and honored me with the privilege of baiting her hook with fishes, while she used her charms to catch the mariner softies even as now.

Puppy Love, But it Seemed so Real

Well laugh if you will but right there with that gals grace, charm and that beautiful little curtsy, common in the old days (all out now) I fell desperately in love. Of course I had experienced a few mild love attacks from 6 years up but this was the real thing. Well those were the days of one night stands and after her departure I wrote the longest love letter (still unanswered) in my career, and if the modern women of to-day would receive such an epistle she would treasure it as a basis for a breach of promise suit and no kidding.

Now comes Uncle Tom's Cabin and my duties at the time was at the furnace, sure I had the privilege of leading the blood hounds in the parade but danged if those dogs in the basement didn't get so vicious I couldn't get up on the stage to see the show, and as far as I knew Eliza never did get across the ice.

Yes those were the happy days and I pine at their passing, here in the parquet we would move the seats to one side for those grand old dances featuring the Polka schottische, waltz, minuet and virginia reel, under a profusive variagated color of tissue and tinsel decoration extending from the stage and across from rail to rail of the balcony, and here the floor manager "a person of great distinction and importance in the good old days" (of good manners) must introduce one to the ladies (or else no dance).

A Change in the Breed

Oh to go back to those good old days when men were men (or were they) and women were ladies (and they

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were) next to the angels (some unbelievers thought they came before) those angelic creatures that once said that lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine, in any event whether you did or didn't, you'd better have a marriage license in your pocket before you tried. My, what a contrast with to-day when females are so saturated and stupified with booze and tobacco (lips painted with cochineal bug juice), they wouldn't realize they had been kissed or not, and as for the effect, a smack direct from a beer bottle would be more thrilling and not half so messy.

And so time passes on, we move from the drama to the musical comedy, from comedy to opera, grand opera and the movies and later the talkies, but it is of dreams I would speak, a dream I had that night 60 years ago that one day I would own that show, and it really took me 25 years to make that dream come true, proving that all things come to those that wait and work, and because of my sympathy for those Two Orphans I vowed then and there that never would I allow such a cruel thing to happen again, and hence forth I would save any future orphans (if they were past 16) from such a fate, but of course now, that I have become more worldly, I might take a second look at their faces at that, but as to the Black Crook leg show 'twas the first time I ever saw a woman's legs or knew that they had any, and I was just as dumbfounded as the rest of the males, for up to that time women were supposed to possess some of those supernatural angelic qualities, and no gentleman ever spoke of feminine legs except in soft whisper, and never dared think of seeing them until after marriage.

Back to the City Proper

Another progressive group now wants to build a street car line to Poncha Springs and if the advent of the auto had been deferred a few years we would have done that too. Well one could go on and on and still be skimming the surface of what happened in the first 20 years of Salida's history, but with the exception of the panicky years of the late 1890's the City enjoyed a steady growth, yet never had what you might consider a real boom. It seems strange with millions in metal ores within a few miles of us, we should go within a smelter and it was not until the early 1900's we did build The Ohio and Colorado Smelter which was one of our biggest assets and would be yet if Congress had not seen fit to juggle with our monetary economy, and stranger still that our City enjoys the distinction of

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having billions of gold right under our feet and not an ounce to sell, just another case of the ocean with water all around and not a drop to drink. Why not just consider it sterilized or earmarked, then issue paper certificates (flat money I calls it) backed by gold mind you, yet not payable in gold at the moment. Why not? then at some future date if the people wake up and decide they want real honest to God money again, they could just divert the waters of the two Arkansas rivers and go to digging.

Depression Dampens the Spirit

'Twas sad years for Salida, as well as the rest of the Nation in the latter part of the 1890's, most business houses were empty and those still occupied, the rent pictured was reversed, and the owner paid the merchant to stay there. The Chaffee County Bank failed as did other banks throughout the country. Yep, those days tried men's souls and simplicity was the practice, or starvation the result. About this time comes on the scene Dr. Frank Cochems as surgeon to the Rio Grande Hospital and later to build a 60 room hospital of his own. He was to my way of thinking the greatest man we had in the valley. His surgical skill was Nation wide and through he and his hospital, Salida derived worlds of benefit. His first location, office and operating room was in the building "Now Sherman Hotel", the quarters being too small he proposed I build him a new 20 room location, leaving the details to his head nurse. We began construction, while the Dr. took a trip to Europe for further study. As we reached the first story the Dr. wired to add another 20 rooms, and on his return decided to add another 20 rooms 60 in all. Here then was THE RED CROSS hospital that was to be one of Salida's greatest assets. Here Cochems and Schaffer served the public for 40 years, giving much more value than money received for it. Salida is again in the blue days of the 1930's, property at a standstill and the Dr. to close his holdings "including home" sells for the insignificant sum of 10 thousand dollars. Yes the buildings are still here, the City, County and present owners profited much, and the replacement value would be 100 thousand dollars to-day. So the City owes to the Dr. a tribute and I doubt if ever again one with his ability will settle in our community.

And the Band Played On and On

No story of Salida would be in complete without a tribute to the Scenic Line Band, and as they marched up

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and down our streets business stopped inside the stores right now, and enthusiasm was pepped up anew, and this band was the pride of our City and State, adding a colorful lustre to Salida's popularity and prosperity. Here I pay tribute to the officials of The Denver and Rio Grande, the sponsors and generous supporters, to the individual members, many that have passed over the Divide and tender a vote of appreciation to Kramer, Manful, Garrets and the other few surviving members now with us.

Many Leaders and Few Followers

There is this to be said of our early settlers, they had what it takes to build empires and some of the brainiest and most cultured people in the U. S. A. were residents and guests in our City, even to one Rudyard Kipling "the poet", and many of the settings for his greatest poems were taken from Salida's background and people. To dwell a minute on our mode of transportation, the old Stage Coach, the ox, mule, horse teams and freight wagons, and when the advent of a new delivery wagon was the talk of the town for weeks, then later came the bright painted and striped transfer wagon and the St Clair bus, any visitor would spend one night at the hotel just for a ride in the gilded coach, and we finally boasted of two cabs that endured until the advent of the automobile.

Still Living Close to Nature

The road and stock company shows come and go, and the dances, formal and public are held in the Opera House, Salida still in that day when women were endowed with constancy, modesty, mystery, gracious manners and alluriveness, still in that day when the natural and delicate odors permeated the atmosphere, and if one happened to be sitting in the balcony of that old show house he would soon succumb to the influence of that seductive smell. That day when lips were still natural tinted, unpainted and untainted by the promiscuous kisses from every Tom, Dick and Harry, Still in that day of long rustling silk and satin dresses, stuffed bustles and padded (if need be) busts, silk stockings, and lucky the guy to pick up now and then an odd gold and silver buckled garter as a keepsake from the dance hall floor.

A Hermit in the Making

And here was in the making "a hermit", why must one fall in love, wait for some particular girl when the woods are full of others. Why grieve over one certain

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female's smiles or kisses, when there are so many minxes to be had just for the asking, but I rebelled because of the lady's dis-inclination to say yes quick enough, and leave civilization its bright lights and lures, go far back into the hills in hopes "and expecting" the light of my eyes might cry her pretty little eyes out because of my absence, even pine away to a shadow from grief and suffer torments and remorse. A vengeful spirit 'tis true, but yet expecting to find the pot of gold, return and lay it at her feet, and beg for forgiveness. That's the way it was planned, but not the way it turned out, for after two years in the wilderness and returning to civilization he found the sweet young thing "the girl of his inspiration" had done married the other fellow in just 4 months from his departure. But women are ever an inspiration to men and under that spell, never did one man accomplish so much work to reach a glory spot that wasn't there.

While awaiting the mating call that never came, the man in the solitude, built great dreams on the gal that evidently never shed a tear after his departure, so I say 'tis women that make hermits, kings, saints, misers, sinners and bums out of all of us, so back again to the hills for more hermiting until another fair charmer comes along.

Dreams of To-day, Realities of To-morrow

I had not forgotten my resolutions and with much time to recover from a shattered heart I came back and behold a City that was to adopt a creed of cleanliness next to Godliness, but I am led to believe later on that cleanliness actually superceded Godliness if I am any judge of human relations, and if this be true then I have built a Frankenstein that could be the City's undoing.

A new sewer line makes the privies a thing of the past, a tub in every home, a lavatory too, a toilet in every house, these things I promised and with this end in view I constructed 250 modern houses in the City with porcelain tubs, hot water and accessories, and right away people turn to cleanliness from decades of dirtiness that puts us all on our way to eutopia "so I thought". Yes we now have a people medicated, fumigated, sanitized, with dirt eradicated, so now every person that passes down the streets carries the aroma of the scented oils, soaps and perfumes of the barber shop, beauty parlor and drug store on their persons. For this transformation I think Salida owes me a tribute for making the people the cleanest "even tho they may become the

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ungodliest in the Nation.

The Spectre of Panic in the Offing

During the early 1900's the City prospers in a big way, the smelter and the suburban town of Kortz adds impetus to the already growth, but now the 1907's are here and far in the East we hear the rumblings of panic, and the dark clouds of financial disturbance dampens the spirit of the venturesome, the depression soon extending to our own locality.

The runs on the banks became serious enough to stop payment in cash and substituting cashiers checks "in a great degree" as a medium of exchange. A hurried transfer of 200 thousand dollars from corresponding Denver banks mitigated the crisis and really saved the day by allaying the fears of the public. As an employer the problem was to keep going and find therewith the funds to meet the pay day. As cash was out of the question merchants were stymied in their collections thus curtailing their ability in extending credit, tho gladly accepting cashiers checks when presented.

Empty Bellys And Cupboards Bare

A medium of exchange "that was the problem" and suiting actions for words I had printed thousands of 5ct to 100ct script (Gimletts money) in coupon books of 5-10 and 20 dollar denominations. With this new money we paid our labor and bills at end of each week and would accept from merchants their script taken in payment for goods at 95 cts cash on each dollar of script tendered. This scheme was possible and workable by borrowing money on real estate, the money available from safety boxes, tin cans and secret hordes, the success due only to the lack of faith in banks and great faith in real estate. At this time with a monopoly on ice (and remembering that our 20 saloons could not run without ice) and money, and strange tho it sound, the Banker himself if he would have ice and many other essentials, could buy it only with Gimlett money. While the panic was to be of short duration it did have a slow down effect on business and building activity, and yet in spite of 100 thousand dollars additional assumed obligations there were few foreclosures, tho U. S. Bonds were to be selling at 85cts and cashiers checks did sell at 85cts on the black market and all to be and was redeemed at 100cts on the dollar later on.

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Time Marches On

So I found things had gone modern in the theatre also, yet I had promised to make some changes and along with these reforms came an attempt to uplift the moral atmosphere of the stage, that ends when I find myself lowered to the cellar. I call to mind as we passed from road show to silent picture and vaudeville, an esthetic dancer heads the bill and even tho she was fully garbed in the seven veils, the orchestra (with woman leader) went on strike, not because of low wages but as she said "low morals, thus closing the show, cancelling the act, and I never did find out if the performer was to remove any or all the veils, but now the bubble, fan, or strip tease dance would make of that act a full dress affair. Times were tough in the theatre business at that time, in preparation for the coming panic and we had just gone through the 1907 one, but lo "and a life saver" came into fashion the Split skirt, I was not responsible for the innovation but through me the public was to see for the first time a womans shapely (or otherwise) leg via the split skirt and for this modern male perverts owe me a tribute and spiritual modesty minded people should frown on me for hiring two of our towns pretty girls, garbed in this new creation to parade up and down the street and into the theatre followed by the whole populace. Well this phenomena did fill the house for 4 nights, modesty was still in vogue and stockings hid bare legs, but theatres like newspapers must live on sensations, and this was the latest one out, well time marches on, the theatre modernized, the Two Orphans forgotten, the players reformed "or were they", the talkies came into vogue, the auto rolls into town and the Rio Grande begins to reduce the 14 passenger trains to but two a day. Now the devil takes hold and from here on the Hermit opines the exodus toward hell will be much swifter than the rise of the City from the prairie to its prominence and the march from serfdom to freedom will be reversed, and the land of silver clouds and golden tinted sky's will fade away forever.

A Medley of Incidents on the Trail

The smelter has come and gone, no more will the silvery fumes waft over the City and no more will the Lead, Zinc, Copper, Gold and Silver bullion roll on to the East. The road show and the drama are no more, opera and musical comedy forgotten so far as the small town is con-

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cerned, it has been many moons since Primrose and West danced on the old Opera House stage floor and many years has passed since May Robson, Anna Held, Maude Adams, Billy Burke, Lillian Russell and Langtry, the Barrymores and all other notable stars took a bow behind those foot-lights.

Everything is on the change, some of the original seats occupy that part of the old balcony still standing, these and the old fly gallery back stage and a few drops and wings the only interior reminders of the good old days. The exterior structure is just as it was 60 years ago, and while the interior has gone through many alterations due to fire and modern demands and the front has been modernized to meet the needs of a movie crazed world.

Today the massive brick work and trustled roof of the SALIDA OPERA HOUSE still stands and marks the initiative and confidence of a people afflicted with a 100% supply of civic pride and faith enough in a community to take a chance, and I doubt if any of the original investors ever realized one dime directly from the enterprise, but indirectly I know the results were profitable to the City and County and no better monument could have been erected to the builder's memory. Men were men of vision those days and the loss of a thousand dollars mattered not a damn, while to-day the loss of a dime in worth-while effort causes much wailing, and would result in a nervous breakdown.

Wheels of Progress Spin Again

The world war 1 has come and gone, the small deflation panic of 1921 left many more victims in its wake. The fire of 1925 wipes out in one night the 30 years gain in business in my industries. A new era of prosperity is rising in the East, venture money becomes cheap and plenty for the gamblers who play in margins on the stock exchange. The inflated bubble bursts again in the 1929's and again we come down to earth with a thud, and while badly bent (not entirely broke) I was again called on to issue a new Gimlett money (script) to keep the wheels of progress going and to provide a 1 dollar per day wage and buying power (equal to 5 dollars now) for any who cared to work rather than starve. The banks tho badly hurt themselves gladly co-operated in the matter and would cash the script when the 20-5ct stamps were attached, and would pay in full regardless in 90 days. So again Gimletts

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money saved the day, and in a day when the people had not too much confidence in banks or real estate. Great tribute is due to the merchant and professional men who supported the movement, it did build bridges and roads, and did fill many hungry bellies until the W. P. A. finally took over.

A Little Train Great Empires Built

The City and Railroad go arm in arm, so when fate (later to be called folly) decrees that our little old Denver and Rio Grande railroad train once numbered 7 and 8 and now 315 and 316 (60 years old thereabout) is to be taken from the rails there is much consternation and grief. The train once a great man's dream, that later became a reality is now and forever after to be but a memory "or is it."

The narrow ribbons of steel over which it rolled, has become in fact a sanctified trail, and should be revered as such. Many curves, cuts, grades and fills are hallowed spots, for it was at these danger points, many of those engine pilots died in the line of duty as they safely steered that little train filled with human cargo to its destination. Yes, each of these martyrs in the dreams of life felt like the bereaved actor in the play, who said the show must go on, and so in spite of many vicissitudes in the way of snow, washouts, wrecks and slides, that train, the trail maker through the gold and silver West has gone on and on, every day 365 days in a year, and for 60 long and glorious years.

Things are Born Little but Soon Mature

And so we progressed and prospered as the results of one man's dream. First we laid out the grade and thereon placed a pair of shiny ribbons of steel, and over these guiding rails rolled this first beautiful, newly painted, gold lettered and silver trimmed little train. First this fast express speeding along at 15 miles per hour, ran from Denver to Pueblo, then fought its way through the Gorge and reached Salida, later they blast the way over the Continental Divide and arrive at Gunnison and in 1882 we find the terminus at Grand Junction.

But in a few years the order is reversed, the standard guage has reached Grand Junction, then the guage is widened up the valley to Montrose, by now the little train ceases operation between Denver and Salida, and now runs from Salida to Ouray. Again the Gods (or fool men) intervene and the terminus ends at Montrose, and later and for the last time the rumble of iron wheels beside the banks of

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the Mighty Gunnison River, and the echo of the whistle are heard no more as the train rolls between the narrow perpendicular walls of the Black Canon, where we got one final glimpse of the famous Curracanti Needle. The terminal from now on will be Gunnison but it is soon decreed that on another day (Nov. 24, 1939) the toll of the bell at the stations, the shrill scream of the whistle and flying sparks from the brakes will never be heard or seen again rolling up and down the valleys of the Tomichi and Arkansas. Yes in the parlance of the old Seardough, she like himself is making her last trip over the Great Divide.

I Love My Wife, But Oh! You Beautiful Engine

Yes. "Isn't she a beauty", says old Tom Ryan, as he patted the shiny cab of engine No. 12 that first pulled this train, "Isn't she a honey", says Ed Malloy, as he wipes the dust from the gold letters of No. 36. "Isn't she a wonder", says George Mosely as he oils the piston rods on the new 61. "Isn't she a Lu Lu", says Stan Alger, as he screws up the old hand power brake on the new rockaway No. 150. "Isn't she a whizzer", says Jack McIvor, of the streamlined 168, as he polished the glass of the new oil headlight. "Isn't she a pippin", says George Crater, of the 172, as he rubbed his hand gently over the shiny number plate. "Isn't she a high roller and speedy," says Billy Yates of the 177. "Yes, but I'll take mine with a little more power and a little less polish," says Jim Reilly of the 236, as he helps the weak kneed shees (168, 172 and 177's) up the hill, and "here is the baby that takes you there and brings you back," says John Ruland, as he listens to the pulsating pump on the new 273. "Isn't she a peach," says Sam Roney as he fondly strokes the 421 on its vibrating chest, and "if its perfection you want, here she is," says George Montgomery as he pulls the throttle of the 422. "Isn't she a dandy," says Tom Saunders of the old mud hen 452 even if she is a little wide on the waist line, "but here is the humdinger of them all", says Frank Fitzsimmons of the 492, as he plows through the snow bank for the last time pulling the ill fated train. Yes, deride these little trains if you will by calling them the galloping goose and the jack rabbit special, that once rambled over the "so called" turkey trails, but they were the real empire builders and every one of these she-engines were beauties (and still are) as they piloted travellers in safety up and down, and over those mountain trails, and "believe it or not", those pioneers that she carried were the real builders

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of the Gold and Silver West.

The She's Dominate in Everything

Yes, in a way, I am envious, and I'm peeved. Just why should all of the beautiful and wonderful things (both human and material) be called a "she", why in heck can't some of the just ordinary things at least be called a "he". Yes at the moment I'm sad and lonely, and you see I feel dejected and blue as the 316 whistles in for the last time on the night of the 24th. The engine bell will indeed toll the death knell of an old, a faithful and ever to be, remembered friend and servant. Never again (as I reminisce) can I sit beside the railroad track in the blaze of a warm campfire (a signal to the engineer as well) (and dead tired after a hard days' fishing, hunting or prospecting) and know that in spite of hell and high water, if I will be patient, that little old train will finally stop, pick me up, take me home. Yes, many gloomy days have come amongst us, but the passing of this old faithful friend will be the saddest of all.

Reminiscing on the Past

Again fancy takes me back to the day in the winter of 1885 as we left Salida and headed for Marshall Pass to the West. A trainful of happy, hopeful people, full of initiative and incentive (un-afflicted with this prevalent spirit of inertia so evident to-day). All too soon we began plowing through a blinding snow storm that was getting more severe as we pass Greys Siding, and finally, after bucking into snowdrifts and backing out again several times, we came to a sudden stop in the deep snow filled cut at Pocono. "all hands out" sang the conductor, and soon the stuffed shirts, common men, section men, train crew, miners and prospectors, (yes including that gal Samantha the inspiration) with shovels were shoveling like mad, and within a couple of hours we cleared the track and with a shout "of all aboard" by the conductor, we with a lot of huffing and puffing by the engine, finally reached Marshal Pass with our little train. We pulled out of the shed after a short stop, and who would have thought we could get stuck going down hill, but at a point half way between the Pass and Shewano we felt a shock go through the train, then a sudden stop as she struck a snow bank that entirely engulfed the engine, so there we were with night already on and it was hopeless to expect relief from any source.

Salida a Heaven, so Near and yet so Far

The wind was blowing a gale and we realized we were

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right in the middle of a real blizzard. No going ahead and no going back, and as the time wore on, we soon consumed the news butchers wares, "but what were we to do from there"? But now comes a providing angel in the shape of a baggage man who brings tidings of great joy for within his car could be found bacon, eggs, butter, oranges, but alas no bread, for as you know (or should) in the good old days those young and old wives baked their own bread, now a lost art to the modern, can opening, streamlined, cigarette puffing imitation of womanhood, but again luck came our way in discovering several boxes of crackers. An old prospector had a plentiful supply of tobacco and whisky (for emergencies), but of coffee we could not find a smell, so we were forced to slake our thirst with snow water.

We Thought of Tortoni's and Monte Christo

But did we grieve? We did not and were plenty comfortable as we took turns occupying the bunks in the sleeper. So passed the 1st day and in came the 2nd, and with it a little new born baby, nothing to get excited about, but was there a doctor on the train, there was not, and it mattered not a whit for those old time women were all trained in the art of midwifery and a baby more or less was of no moment. Yes those were the happy days, any married couple could afford a baby, no preparation, no layettes, no mortgaging the future to pay the doctor, nurses and hospital bills. A sad event occurred on the afternoon of the third day when old Cy Beeler, an old prospector from Whitepine just dropped off in a final sleep with a smile on that storm scarred, whiskered face, fixed there no doubt by that same old persistent dream that the glory spot of the vein, filled with gold and silver was but another foot ahead.

Time Drags on but Hope Still Survives

Three days have now passed and the tender of the engine has been emptied of coal and the water drained from the engine itself, but lo and behold, on the 4th day came the whistle of the work train with snow plow and old Tige Ridgeway and his shovellers. Everybody (including the train crew) were soon out with a shovel and a few hours later were rolling down the Pacific side, stopping at Sargent to unload poor old Cy, and from there he would be loaded in an ore sled for the graveyard at Whitepine, where the miners were hurriedly blasting out a grave, and there in a rough board box gently lay away this soldier of

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chance (the salt of the earth) dreams and all. Yes there was a tear dropped from many passengers eyes, as we left the station but the event made us realize we were free, free to be born, free to die without the necessity of leaving behind us a nest egg of a thousand dollars to pay the doctor, the lawyer, the undertaker, the monument maker, including upkeep in a green grave cemetery.

After a short two hours of travel, our train arrived at Gunnison, all feeling a little tired but none the worse for wear, and there is this to be said, and many good things left unsaid about the railroads, they never charged the passengers a dime for eats and beds, and I doubt if the busses (now to be the executioners of this little train) will ever be able to say that much.

So in the passing I can blame many forces responsible for its demise, Greed and indifference, and a world of people that are willing to live on the past and the future, but not content with the meager production of the present. Yes this little old train dies because the present, would and does ride in automobiles at the expense of robbing the past of its savings, and hypothecating the future of its inheritance. Yes, we laugh while the mortgage grows, that will in turn wreck the mortgages themselves. So I look through the dimly lighted windows of that little train for the last time it will appear as a spectre gliding through the night. The empty seats will remind one of crypts, in which have reposed at times the bodies of the great and noble. Yes, it is but a phantom of the past and now like its millions of passengers gone before, is headed for the graveyard of forgotten things.

The Hermit Revisiting Old Habitations

The Movie gets out of its swaddling clothes and the urge to attend the modern talkie movie bids the Hermit to sit in sanctified ground. Yes I'd heard tell of these up to date movie picture places that showed to-date what happened a thousand years ago, and now after selling some skunk pelts for three dollars and sixty cents I just made up my mind to be kinda reckless and see one of them there shows. Well I had to get in line and wait my turn at the window and I noticed every once in a while some varmit would hand some one ahead of me some small change and phony tokens and say "two for me", Well, I didn't say anything, but I just thought of what would have happened to those chisellers in the good old days. I noticed at the window after

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I had arrived there a sign that said "bargain day" matinee and 12 pair of silk stockings and other knick knacks given away free. Well that stumped me, what would I do with ladies hose?, and then I just remembered in the good old days our mothers always cut sisters stockings down to fit the younger boys, and I could do likewise even in this day. Well, when I got to the door a feller took my ticket and tore it in half, handed me half and put the other half in a basket, and then I noticed he did the same thing with a lady but put her other half in a glass jar. Well, after trapping skunks for 50 years there is two things you learn and that is to be both cautious and observing. Says I, "What's the idea," and says he, "That's to be a great surprise." Well, that didn't satisfy me, but I let it go and went on inside the show. Here I met what I first thought was two boys dressed in variagated colors of pants and waists. Well, they were mighty polite and soon as I smelled that drug store perfume I knew they were girls, just dressed in masquerade clothes and called usherettes, and were to show you a seat in that pitch dark hall. I was taught to always beware of anything pulled off in the dark, and there was a lot of racket going on back of the stage, sounded like a South Sea island cannibal band playing the missionary's funeral march, but I learned it was called the modern music of the day.

Harmony, Melody And Poetry Forgotten

While I was waiting for a little harmony like Sweet Adeline or the Swanee River (which never came), they were showing what they called preludes, or what was to happen a thousand years in the future. Well, pretty soon here comes Wallace Beery, you know I always liked that guy by what I had read of him, and for his part in the pictures that reminded me so much of my friends of the good old days. Well, I got so interested in the plot which was about a boy and girl, and this scamp of a boy leaves her flat and in plenty of difficulty, and some kind hearted old geezer (like me 30 years ago) says "honey, I love you and I'll marry you right this minute" (which he did) and says, "Now you can name the baby after me" (which they did). Well, everything went on smooth for about a year and a half, and who should come back (you guessed it) but that scallawag, and says to the girl, "I want my baby right now." Well, that guy Berry - supposed to be the father of this upstarts baby - says, "son, get the 'ell out of here - you are in somebody elses corral." Well, you know in the good old days

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nobody said anything but just started shooting, and the girl never had but one to choose from "if any". At this point I really got excited and wondered if this Maurine Sullivan "they called her" would do the right thing by the old geezer that had saved her reputation, and by gum she did just that, by giving the young squirt his sailing papers, and they lived happily ever after "so the picture said". Well, just before the picture ended a lady sitting next to me began a frantic search through a valise - purse she called it - and in the struggle she turned the thing upside down or bottom side up, and I thought for a minute the house was tumbling down. Right now I will offer a reward to anyone that will patent a woman's pocket and get her to use it. This daily search through 40 million hand bags or purses containing one billion articles is costing our Nation thousands of years time and holding back progress 500 years. Well, there was one law in the good old days that we obeyed to the letter, and that was, ladies come first and always, and to extend courtesy and chivalry to any lady in distress was mans' first thought. Well, down on my knees I went to salvage what I thought was a thousand pieces of bric a brac, when in reality it was only 59, consisting of card cases, combs, prophylactic kit, pins of all kinds and descriptions, powder, several kinds of tube paints, hair curlers, money (mostly tokens), handkerchiefs, bathing suit, raincoat, cigarettes, lighter, matches and other articles too numerous to mention including what proved to be 5 show tickets a week old. Well, I started all right feeling here and there (pitch dark mind you) in what at times seemed to be an enchanted land of silks, satins and patent leathers. Of course reaching hither and yon I encountered and might have slightly touched an ankle, but you know I had sense enough to know they never came out of a hand bag, and I always withdrew my hand right quick, but never quick enough.

Hell Hath No Fury Like Woman?

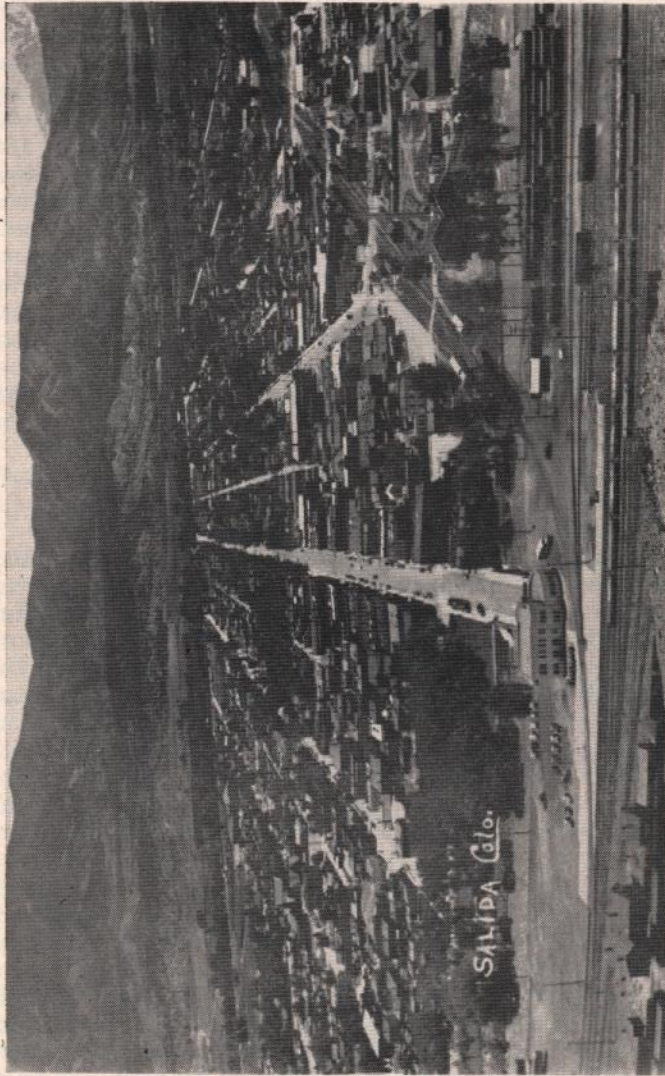
Well, don't ever talk to me about female manners again. Why, when I finally got on my feet 6 rows ahead, my fingers were mashed, face scratched, nose skinned, and I remembered several kicks from sharp pointed shoes, and to top the climax, when the drawing came off, my lady (?) friend remarked that she knew she had the winning ticket, and if I had been more cautious and observing I could have found it. Well, I muttered something about a hussy, and she says,

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"what's that?" "I was just thinking," says I and says she, "all right, but not about me". Well I was holding up my ticket and a gentleman next to me says, "boy, that's useless, that ticket's got a dead end." Well, that was a great surprise just like the doorman says. Well, Wheeler and Woolsey couldn't get a laugh out of me after that, but I resolved then and there to be twice as cautious and observing, and never again to give up a seat or doff a hat to a lady, or show any respect whatsoever to these modern, ill-mannered dames. Now I'm going back to the hills again, trap some more skunks, get some more money and go to that picture show again. Darned if that wasn't a lot of amusement for 20 cents, or at least it would have been except for what happened. I suggest to the manager that he feminize the ush-erettes, dress them in cute long skirts, patent leather booties and jaunty caps, just a faint reminder of the good old days, and at that, they were cute little tricks, and I wish I might have one for a watch charm, but for a wife "phooey". I remember the 40 inch busts the old girls used to wear, that's the girls for me.

'Tis Ever, No, Never, The Same

I'm climbing again old Tenderfoot Hill, over the very same trail I traveled 67 years ago, about half way to the top I set me down to rest and in reverie, see a panorama of time rolling by that reveals the changing scenes that have taken place. Nothing is the same, the cars, the engines, even the rails of the Rio Grande are different, the old log bridge, the trestle bridge are gone, but now a cement bridge spans the river, even the streets once of dirt are now paved with asphalt, the old oil street lamps replaced by electric. The board walks are gone, and cement takes its place. not even a sign of the old buildings that once graced the street are visible, a few bricks of the old town are there, but the identity hidden by the new face-lifting front. The faces have changed, customs are new and morals have declined, so I think. 'Tis strange I never objected to the mythical pictures of the mermaids in the nude who had nothing to cover, but I deplore the feminine human following the same practice, when she does have so many things to hide (defects and all). The Salida Opera House - its name is no more, even The Empress Theatre, "named by me", has been replaced by the Salida Theatre. Manners, habits, amusements and personalities have all changed leaving my town, people and everything "that was" entirely out of the pic-



Salida, 70 years in the making. The Heart of the Rockies and Gateway to the Gold & Silver West... A dream fulfilled, a City beautiful, medicated, fumigated, dirt eradicated and the cleanest in the Nation.

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ture.

The Passing Of A Shrine

The demolition of the old stone depot, the birth place of Kipling's romance, the last marker of the past, brings gloom to those who value things worth while, and the new steel railroad bridge across the Arkansas tho strong, carries no sentimental value, so in turning back memories pages 67 years, and in fancy, treading over Salida's old board walks, I feel again the smell and breathe the wholesome, healthy scent of the sweating horses and mules, as they lumber up and down the busy street and the very air is perfumed with animated life, and not contaminated by the obnoxious odor of burnt oil, exploding gas, and monoxide fumes as it is to-day. I call to mind my friends of old and pay to them a worthy tribute individually and collectively. Those men of vision and faith, those soldiers of chance that built our streets, sidewalks, homes and business houses we now occupy, and never forget it was done by the labor of their own hands, the sweat from their own brow, and the money from their own savings, and not from borrowing from the babe in the cradle and posterity of to-morrow.

Sentiment Wields The Pen

Now passing down the street in the days of long ago I meet Smith, Disman, Droney, Hampson, Francis, Mulvany, Hay, McCullough, Jewel, Plimpton, Spray, Crutcher, Preston, Woody, Hollenbeck, Craig, DeWeese, Stead, Jones, Wheeler, Gill, Bateman, Hutchison, Alger, McGovern, Bowen, Haight, Churcher, Rogers, Lippard, Sullivan, Collins, Webb, Corbin, Bettis, Gimlett, Unger, Roller, Harbottle, Grodal, Miller, Hively, McClure, Cochems, Schaffer, Wenz, Davenport, Arenburg, Randol, Phelan, Sneddon, Hanks, Brooks, Emerson, Heaton, Briggs, Farrell, Abbott, Sandusky, Shonyo, Robinson, Jackson, Brown, Williams, Ankele, Anderson, Alexander, I can count the remaining builders of Salida still alive on the fingers of two hands, and for those not mentioned and many forgotten I pay everlasting tribute, for they too have passed over the great divide. Perhaps their headstones may be small and their graves neglected, and maybe the busy world has forgotten their last resting place, but a more lasting monument to all those old timers can be found in tunnels and shafts on our mighty mountain peaks. Tho you will not find their name or inscription engraved on the tunnel walls of stone that they have dedicated to posterity, but their deeds are recorded

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in the great book of achievement, that now rests in the archives of the County Court House.

A Nation Gone Wild On Unproductive Sports

Let the past bury its dead, so say we all, and let the present also bury those that are dead from the neck up, and we pray heaven that a posterity will again be born with vision, faith and initiative, and that they may see and appreciate the wealth and beauty that surrounds us. Our present generation, so blind they cannot see gold at their feet, seemingly so dumb that opportunity can pass by without recognition and so deaf to the needs of home enterprise that they could not hear the toot of Gabriel's horn, and it would be a blessing if they did fail to hear, for if they ever entered the pearly gates of heaven, they would want to extract the gold from the streets, the silver trimmings from the chariots and send it to Wall Street or some other foreign port to insure the little wife (temporary at best) or widow, peace and comfort in her old age, and they did just this, as Salida is noted for its many rich widows "and all so useless", when their good judgement should tell them, there is another, better and more sensible man just around the corner ready and willing to take her in charge, feed her, dress her while she is alive, and not fill her with a lot of hooey on what a nice time she will have on insurance, after you or she will be dead.

Well, if God Almighty would place the present generation in the garden of Eden they would send away for their apples, cut down the cherry trees, cover their women's nakedness with one little bitty fig leaf, cover the garden with public buildings (Sports Arenas), memorials, stadiums, race tracks, gynasiums, swimming pools and paved streets under the guise of social progress, favoring any project with money borrowed on the yet unborn babe. They would have dollars to buy golf clubs, chase the little ball around the course, money for airplanes, toys, but can spare nothing for some old sourdough for bacon and beans "oh no", they have dollars for sweepstake tickets, lottery chances and slot machine, with but one chance in 100 thousand, but nothing to grub stake a miner on a possible gold mine, oh no," they have millions for Wall Street to gamble on and flitter away, but nothing for productive home development "oh no", as extracters, detractors and subtracters from the wealth of the soil they are past masters, but as builders of sound enterprise they are nil. Perhaps I have mis-

SALIDA IN THE MAKING
A CITY UNDERLAID WITH GOLD

judged them, but when I look around me within a distance of 50 miles from our City see nothing but devastation and solitude in a land of opportunity, and not a human being in sight, something must be awry, for evidence will prove I am right and the present generation dead from the neck up, so far as sound economy is concerned.

And so we build through faith while others tear down through lack of it. Yesterday we dreamed and made that dream come true, those constructive dreamers themselves now forgotten by an unappreciative world. If I were judge and jury in the court of life to try those gamblers that bucked nature's game of chance, I would decree now that their work is done and has created all these things we enjoy, I would say, well done, my good and faithful servant, to you we pay great tribute, all that we are and expect to be we credit to you, and your reward at the end of a lifetime of constructive work, win, lose or draw, is a guarantee of security from want, worry and strife, so long as you live, so say we the benefactors.

Just To Go Back Once Again

I want to go over the trails of 1880
And travel Salida's dusty streets
Down the old board walks of yesterday
With its rattle, clatter and creaks.

Just to hear again, the crack of driver's whips
As the weary yoke of oxen pull into town
With an old battered prairie schooner
Loaded with pioneers, a new home to found.

I want to see the six span of mules
Sweating and tired, and ready to drop
With the freight wagon and trailer behind
After the long hard days grind.

I want to see again the old Concord coach
With the six horses galloping by
Filled with passengers Leadville bound
Their luck in a new world to try.

I want to step inside the old Grand Hotel
That we thought so big and grand
And hear the miners talk of millions
Where the Casino Cafe now stands.

JUST TO GO BACK ONCE AGAIN

A few steps further, the Arbor dance hall
Filled with angles so they used to say
Where music, wine and dancing
Made merry the 24 hours every day.

I want to see the train of jackasses
Loaded with supplies at Pete Mulvany's store
In the very same spot that now harbors
Angelos Spinos wood yard and store.

I'd like to see the old calaboose
Where Baxter Stingly, chief of police, was host
Peek through the bars and see bold, bad men
Now too meek, tame and docile to boast.

I want to see the old whiskered prospector
At the Webb-Corbin and Geo. Sullivan store
Loading his donkey with grub and dynamite
New worlds to see, conquer and explore.

I'd like to pass by the old Arlington hotel
Where the Star Cafe (now Rio Grande) stands
And walk over the crude old log bridge
To meet the first train on the Rio Grande.

I want to climb aboard engine number 9
With my friend, old Bill Shaw, the engineer
And burn up the rails at 10 miles an hour
With never a thought of danger and fear.

Troupe Reeves and Jack Brown were conductors
On the fast express to booming Maysville
What if the coaches were close and stuffy
Everybody then had a mission in life to fill.

I'd follow the crowd on the special picnic train
To that noisy and fast building Maysville town
To see the first circus in South Arkansas valley
With its tigers, elephants, lions and clowns.

I want to stand on the station platform
As the 6 and 8 car coal train pulls in
Piloted by old 16's and 18's, straight air brakes
Lighted by kerosene headlights, faint and dim.

I want to see Salida again, when it was day time
All the time and there was no night before
Cy Warman knew this thirteen years before
Creede even on the map did appear.

Of course I'll miss the old railroad
The autos, airplanes, radios and bathtubs, too
But if these are the cause of all our troubles
Then back to old log cabin where happiness grew.

It's not because I'm abused and unhappy
That I want to go back to the yesterday
I only want to regain my old freedom
That the to-days have taken away.

To associate with honest to God people
That believed in the new world we were making
With supreme confidence in resources and future
That lived and died with their faith unshaken.

The Hermit

The Futility of Loving Vagarious Women or Price of Virtue too High



Woman, perverse creature that she is, with the gentleness, sympathy and affection of a kitten at times, and with the cruelty, jealousy and envy of a virago when circumvented. Modern woman's love and kisses are attained for a price, and that price is expensive gifts, in lieu of heavy chains of submission, once borne by the majority of women in the days, when man decreed, and woman acceded, as evidenced in my adventure and courtship of little Mary Lee "the gal from Tennessee".

The story began on a summer day in August of the early '80's, one of those hot, dry sultry days when man would rather relax than labor, thus I was sitting astride my jack-ass in the shade of a full leafed aspen tree, just beside the old one-way stage road, as the old prairie schooner, powered by two lop eared skinny mules passed me by, and crept on its way up the narrow canyon alongside the banks of the South Arkansas river reaching toward the Continental Divide.

The ragged and much patched wagon cover gave evidence of hard times and poverty, while the wagon itself was slated for a short life, as the loosened tires and spokes in fellow and hub creaked, groaned and squeaked with every turn of the wheel.

After numerous stops for rest, the travellers, Pa, Ma, a lad of about 4, a scrawney little gal of perhaps 10, and a young miss, well developed, "near 16, I would say", climb from under the wagon sheet, tied mules to hitching post, and were meandering up the main street of Maysville City. They stopped in front, then entered the general store and with much bickering over prices rather than quality, the man subtracts from a much worn leather pouch, a few coins in payment for a small hunk of sowbelly, a few pounds of beans, 25 pound sack of flour and the usual plug of chawing tobacco, the main stay of Southern manhood.

Loading family and provisions in the wagon "quite a chore in itself" Pa unhitches the mules, climbs aboard and with slow motion soon reaches the outskirts of the City and comes to the toll gate, "erected just at the entrance to the rocky canyon". Here was a barrier that must be passed

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before continuing on to the promising Gold and Silver horde that lies above, and just beyond the horizon.

Horses, mules and jackasses can pass through on payment of 50 cents per head, but wagons and other wheeled vehicles drew \$1.00. Here passes the last coin from the money poke, and from now on began a life of adventure. Future food and clothing, to be dependent on that alluring game of chance "gold and silver mining", and with these emigrants that dared bet on this game, many of their dreams grew into a reality far above expectations, while many others ended in failure, even amidst the plenty of the Gold and Silver West.

It was mid-afternoon, the sun in a cloudless sky "even in the high altitudes" was beating down with a merciless glare on the cavalcade of tired plodding horses, mules and oxen with their heavily laden wagons, the iron tired wheels cutting deep in the soft roadbed. The drivers sat listless on the rocking and bumpy seats, at times walking beside the slow-moving vehicles to lighten the load and exercise their own stiff legs. In this day miles of travel meant miles of work for both man and beast, even the coney, chipmunk and groundhog had better sense than to exert themselves and sat on their haunches or lie sprawling atop stumps and rocks taking a sunbath in the heat of the day.

The birds of many varieties, "more active than the bipeds and quadrepeds", were flying through the air in great numbers, alighting in flocks ahead or behind the slow-moving travel, feeding on the manure drippings from the thousands of work animals, and as I look about me now and see the great scarcity of bird life, I become aware that the auto "our modern mechanical horse", leaves no substance for bird life to thrive on.

Thus for the moment both ass and I were inert, later edging into traffic and thinking little, intent only at spitting gobs of tobacco juice at a grasshopper or the little garter snake beside the road. In time I caught up with the slow-moving prairie schooner, the plight of the travellers disturbed me not too much, but noting the girl treading behind, lifting dirty skirt now and then to wipe away the dust from a sweaty face, awakened a latent sympathy that was soon to demand some action.

Passing through the toll gate a short time later, still mounted on Samson "the first" (my jackass) I soon overtook the tired travellers on a stretch of the very steepest road. Dad and the oldest girl walking behind were adding

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their little bit, by pushing their best on the wagon. I could not go round on the one-way mountain road so followed the procession as it moved slowly ahead. I noted more closely Mary's (he called her) hair hanging in two long braids, tied by a once light colored ribbon, but now a little faded and the worse for wear and dirt, even then there was a sheen and brilliance to the tresses of silky yellow, intermingled with strands of brown, of a corn silk texture, attractive yes, in spite of swirling dust, that now and then need be shaken off by a toss of the head.

The eyes of youth can laugh and smile even in the time of great distress. A smile of disdain comes over the maid as she gave me the once-over, while my eyes dropped to the roadway, centering on a pair of dirty feet protruding from beneath the soiled ragged hem of a long hanging beltless dress. The dress itself of cheap material swirling about as the wind flattened it to her person, and one could detect the absence of both brassiere and corset, and little evidence of the unmentionables an absolute must, of every woman's apparel in those good old days.

Now and then I glanced at a pair of provocative lips, dust covered at the corners, and I wondered if a kiss from those dirty, tho kissable lips, would bring a thrill. Yes, I would have taken the chance, well knowing that so-called dirt in the Rockies was actually gold and silver dust, good for the wealth contained therein and for the health and digestion too. No question, but what poverty led many women to often choose very faulty husbands, and in those days when contraceptives were unknown, she dared not take time to shop around. To be classed as an old maid was a disgrace, hence through womans fear of both poverty and disgrace, many men secured wives of unquestioned virtue, when in fact they were entitled to nothing in the way of saintly femininity.

You may believe here was a girl of nature, unsophisticated with no touch of artificiality, no cosmetics and make-up in evidence. While preventatives even if known about, were considered sinful. There was not even an inclination to expose her beautiful form enclosed in gown that reached from neck to ankle, and tho much the worse for wear, 'twas truly built for modesty, even tho the diaphanous texture, due to too much wear, made it almost impossible "in spite of the wearer" to hide from curious eyes, even as she delicately lifted the skirt now and then to blow her nose, the

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unmentionable with lace edging just above the knee.

To be a prospector of those days in possession of a jack-ass and equipment was to be a man of some social standing. He was of course expected to live up to that position, so as I followed along, watching the dust rise in spurts between the toes of the barefooted gal 'twas not an alluring picture at best, and I felt a sense of guilt at my behavior, a violation of the code of the West, where chivalry in case of women must come first, last and under any condition.

At the next stop I alighted from my steed and with a gracious Sir Walter Raleigh gesture, said, "for you, dear lady, the steed awaits", and with little ado and no resistance from the tired maid, I lifted her gently to the saddle and added my weight to the pushing of the wagon on up the hill.

There was little time for conversation, but I was rewarded now and then with a ravishing smile, and thought I could detect a message of gratitude in the quick glances from a pair of hypnotic dark blue eyes, and what few words escaped from the lips were soft and caressing. Life has taught me that with the many baits women have at their disposal, there is no escape for the male, and on that 6 mile stretch of road while basking under those wiles, a spark of love was kindled that grew into a great big flame. I was a soldier of the West, well versed in the perversities of woman, was taught and believed that a kiss from any woman's lips was the key to her bedroom "with reservations", also knew there were few keys distributed and most of those led to the bridal chamber. I knew well that love was not an inanimate thing that could not be won, then stored away in vault or safety box along with the other material wealth, the love and possession of a beauteous feminine creature I thought could be held only by gold furs, kept prisoner behind locked doors within the cabin walls "a bird in a gilded cage", or kept submissive and anchored by a baby on the way, baby arms entwined about the neck and baby hands clinging to her skirts. Women ever a parable, she is born with dominating desire for babies, chained fast by their needs and held in subjection by their demands. She is a martyr to the dominating force of motherhood, responds to their cries as they cling to lower limbs, thus shackled there is no escape from loves bondage, and "wish as they may", no woman can ever be happy if entirely free.

So I set myself to work in earnest and fixed my mind on winning this gal, whose form (perfect I imagined) tho

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concealed in long modest gown was my ideal, but the proof was still a dark, deep mystery, never to be unraveled until the wedding night. The inspiration to labor comes from exposure to a pretty face, long silky hair, entrancing smile, sugared words and seductive lips, these in themselves were attraction enough without a perfect figure. Being an overly modest man I always abhorred women in the nude, semi-nude on display, or parading about with suggestive movements, and the more artificial they became, the less attractive they were. Surely the Lord intended women to be fully garbed, else he would, as in the lower animals, have enclosed them first hand in a covering of fur, to hide their imperfections "which are many" and keep them warm and comfortable. Yes, women in even aping the ways of man, is submerging real self and femininity when attired in scanty and unattractive garb.

It is paradoxical to find woman "the huntress" intent on the chase, exercising all her wiles in stalking the male, then turn face about and become the hunted, captured and held in captivity by the male. This statement true to facts in those days when marriage obligations demanded chastity, modesty, constancy, fidelity and obedience, not to-day tho woman still the wolf on the prowl, the huntress, to be hunted in turn, captured but never tamed, and because of easy divorce, with eye ever on the field for new victims.

Now after a long tiresome climb we at last reach the booming mining town of Junction City, Colorado, where for the time being, there were plenty of jobs for every man, so 'twas not long until Pa secured work in a mine and with it was given credit at the general store, but the problem then the same as now, was where to live. A good friend and fellow prospector getting ready for his monthly pilgrimage back on the Divide, with my persuasion, consented to let these homeless strangers have the use of his one room, dirt floor and roofed cabin, until he again returned for a grubstake. So here the family of 5 were made comfortable, and here a real courtship began that lasted for years, and at what a terrible price.

My gallantry on the old stage road did make me the King bee for the while, in the matter of the young lady's attention, so was not bothered a great deal with rival suitors. Women no doubt are more honorable, more prone to be grateful than the male of the specie, and it has been known that in appreciation of a kindly word, act and a few

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minor courtesies, women will say "I will", live to regret their impulse, but keep the solemn vow until death do them part. Not so in these days when even the word obey and fidelity are left entirely out of the ceremony, most women now accepting marriage as a lark, to be dissolved at the first fancied grievance or change of heart.

Evening approaches, and I take the old fiddle from the shelf and proceed to serenade the gal with soft strains of "Oh, My Darling Clementine" and 'twas but a minute until she appeared, to join in the chorus. Sitting on the top step, we hand in hand watched that old full moon as it came up over Monarch Mountain, casting shadows and brightness as it moved through the tall spruce trees. 'Twas a night for love as she said, "for you my first kiss", and what a kiss, for on delivery, she, so shy and timid, fainted dead away. Emerging from the spell she resumed, "and for you alone all my kisses hereafter". The ecstasy of that kiss as inspiring, the thrill and flavor so lasting that for weeks after I was treading on air. What mattered the mere digging down of mountain peaks or trapping denizens of the forest? 'Twas not long until we were engaged, our troth plighted and sealed by the gift of a ring, and in those days "not too expensive", and not always real gold or diamond, but never the less it became an obsession with me to rid the gal of the shabby garb she wore, and encase my future queen in furs, satin, silk and lace.

Furs then as now decreed the social standing of the female, and so as the gamblers wife was soon sporting a new beaver coat, it was my duty to do likewise for Mary. After my hard days work of digging gold and silver from the hills, I set my trap lines in the valley which carried my labor far into the evening. Within a month of strenuous effort I had secured enough prime skins for a coat, and before the winter set in, I presented my sweetie with the beautiful garment. God bless her little heart. I was amply repaid for my efforts with the joy and ecstasy she showed in the gift, and was rewarded with a shower of kisses from exotic, exclusive lips, the only kisses that any man "if he be a man" enjoys.

We are fearful of the atomic bomb, better refer to the feminine dynamite that creates and destroys great cities, Nations, tears down mountains and supplies the inspiration that moves the world. Yes, 'tis she who is behind the man, behind the brain and behind the fingers that created the

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atomic bomb itself.

As impetuous youth will ever be, I was desirous of marriage at an early date, but with the intuition and wisdom (or was it caution) of woman, she deferred the day explaining that we were plenty young, and it was so much more fun being engaged, and then too, I had not yet discovered a glory spot with sufficient riches to support a wife in the style she was "not accustomed to", but what she wanted in the search for the golden fleece the prospector gives first place in thought to his mine, all other matters are secondary, so I was not too much disturbed by the delay. Impatient, yes, and enjoying myself, but biding my time and waiting to see what the next shot would bring forth.

About this time the Mayor of the Town, a well to do person, dolls up his wife in a coat of martin, of a color and fineness that became the envy of every other woman in camp. My lady love was no exception, and said in pleading voice, "if you really love me as you say, you will get me one of those fur coats, and I will be forever grateful and supremely happy". I say again God bless her little heart, but I wondered sometimes how it was possible for so many big desires to emanate from that little organ. But no more said than done, as I began to trap the wily martin, and soon enclosed Mary in another beautiful garment. Enraptured to the point of surrender, my reward again a hug, smile and kisses from untainted, unpainted, natural tinted lips, sufficient unto itself."

The code of the West was well defined as to chivalry toward women, and square dealing between men, and man was sole claimant to his sweetheart, unless by her own violation she began with her wolfish nature to play the field and center her wiles on other males. Up to this time I had no competition so could well afford to bide my time and feel secure, but I was still not in position to support a wife properly, and in the end the delay proved my undoing.

Jack Muldoon, a lucky guy if ever there was one, makes a rich strike on the ONLY CHANCE MINE, and at once makes tracks for the New England States, and in two weeks comes back with a brand new wife (his second). Pretty as a picture she was (too pretty for jealous Jack who keeps her prisoner behind locked cabin door) and sporting a gorgeous mink coat "a gift from Jack". Again there was envy and jealousy among the female., and my gal was to be no exception. If only I could have one just like that, I could

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die happy. Just why it was necessary to think of dying, I could not fathom, but one look in those sad, wistful and teary eyes I said, "Worry no more, bless your dear heart (I left out the little) you shall have your wish." So again I set my trap lines for the mink. Success followed my efforts in trapping much better than in prospecting, and it was not long until my fiancee came forth encased in a soft silky mink coat and along with her natural beauty she was a sight to behold. Small wonder that so many male eyes were now directed her way, and I wondered if in my attempts to make her happy, she became more luscious bait for other rivals.

Next season muskrat came in vogue so I trapped and attired my lady love in a coat of this fine fur, and from that we went to the blue squirrel and weasel, when into our midst came one of those capitalists from New York, and with him an aristocratic blue blooded wife all dolled out in real seal skin "mind you." I did not like the new arrival, partly out of envy, but close association to some Bostonites led me to believe that arrogance, insolence and intolerance went with a haughty mien, and women-like, even tho the lady would not condescend to even speak to our rough Western gals, they wished to ape her ways, while she cared only to show her superciliousness in attitude, manners and dress.

So behold on another night while basking under the spell of the same old moon, the gal, over-generous with her love and osculations, asked if I would grant her just one last request, the gift of a real seal skin coat. I gave the matter deep thought, this girl now a superstructure of womanly virtues, principal and fineness. Who would deny a woman's fresh, first and exclusive kisses are beyond price, yet is but a nail in that feminine framework, and where each and every one extracted thereafter, has a tendency to weaken the will power, moral and spiritual structure. The granting of a first kiss, the acceptance of a first drink, a first puff from the nicotone weed, a first inch deducted from length of skirt and height of waist is but loosening the feminine defensive armor of virtues, self respect and morals. Man wants perfection and exclusiveness in the female, he may outwardly forgive the transgressions and surrender of these requisites to other men, but he never forgets. Good Lord, when will modern femininity understand that the loss of these womanly virtues leads to unhappiness or disgrace,

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and the more promiscuous in the giving leads to utter disrespect, this was true a thousand years ago, true to-day and a thousand years hence.

I was stunned at the magnitude of the desire, remembering that by now I had trapped and exterminated all the wild life in the forest to cover with furs, one little 100 pound speciman of femininity, and now she wants a **Seal Skin Coat**, no seals within 10 thousand miles, and just about as far away as having enough cash to purchase one outright.

I think I might have waived this demand, but her dad at the time of the Klondyke gold rush decided to make one of a crowd of men going from our camp and with him went the family and Mary. Our troth was not broken, and I detected a tear in her eye "and shed a few myself", as I waved a last good bye, as the train went down the track and round the bend.

We corresponded quite often at first, the letters became fewer, and one at last made me suspicious enough to venture forth in search of both gal and gold. I wondered if distance really did make the heart grow fonder or if it was to be a case of out of sight, out of mind. Try as I would I could not get the gal out of my thoughts, so with blankets rolled up and hope to speed me on, my footsteps and yearning took me into the far Northwest, and if the last obstacle to happiness was a seal skin coat, I determined to make my way to the Pribiloff Islands and trap those seals.

Alighting from the train at Seattle and with heart all a-flutter, I made poste haste to her last address, rang the door bell and was confronted by a total stranger. Taken by surprise for the moment I asked if Mary lived there. "Honey", he called, "a gentleman to see you", and from the kitchen came Mary with a small tike of a baby in her arms. My world was tottering even while she was giving me a hesitant smile of welcome. For sure here was a barrier now insurmountable, and Mary had her seal skin coat as I could see it lying on the divan, proving a much wiser suitor than I, demanded payment in full on delivery.

She was much more buxom, yet still alluring, not exactly the Mary that had left me behind her in Junction City. I was envious of the man's good fortune, and I envied him Mary and the baby that should have been mine. I looked the man over with disdain, then with an element of pity and compassion for now and forever after he must accept the

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leavings of kisses and love and be content. Damaged goods by any mans measure in this respect, so who was to be the greatest loser in the game of romance, he or I? But words unspoken went racing through my mind. Yes, you have the woman's beautiful empty shell, perhaps even her soul, but not the privilege of sipping the sweet nectar from her first virginal kisses, "the sweetest of all", and I doubt if looks do not deceive me that you will ever receive your portion of love, "limited in extent and already diminished", and so long as man may live, unless he be the first in a woman's affection he must be content to enjoy the pressure of lips, tainted calloused and embraces that at one time belonged to some one else.

You may believe my visit was not an extended one, so I hurriedly said good luck and good bye, remembering the old axiom "life and its interest" lie not in the capture but in the pursuit. Fortitude, the prospectors virtue, and come what may, I have those never to be forgotten kisses to remember Mary by, and "perhaps after all" fate did prove kinder to me than anticipated.

Down through the years with memories of the past, all I am I owe to woman, look me over and judge well "if you can" of your handiwork. The Creator in His wisdom gave man a break in the matter of loveology, by seldom mixing brains and beauty in the same woman, and most all women are beautiful.

The Hermit Of Arbor-Villa

THE FREEDOM THAT WAS

Free to work, free to loaf or play
Free to Hunt and Fish, night or day
Free to trap furs, for my lady fair
From forest or valley anywhere
Free timber to build a cosy home
Free to dare and venture, or to roam
Free to imbide at gurgling stream
Free to bask in shadows, and dream
Free to explore, stake out a claim
On desert, mountain top or plain
Free from tax on boat, bus or train
Light, telephone or fast airplane
Free from a tax on what we may say
On the air we breathe, or movie play
Free from tax on bread and meat
Free from tax on each morsel we eat
The freedom that was, has passed away
Alas enslaved, forever, are we to-day.
The Hermit.

A Message To Congress Go Back On A Gold Standard Or Go Bust Or Defect In Our Monetary System

Thanks, Mr. Chairman and members for the privilege of addressing your committee, and I trust a few words from one of the few 100% Americans left in America will find receptive ears in a Congress bewildered by complication.

I am much concerned over the monetary policy now in force in the U.S.A., and as I watch the steady debasing of the dollar, I view the future with great alarm. It seems strange that in 150 years we have never been able to balance the amount of money created, with the money in circulation, and each year for 150 years we see on the Treasury reports a certain sum set aside for redemption of money that has long ago been lost or destroyed, and there should be some way devised to eliminate the unnecessary book-keeping, and I will later suggest a remedy.

For 150 years we had gold and silver money, 50 years ago we created in the U.S.A. in truth a sound money, no currency was issued by the Government without a 100% backing in gold and silver, then in later years partly to cure errors in our economic policy we began to deflate the percentage, began to deflate the grains in the dollar, with further deflation in percentage, until to-day, "due to the inflation in the price of gold", "and the additional deflation in percentage" we have but a 5 grain gold dollar compared to 15 years ago.

It has been the custom of Congress by new laws "in the past 65 years at least" to inflate cost of Government, commodities and taxes, this in turn debasing the dollar in the same proportion. There was no effort to keep the dollar on a parity with wage salary, commodity or tax, so now we find ourselves using a dollar "mind you an ounce of metal" with but a 6 cent value in essential commodities as compared to 65 years ago.

By this system of deflation we have nearly destroyed the paper as well as the silver dollar as a medium of exchange, and have as you know demonitized the gold dollar entirely, pretty much for the same reason.

But strange to find that 70% of our working circulation, or medium of exchange is the subsidiary coins, these doing most of the cash transactions, while the dollar and larger denominations are the keeping and saving money of the Nation.

A MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

Again I refer to the gold and silver dollar, wherein according to statistics it took a 10 hour days work and sweat to create each dollar, based on our old weights, size and fineness. This then established the intrinsic value of the dollar, and the value of the days work in other industries. But now the Government, given the power to create 100 dollar paper money with but 3 cents worth of labor (and printing presses don't sweat) it has allowed our economy to inflate everything to a dangerous degree, and in so doing is putting us well on the way toward a Chinese dollar and nothing.

This dollar I hold in hand, the same dollar we coined 150 years ago, now worth but 6 cents in essentials of life, worth but 5 cents in our per capita tax structure as compared to just 65 years ago. Think of it as an ounce of metal with an average circulating value of but 5 and 6 cents, "does n't this concern you" for the safety of tomorrows? And along with this tragedy, think of the 20 billion in idle gold "as it stands" worth nothing, but costing the tax payers 2 and 3% in interest perpetually to say nothing about the cost of an army to guard this useless horde.

Now that we have for 65 years deflated the dollar to less than 6 cents by inflationary laws, I would ask that you begin to deflate the cost of Government, taxes, wages and commodities, and thus inflate this dollar back up to 100 cents, do this by passing a law, that by Government edict at 7 A.M. on a certain morning we will discount everything of fixed value in the U.S.A. 10%. Bonds, stocks, mortgages, commodities, wages, salaries, services, interest and taxes, with a capital tax of 10% on cash money in hand, continue this for 9 successive years, and when the dollar is then restored to 100 cents, never again let it lose its parity with the cost of Government and the essentials of life.

I further propose we deflate gold to its old value and remove the billions of inert useless gold bullion in the vaults of this Nation, stamp into coin at our old weights, size and fineness, and for these Pagans of the East who do not care for the motto "In God We Trust" stamped on their money, let them have the germy, microby, dog-eared and flimsy paper, but see to it that it be backed by 100% gold and silver, so in case we Christians get hold of it, we can redeem it in honest dollars.

I propose that our domestic gold produce be paid a bonus on new production over re-established price of \$20.67 per ounce, until the wage scale again reaches the 1935 dollar

A MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

standard, and under no condition accept gold from countries at more than our established price of \$20.67 per ounce, this will not only bring our own monetary system in order, but will give other less fortunate countries something to build on.

As for silver, stop robbing the producer of 30 cents an ounce, and forbid the destruction or mutilation of our money. What manner of ruling is that allows any man or industry to remelt or reduce to acid solution our circulating coins under false premises that destroying is not mutilation. Who ever heard of destroying anything without mutilating it to some degree. By such a false ruling the industries could actually (if they wish) destroy our subsidiary coins of 10, 25 and 50 cents denomination, and thus leave us without 70% of our circulating and working medium of exchange.

This deflation process then will cure our monetary ills, and hereafter lets get our money balance straightened out, by calling in first year, and each decade thereafter, all the money in circulation, exchange for new stamp or design, and after one year declare all money not exchanged null and void, for truly the circulation of money is the life blood of a Nation and to hoard, or freeze, or destroy the circulation, is just as disastrous to a Nation as freezing the life blood in the human body.

America at the moment is close to the breaking point, democracy, representative Government, even solvency is threatened. The power to tax, the power to destroy and for the past 65 years we have worked overtime to actually bring this about. Poverty, misery, distress and tragedy comes not from the forclosure of mortgages as in the old days, but by the forclosure on tax defaults, thus in these same 65 years we find per capita taxes increased 1900%, other things in proportion, this burden destroys incentive, initiative and ambition, and will bring us to the point where no man will dare venture.

Yes, two things are sure, death and taxation, but death is final, while taxes on the achievement of the deceased goes on and on forever. So I warn you that any new bills passed, adding to cost of Government, commodities and taxation, will destroy our solvency and our money with it. America depends on three things, sound money, sound legislation and saintly women, and if, as I am led to believe, all are going to hell, count our Nation lost.

Grieve not too much when you, my representatives,

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reach that stage where your salary will be but 10% of what it is now, but rather remember your dollar will be worth 100 cents instead of less than a dime as it is now, and remember again the savings on our printing presses, the denuding of our forests and the depletion on our mines, when we once again make our 100 cent dollar a thing to be honored, respected and revered, and ever ready to pay for an honest days work.

As I have passed down lifes highway I find that too much money easily acquired is the most dangerous thing in the world. A fool and his money are soon parted. I am not saying all men are fools, but when we find that 85% of our population are still afflicted with 12 year old mentalities, "who may be wiser than we think," or the adults who may be dumber than we think", a loaded gun is safer in their hands than too much money. The Mountain sides of the old West are covered with the graves of my friends who died not so often by the bark and bullets of the 6 shooters of the desperadoes, but by having too much money, easily earned and wrongfully spent, and along with this loss was left behind wrecked morals, debauched womanhood, intensified greediness and christian principals of man.

But still to be settled is the equalization problem. God forbid that we continue as we are now with 40% of our citizens lolling in luxury while 60% are on the border line of distress. Dream no more of the wide-open frontiers, yes, we still have plenty of wide open spaces, but it is already denuded of its fertile soil, water, oil, timber and mineral wealth, but if Representative Government is to survive, it will be by a more equitable distribution from production, and not loot from the U.S. Treasury.

Thanks for your attention and if any dissenting opinion arises, I am here to answer and defend my statements.

The Old Prospector,

F. E. Gimlett

