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A Turn of the Earth.

A Case of a Modern Miracle.

By JEFFERSON PORT.

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It was a desolate country which Clarence Ives was traversing with sagging feet. Six weeks before he had started from Ensenada with two pack mules and a prospecting outfit. Now the mules were heaps of bleaching bones among the ragged Lower California hills, and the vultures had sailed away to other banquets. Ives wondered if they would come back to quarrel over his remains before long.

Ahead of him was a Goconda of riches—of course! Had not that half breed Mexican, Felipe Ordo, filed his ears with tales of the gold to be picked up in that canyon down in Lower California? True it was that Felipe had not been to the country beyond Ensenada, but his story sounded reasonable, and he had substantiated his assertions with a rude map of the country which had descended to him from his grandfather, who had been a man of many adventures.

Ives wished success in this adventure. He had been the owner of a prosperous vineyard and had lost his year's crop by a mysterious fire which had swept down and obliterated every vine on his acres. There was a mortgage on his ranch, and it was held by the man whose daughter he wanted to marry.

"If you can pull yourself out of this hole, Clarence," Norman Royce said grimly, "I'll cut a carload of orange blossoms and you can engage the padre. If you can't make good what's the use of your marrying Cora now and entangling her in the meshes of your difficulties—eh?"

Clarence Ives had thrust out his determined chin and informed Papa Royce that one year from that date he would call upon him to deliver Cora into his arms. In the meantime he shut up his ranch house, bade farewell to his pretty, loyal sweetheart and set forth on this expedition into Lower California after gold—a wild adventure into a wild, uninhabited country, undertaken by a man whose greatest assets were youth and courage and the love of a woman.

The mules, one after the other, had each broken a leg among the crevices of the foothills. That was why Clarence was trudging along, weary, spiritless, with now and then a reference to the old map he had received from the half breed.

Near nightfall he came to the entrance of a rocky canyon. Scrubby chestnuts and pecans clothed the rim of the cuplike inclosure. Across one end a small stream of sweet, pure water meandered and was lost among the rocks. Near the stream was a patch of coarse green grass, and here Clarence made his little camp.

After supper he compared his map with the canyon and grew dizzy when he realized that this must indeed be the treasure house of which Felipe had told him. To verify this belief he searched the beesting rock that hung over the source of the spring and was rewarded for his effort by finding rudely carved thereon the image of a serpent placed there a hundred years ago to guard the spring.

"Hoora!" yelled Clarence excitedly, and the echo was borne back and forth across the rocky canyon until it seemed to fall at his feet in a frightened whisper.

When a new day dawned he was refreshed and set about delving among the rocks at the head of the stream where the map indicated that gold nuggets might be found.

Day after day passed in a monotonous succession of disappointments.

At last, after three weeks of delving in the rocky soil, he lifted his pick and threw it far from him with a bitter exclamation. Then, because he recollected that other treasure seekers had found gold many times when on the verge of abandoning their projects, he sought his pick once more and again applied himself to the task, but it was only a dying spurt of ambition, and at sunset he once more tossed the implement aside and flung himself on the ground in bitter despair.

He had staked his future and Cora's on the rare smile of the goddess of fortune, and she had chosen to frown upon him.

"I've paid my tribute to labor," he said grimly after awhile. He surveyed his bruised and blistered hands and the turmoil of rocks and earth he had tossed up in the canyon. He took stock of his scanty store of provisions and packed them together. Then he turned his back on the canyon and rounded the rocky entrance and climbed the

heights to the fringe of chestnuts and pecans.

He made his way through the grove of nut trees and was once more on a certain rocky trail when it occurred to him that night was drawing in and he must make camp until morning. So he returned to the nut grove, ate a scanty meal and threw himself on the warm ground and went to sleep, sore at heart and bitter with the whole world.

It was just before dawn that he awoke to a strange rocking motion. Birds were twittering excitedly among

the trees; the gray of coming day was in the sky, and something else—something strangely electric—was shaking the earth beneath him until he staggered to his feet sick and dizzy with the sensation.

He heard the crash of rocks in the canyon below; he heard strange rumblings beneath him, and that which he had thought was solid earth suddenly heaved upward and threw him, together with the little nut grove, slipping and tumbling and finally crashing down the sides of the rocky canyon.

The rocks of the canyon had heaved and ground themselves together into new shapes, and when Clarence fell among them his body was cradled among the thick branches of the trees that had fallen with him, and altogether were wedged among a new formation of rocks near the little stream.

Consciousness left him at this time. When he awoke it was high noon and the sun poured fiercely on his unsheltered face. He moved and found that beyond severe bruises he was unharmed. He climbed out of the labyrinth of twisted branches and looked about him at a strangely transformed canyon. The earthquake had riven the earth in a dozen places; had tossed huge rocks aside as if they were the merest pebbles; had diverted the little stream in a new bed.

Clarence Ives stared and stared again at the place where the huge beesting rock had stood guard over the head of the stream. The rock with the serpent carved upon it had tumbled over, disclosing beneath it a deep indentation of the earth. Here something glittered in the rays of the sun, and Clarence scrambled over rocks and trees until he hung breathlessly over this storehouse of golden treasure.

Nuggets of pure gold, rubbed smooth by the grinding process of water and rock, were pocketed here. Nature had opened her storehouse for him after all, and she was a liberal dame when she chose to give bounty. Feverishly he filled one of his empty canvas food sacks with the precious lumps, and when not one remained in the cavity he turned away, satisfied a fortune was his.

There in the canyon, torn and ragged with the effects of the earthquake, the man flung himself upon his knees and gave thanks to the one who had directed the earth to open for him. To Clarence Ives it was a greater miracle than those which he had read about in the Bible.

He was to witness a still greater miracle before he left the canyon. He had secured his bag of precious metal and had searched for and discovered his provisions, which had slipped down the canyon walls with him in the shock of the quake, and he was just leaving the canyon for the second time when once more the earth trembled.

The rocks ground together, the trees shivered, and then, as earlier that day, there was a violent tearing sound, and he saw the earth beneath the recumbent serpent rock burst upward and precipitate the rock back into its former bed from which he had rescued his golden store. After a few faint shiverings the earth ceased turning in her bed and was still.

Awed by what he had seen, Ives struck the backward trail, witnessing many evidences of the disturbance as he made his way toward Ensenada. His progress was slow on account of the weight of gold, and he was wary of wandering prospectors or stray bands of half breeds, but he had little to fear, for the earth shocks had driven them panic stricken into the town.

Then one afternoon as he neared the last few miles before he should reach Ensenada and a semblance of civilization he saw coming toward him a little party mounted on wiry horses. He scanned them closely, wondering at their identity, hoping he might be able to purchase additions to his depleted store of food.

They came within range of recognition. First he recognized Felipe Ordo's sloping shoulders, over which curled a streamer of cigarette smoke; then the large, bulky form of Norman Royce, red complexioned, gray haired, anxious eyed until he saw the worn face of the pedestrian. Behind Norman Royce rode a girl, her pale face shaded by a large felt hat.

"Ah, the Senior Ives!" ejaculated Felipe, and he fell back to permit Norman and his daughter to see the young prospector.

"Good heavens, boy, you are safe! I'm thankful to see you alive!" burst forth Norman as he dismounted and grasped the hand of the amazed prospector. "We read about the earthquake and that it was reported a great many miners had been entombed. Well, of course we didn't know where you were then, you were so se-

cretive, but Felipe here came to me and told me of your search after his grandfather's gold mine, and Cora gave me no peace until I consented to come down here to Lower California and dig you out." He laughed with tears in his eyes.

"Father," cried Cora, who was holding the other hand of her lover, "it was your own suggestion. You blamed yourself for driving Clarence away on a wild goose chase for a fortune when you wanted him to stay right there."

"Well," admitted the older man, "we've got him. Now, Clarence, you come back to the ranch and take hold with me. I'll get that carload of orange blossoms, and Cora seems willing to take a chance on your future success."

Clarence thrust one hand deep in his treasure bag and tossed a golden nugget into Felipe's astonished hands. Then he handed the bag to his future father-in-law.

"I went on a wild goose chase, all right," he grinned, "and I found the wild goose and the nest where she had laid the golden eggs."

THE SOLICITOR

(Continued from Page Two.)

was not expected that he would make sales of more than a few burners at a time. But here were a hundred ordered at 10 cents apiece. That would be \$10, of which his commission would be 60 per cent, or \$6. He was quite elated.

The next day he called with the burners and was received by the young lady, who informed him that her mother was indisposed and it was necessary that the house should be kept quiet. The burners, therefore, could not be put on that day, but if he would call the next afternoon at 3 o'clock the work might be done. She intimated that no haste was necessary either in the burners being put on or his proceeding with his soliciting. She asked him into the library, where she introduced the subject of books, upon which she discoursed with as much volubility as he had used in demonstrating burners. When he departed he was a good deal puzzled.

But he was more so when the next afternoon he called to put on the burners. A phaeton was standing at the door, and when he went inside the young lady, attired for going out, was putting on her gloves.

"I think," she said, "that I'll not have the burners put on this afternoon. To tell the truth, I am a stockholder in a gas company, and your burners consume so little gas that I fear a complication."

"What complication?" asked Gardner, opening his eyes.

"Why, I am afraid that as a stockholder I shall become indebted to myself as a consumer."

The two stood looking at each other for a few moments, when a smile broke over the girl's face.

"I knew you," she said, "from the moment you rang the doorbell the other day. You are John Gardner, and I met you not very long ago at Mrs. Tucker's. I have heard of your misfortunes and admire your pluck in taking hold of the world even if your first grip is nothing better than a gas burner. I'm going to ride and shall be happy to have you go with me."

Six months later Gardner married the girl and a fortune.

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La Grande, Oregon, Oct. 3, 1911.
ROY W. LOGAN,
City Treasurer.



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