

he tossed about his baby hands in the cradle, he mounted his horse and rode away from the cabin, turning every few yards to throw back a kiss to the little group at the door until intervening trees drew their green curtain before the scene.

The little party with which he united journeyed rapidly southward. Up the Willamette valley they passed, across the Calapooia mountains to the valley of the Umpqua, on through the rugged canyon to the lovely Rogue river valley, in which stood not a habitation, save the rude wickiups of hostile savages, over Siskiyou mountain and across the swiftly-rolling Klamath, along the base of snow-crested Shasta, until they finally reached the Sacramento valley. At Nye's ranch, now Marysville, they learned that good diggings had been discovered on Yuba river, and turning up that stream followed it to Rose bar, in the foot hills, where now the great hydraulic mines of Smartsville wash down the auriferous hills. Here each man selected a claim and began his mining career.

More fortunate than some of his companions, Peter Warren found a very rich claim, but after working a few weeks, the river, swollen by heavy rains in the mountains, covered the bar so that all work had to be suspended. For three months he waited patiently for the water to recede, spending all the dust he had accumulated and even running into debt at Rose & Reynolds' trading post. He finally resumed work and soon had his score cleared and laid away a small bag of the scale gold his claim yielded, when he was stricken with that horrible malady, the scurvy, brought upon him by living continually upon bacon, without vegetables or acid food. Leaving his claim in the possession of a man who offered to work it on shares, he hastened to Sacramento for medical attendance. By the first of June he was so far recovered as to again seek the mines, having spent his last "pinch" of dust, though by no means capable of much physical exertion. Upon arriving at Rose bar he found a stranger was working his claim, having purchased it from the man in whose charge it had been left, and as possession in those days was all the title required, Warren was compelled to look elsewhere.

The mines were now rapidly filling up with that great army of argonauts from the east, pouring into California from around the stormy Horn, across the fever-haunted Isthmus, through Nicaragua, Mexico and Arizona, and over the bleak plains by the way of Salt Lake and down the mar by Humboldt. They made their way up into the mountains in search of new diggings, and Warren also pushed further into the canyons of the green-clad Sierra. He had postponed his departure for home until fall, expecting to be able to take with him the heavy sack of dust he had hoped to have in the spring. There was no mail to Oregon then, and as he had met with no one returning thither, he had been unable to send home a message of any kind. With a firm determination to win the coveted prize and return to them in the fall, he plunged deeper into the mountains. He prospected here and there, frequently finding what miners at the present time would consider a splendid claim; but his feverish anxiety to make a "home stake," and the memory of the richness of his old claim on Rose bar, led him to abandon them all and prospect for a better one. In this manner the summer and fall wore away without finding him ready to return.

He came down the South Yuba and crossed over to Deer creek, to spend the winter at the famous "pound diggings" on Gold run, and with what dust he had accumulated bought the claim of a man who had made enough and desired to return to his eastern home. There he worked all winter, making but little more than "grub money," as the best ground in the claim had been worked out before he purchased it.

It was now the spring of 1850, and though he had already been gone a year longer than he had promised, he had not yet secured the coveted bag of dust, and he was ashamed to return without it. Early in the spring rumors spread through the mine: on Yuba and Feather rivers that a wonderful lake had been discovered away up among the mountain peaks at the headwaters of those streams, on whose shore gold could be picked up by the wagon load, and that Stoddard, the discoverer, would lead a select party to that spot as soon as the icy fingers of Jack Frost had been unclasped by the warm rays of the sun and the mountain passes freed from the huge drifts of snow. Preparations were made by hundreds to follow in the wake of Stoddard's party; and when the news was spread that search for Gold lake had really been commenced, there was a great rush from all sides in the direction the first party had taken. Thousands roamed through the mountain fastnesses of Sierra and Plumas counties, and though the golden lake was never found, scores of rich diggings in that region were discovered and quickly filled with miners.

Among this excited crowd of adventurers was Peter Warren, the last ounce he had being spent for an outfit. He accompanied the hurrying and incoherent crowd hither and thither, over high mountain summits, along rocky cliffs and the edge of yawning precipices, plunging through immense drifts of snow and forded the icy current of tumultuous mountain torrents, until he became separated from all the others and found himself alone among the mountain summits. His pack animal weakened by want of food, lost his footing on the steep side of a canyon, and rolled down upon the rocks a thousand feet below, scattering his pack of provisions and tools so completely and in such inaccessible places that it was impossible to recover them. Warren still struggled on until, footsore, discouraged and nearly famished for want of food, he sunk down beside the trail and abandoned himself to utter despair. For hours he lay in a half-conscious state, his mind oblivious to his surroundings but painfully acute to its own agony.

"Hello, partner, what seems to be the matter?" said a hearty, cheerful voice as a hand was firmly but tenderly laid on the prostrate man's shoulder. "Nothing gone wrong with you, I hope? I reckon he's about played out. Here, take some of this," thrusting a flask into his hand, "It's genuine Bourbon and will do you good; you look powerful weak."

Instinctively Warren grasped the flask and conveyed it to his mouth, and as the spirits trickled down his throat he began gradually to realize his condition and that he had found a friend in his misery.

"If you always drink like that, partner, it would take a heap of spirits to keep you going. I reckon you are hungry, too?"

"Have had nothing to eat for two days."

"Sho! you don't tell me. Well you shall have some powerful quick. Jim Watson is the

last fellow on earth to see a man go hungry. I never miss a meal when I can help it, and I'm dogged if I like to see anyone else miss one either. Can you walk a little?"

"Yes."

"All right; come along to the creek ahead here and we'll go into camp for the night. I'll get you something hot to eat in a jiffy."

The new friend was as good as his word, and in half an hour the two sat down to a repast that many a man less famished than Peter Warren would have relished. After eating they reclined beside the blazing pile of faggots, and while smoking by turns the only pipe Watson possessed, related the story of their lives. When Warren spoke of his once happy home by the Willamette, where now his wife and little ones were no doubt mourning for him as dead, and how he had struggled and suffered in the mines in his efforts to get even a small sum to take home to them, Watson's eyes filled with tears, and seizing his companion by the hand the generous-hearted man vowed that half he possessed should be his and that henceforth they were partners.

"Cheer up, old fellow, I'm on my way now to the richest diggings in this whole country. Some friends of mine discovered them and sent me word. We'll take up two claims together and work them for all they are worth."

This arrangement was entirely satisfactory to Warren, who would have clutched eagerly at the least straw of hope. The next day they started out, and two days later descended the steep hill near Spanish peak to the east branch of the north fork of Feather river, and located two of the best claims on Rich bar. With the thought of his loved ones always in his mind and encouraged by the hope that at last he would be able to win a fortune and return to them, Warren worked with tireless energy until spring. The buoyant spirits of his companion aided in making the winter seem short and the labor less exhausting.

James Watson was one of those free-hearted, noble souls that do so much to redeem this world from utter greed and selfishness. He was a young man of ability, cheerful in adversity and brave and quick to act in times of danger; generous to a fault and honorable in every impulse, he was a worthy son of the grand old state of Kentucky, the best representative of an old and respected family. Like too many of his temperament who went to California, the excitement of the mines led him into many excesses of drinking and gambling, of which he was ashamed when sober, but which his convivial nature would not permit him to abandon. In his efforts to reform he found a tower of strength in Peter Warren, and soon after they had located on Rich bar he was by his friend's aid able to refrain entirely from drinking and even abjured the game of poker, which had been his favorite amusement since childhood and which had kept him constantly on the verge of bankruptcy.

One Sunday late in the spring, while reclining at full length beneath a huge pine enjoying their pipes, Warren said: "This will be my last week."

"Have you made enough?"

"Not as much as I would like, but my halt will be quite a sum, and I am too anxious to stay any longer."

"How much do you reckon we've laid away?"

"About \$15,000."