

"And you want to take only half? What becomes of your interest in the claim?"

"You can have that and welcome."

"I have a proposition that beats that to death."

"What is it?"

"I've been thinking over this matter a great deal, and I'll tell you what I think. If you go away and leave me here, I will get to drinking and gambling again, lose all I have and become a worthless sot. I am not fit to stay in the mines. Our claim is the richest and has the best water on the bar. It is not half worked out yet, and I can sell it for \$5,000. That will give us \$20,000. I will go to Oregon with you; we will still remain partners and will put our money into a good, steady business."

"Agreed; we'll sell out and start to-morrow," and they clasped hands to seal the compact.

The next day they divided their pile of dust into two equal heaps, each one stowing a portion in a belt and strapping it around his waist. They purchased two good saddle horses and a pack animal for their provisions and camping outfit. The second morning early they mounted and rode slowly along the trail that wound tortuously up the steep slope of Rich bar hill, turning at the summit to look down upon the scene of their labors and to bid a final farewell to the mines.

It was in the month of May, 1851, that Peter Warren again skirted the base of white-robed Shasta on his return to the home he had left two years and a half before. In Shasta valley they came upon the new mining camp of Shasta Butte City, now Yreka, a lively place but two months old; but they turned their backs upon the temptation to stake off a claim on the flats, camped but one night on the bank of Yreka creek, and then resumed their journey northward.

The next day they crossed Siskiyou mountain and descended into the edge of Rogue river valley, where they camped on the margin of Bear creek. They were now in the country of the hostile Rogue River Indians, and having been warned to be on their guard, decided to keep watch through the night by turns. Just before daylight, while Watson was sleeping soundly and Warren, having just returned from a short tour around the camp, was sitting by the fire, lost in thought about his family and wondering in what circumstances he would find them, a demoniacal yell burst from the darkness without, accompanied by a volley of arrows. Warren fell forward dead, while Watson sprang to his feet and discharged all the chambers of his revolver in rapid succession. The assailants were few in number and fell back before his fusillade. During the lull in the attack Watson hastened to the side of his fallen partner and endeavored to arouse him, only to find that he had ceased to breathe forever. He had just time to snatch a revolver from the dead man's belt when the attack was renewed, and springing upon the back of one of the horses, he cleared for himself a passage with the weapon and made his escape along the trail up the side of the mountain. He returned to Yreka with an arrow head sticking in his arm, to testify to his narrow escape.

The crowd that gathered round him to listen to his story of the night attack and the death of his companion was of the true miner stamp, and again and again was he taken to the slab bar of Sam Lookhart's shake and canvas saloon and treated by his sympathetic auditors. Having ab-

stained from liquor for nearly six months, these frequent guzzlings soon affected him strongly. Although in his flight he had taken with him only half of the gold belonging to them, the other moiety being on the person of his dead friend, yet his fine sense of honor led him to look upon the half of what he had saved as belonging to his partner's family. Exhilarated by the excitement and the whisky, and enticed by the sight of gambling on every side, the idea of winning enough at faro to make his partner's share as large as before entered his befogged brain. He began at once, alternately playing and drinking, and before morning he not only lost his last "pinch" of dust, but became so thoroughly intoxicated that when he came to his senses again the next day he could scarcely remember what he had been doing.

Gradually it all came back to him, and when he realized that the little store he held in trust for his dead friend's wife and little ones had been hopelessly lost, he was wild with grief and remorse. With uplifted hand he solemnly vowed to abjure whisky forever, and to rectify the wrong he had committed. He sent no word to the bereaved family, for they had no doubt believed Warren dead for at least a year, and no good could be accomplished by telling them how narrowly they had escaped a fortune; besides he was ashamed to tell the truth, and less than the truth he would not. He took up a claim on the flat and worked with energy to retrieve his lost ground; but his early habit of gambling had become too firmly fastened upon him, and with no true friend like Peter Warren to hold him back, he was unable to resist the temptation to try his luck at the table. Gaming became a mania with him, not on his own account, but to win a fortune for the helpless ones who might even then be suffering for the simple necessities of life. Regularly every Saturday night he took the few ounces he made in his claim and sat down to the table until the last stake was played. He worked early and late, denied himself even necessary food, that he might save more, and every ounce went into the hands of the gamblers.

He soon left Yreka and wandered through the mines, his thoughts constantly bent on the same object. Only once after that did he find a good claim; but one night in the excitement of a game, having lost all he had, he put up his claim as a stake against ten ounces and saw the card turn up against him. He cursed himself in his despair, and for the first time realized how insane he had been. From that day he never staked a dollar on cards. Yet, now that he had come to his senses, all good fortune seemed to desert him. Year after year he wandered through the mines, never again finding a paying claim, and making barely enough to live upon.

Every exciting stampede for new diggings or adventurous expedition that promised a golden reward, found an eager follower in James Watson. In 1854 he joined Walker's invasion of Lower California, and when the "Grey-eyed Man of Destiny" met with disaster, found his way back on foot across the burning sands of San Diego and Los Angeles. In 1858 he was in the mad rush to Fraser river, traversing hundreds of miles of mountains and valleys, inhabited only by hostile savages, and plunging at last into the rocky wilderness of British Columbia only to find the good claims all located long before his arrival. He returned the next year just in time to be car-

ried on the crest of the mad wave rolling into the Washoe country to locate on the great Comstock lode. From there he went to Salmon river when the Idaho mines were discovered in 1861, and the next year passed south to the new mines about Boise City. A year later he hurried to Alder gulch in Montana, and later yet to Summit valley, near the Silver Bow.

Here he located a ledge in partnership with two others, and prospected it until they became convinced it was very rich. They worked with an arastra for a time and then put up a two-stamp mill; but soon after this was paid for the rock from lower down the ledge became very base and yielded almost nothing.

Watson's partners abandoned the mine in disgust, saying it was a "dead failure," a title the mine bore ever afterwards; but Watson decided to remain. He had wandered enough, and was determined to make his final stand in Summit valley and cling to the mine, convinced that at some time in the future a method of working the ore would be discovered. Annually for years he did the necessary amount of work on the ledge to hold his claim, living in the little cabin near by, and supporting himself by labor in the large mines being developed all around him.

Thus matters ran on for ten years. One evening late in the fall of 1876, he was returning from his work on the day shift of the Moulton, when he heard cries for help coming from the darkness a short distance ahead. Snatching up a stick that lay at his feet in the trail, he ran forward and came suddenly upon three men bending over a dark object on the ground. They jumped up and disappeared quickly in the darkness, while he stooped over to see what the object was, and was horrified to find a man apparently dead, with a warm current of blood flowing from a deep cut in his side. He raised the senseless form in his arms and bore it to his cabin, where he staunched the flow of blood and restored the wounded man to consciousness. All he could tell of the affair was that while on his way into Butte City he was attacked by three men, two of them holding him while the third took from his pocket a buckskin bag containing \$400 in double eagles. He struggled violently and called loudly for help until one of them plunged a knife into his side, and he knew no more until he regained consciousness on the cot in the miner's cabin.

The stranger was a comparatively young man, about thirty years of age, and though pale from the loss of blood his countenance showed that he led a life involving plenty of exercise in the open air. A few days later, as his patient began to gain in strength, the host said in his bluff, straightforward way, "Well, stranger, let us trot fair and introduce ourselves. I am Jim Watson. I've knocked about all the mines on the coast. I own a ledge here that everyone will tell you isn't worth a green persimmon, and I work in the mines for a living."

The other simply said, "My name is George Warren, and I came from Oregon with a band of cattle."

Never since that fatal night in Rogue river valley had Watson heard the name Warren without a start, and now he looked up quickly and asked, "What was your father's name?"

"Peter."

"Is he living?"

"No, he died in the mines when I was a baby."