

fire-water before seeking a couch beneath the spreading branches of some not-distant fir, or in rainy weather, rolling up in their blankets to "court the balmy" upon the floor of the saloon, despite the hilarity of the more wakeful guests. No attention was, therefore, paid to the new comer, until he stepped up to the rude bar, made of a slab sawed from the side of a log and turned with the bark side downward, and offered Johnson a dollar for the loan of a blanket until morning. A man without a blanket in the mountains was as rare a sight as one without a horse on the plains, and in a short time every pair of eyes in the room was carefully scrutinizing the stranger. He was a tall man, of refined features and expression, polite in his manner and dignified in his bearing, and yet the fact that he was traveling without a regular outfit created such a suspicion in the minds of the proprietor and his patrons, that the object of it could not but see it reflected in their countenances. Johnson gruffly said he had no blankets to lend, but would sell him one for ten dollars. The stranger at once turned on his heel and passed out the open door as silently and unexpectedly as he had entered.

A few days after this incident at Betsyville, a miner whose claim was located farther up the stream, noticed, while following down its banks on his way to the camp, smoke rising through the tree tops on the side of a little gulch leading upward from a flat along the stream. Curiosity led him to follow up the bank of the little brook, which poured in alternate foam and crystals down its steep and rocky bed, and see who was camped in that beautiful, but lonely, spot. Ascending a few hundred yards, he observed a rude cabin of brush and poles, standing a little back from the brook. From a clay chimney, protruding from one corner of the structure, issued the

column of smoke which had first attracted his attention. He climbed the bank and entered the cabin, expecting to find the owner within, as he had observed no signs of his presence on the outside. The hut was empty, not only of the owner, but of everything which could be classified as furniture or domestic equipments, save only a few freshly cut fir boughs in one end, which were evidently used as a bed, and a clay fireplace at the other end, in which was blazing a fire of dried branches, whose ragged ends gave evidence of having been broken by hand. There was neither axe, spade, pick, nor, in fact, any article whatever usually seen about the cabin of a miner, and no camping utensils of any kind. The hut was, evidently, but two or three days old, and was just such a structure as a man of intelligence and ordinary ingenuity could erect with the aid only of a large pocket knife. The thick branches which formed the corner posts and cross pieces, among which the lighter ones were entwined to make the sides and top, had been sharpened with a knife and driven into the ground with a large stone, as the whittlings, discarded branches and discolored stones scattered about on the outside plainly witnessed.

There were signs of a meal having been cooked, but no preparations for another were visible, save only the blazing fire and a few sharpened sticks with charred ends, which had evidently been used for broiling spits. The intruder waited some time for the return of the unknown occupant, and then, his desire to reach camp conquering his curiosity, he left the place and resumed his journey down the stream to Betsyville. In the course of his stay in camp he made inquiries about the owner of the hut, only to learn that its existence was unknown to the frequenters of Johnson's. Only he and the mysterious builder had,