

vein, and for awhile he revelled in the accumulation of wealth. Then, the vein was lost again. There seemed to be no farther chance, and he determined to go to San Francisco. Before taking his departure, however, he wished to do some missionary work, and so he passed around the bibles. Bibles are always handy and ready for distribution. For some reason, saints take more pleasure in distributing them than bread and butter. It is for the glory of God, while bread and butter is for the benefit of man.

The deacon called a meeting, made a little speech and a long prayer. His speech was as follows:—

"Fellow-travellers to eternity, we are sojourners here for a few days only. This is a world of shadows, a vale of tears. We must prepare for the judgment. We must sit in sackcloth and ashes and mourn our sins. I speak to you as on the verge of hell. I can hear the roaring of the flame and the groans of the tormented. I can see the wrath of God. Oh, tremble, for he is a great and terrible God! Listen to his word, I give it to you. Read and meditate and repent, and cry out for mercy."

The deacon's prayer was too long to report. But there was no need of that, for everybody at Golden Throne knew it by heart. The deacon always prayed extemporaneously. He believed that one's petitions should come directly from the heart. He was down on all rituals and ceremonies. Nevertheless, his prayer was always the same; and, after a few times, the whole camp could repeat it as glibly as the deacon himself. No one, however, felt disposed to rob the deacon. His prayer was as safe as if copyrighted.

"Say, deacon," said Charlie, "I think you might do something better than distribute those Bibles. There's Aunt Eliza down here, she's sick and can't do any washing and needs money. Sell the Bibles and give her the money."

"I can't do that," said the deacon. "The Bible is for our immortal souls. The body must perish, but the soul survives."

"But, while the body does live, I think we'd better take care of it. If the soul has another chance, so much the better. The body hasn't, and we ought to be kinder to it. Come now, I'll give you fifty dollars cash down for them books. I'll burn the books, and you can give the money to poor Eliza and help save her life."

"Oh, no!" said the deacon. "I'll take your money and send it to the heathen, but I must distribute these Bibles. I'm agent for the missionary society. I'll forward your contribution to the Sandwich Islands or to Patagonia. I may be the means of converting some poor savage."

"Yes, and making a rogue of

him, I'll take the money to the poor folks here," said Charlie.

The deacon distributed the bibles with solemn unction, quoting a text here and there, such as: "The devils believe and tremble. The wicked flee when no man pursueth. Woe unto you generation of vipers. Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting flames. Without are sorcerers, dogs and whoremongers," and all such delectable phrases, which he was very fond of repeating.

I suppose not many tears were shed when the deacon left the camp. He pretended to be very poor, but the fact is he took away about twenty thousand dollars. Although so humble in outward appearance, he had a vast ambition. He meant to be a millionaire, and build a church and endow a seminary. With what success, we shall find out hereafter.

CHAPTER XVII.

Months rolled by.

"I am going to pull up stakes," said Charlie. "I have had enough of this life, haven't you Bill? It's time for a change."

"I'm ready," said Bill. "We've done pretty well."

"That's a fact. Golden Throne has turned out to be a 'golden throne' for a good many of us. We struck it rich in Jimmy's mine; and ours hasn't been any poor shakes. We count up a good heap. We might as well stop and enjoy the world."

"Of course. It's no use to earn this money, unless we spend it; and we can't spend it here to any advantage."

"Not at present; but Golden Throne is bound to be a big place. Do you know there are first-class mineral springs where Prince Hall has squatted? This will be the Saratoga of the West. We might stay and become nabobs. But we have the golden key, and can open the doors anywhere. I'm bound for 'Frisco. Something will turn up there. If I get tired, I can come back, for I shall still hang on to my claim. Do you tumble to this, Bill?"

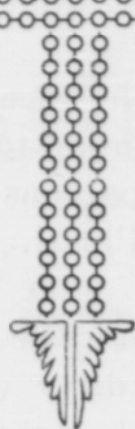
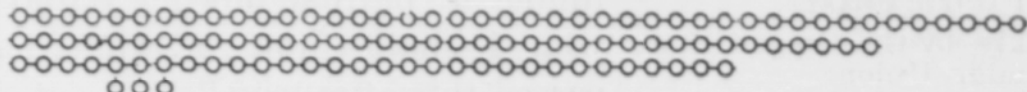
"I do."

It doesn't take long for miners to equip themselves to go anywhere, and the next day these adventurers were ready.

"Good-y, Grubbins. I'm glad you've been elected to the legislature. I gave you my little vote. Do the best you can. You've got a hard row to hoe to please yourself and the people and the rulers, for we have rulers, though we don't dub them with any titles; and, in order to succeed, you must bend the knee to them. But this is not always safe, for people have strength and occasionally know how to use it, and you must keep half an eye on them, or you will go overboard."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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