

THE LURE OF DIM MOUNTAIN TRAILS

FORMER MINING HOME OF

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

LIVED IN LONE MINER'S CABIN

At Abandoned Mine on Mount Saint Helena in California

(M. J. Brown, Courier, Oregon City)

Doomed to know not winter, only spring a being trod the flowery April; blithely for a while took his fill of music, joy, of thought and seeing, came and stayed and went, nor ever ceased to smile.

There are very few people in this country who know where the tablet is from which the above is copied, and it may make some of you scratch your heads to recall who wrote the lines.

I'll tell you where to find it and how to get to it.

Due north from San Francisco runs a branch line of the Southern Pacific. It runs 75 miles and stops, stops at Calistoga, the beautiful little palm-shaded village at the head of the Napa Valley.

A great range of mountains rises up like a wall and forbids the lines of steel to go farther. And there is nothing beyond a railroad would build for—just great wood-covered mountains. And there is little beyond a white man would care for—just great hills of silence.

Yet up in these mountains Robert Louis Stevenson found a home for many months. There he fought the dread tuberculosis; there he wrote two of his many books; there he wrote the descriptive story of his mountain home "The Silverado Squatters."

In Calistoga I found an old friend from New York, M. W. Hill, and together we started for the mountains, to the old home of Stevenson.

One horse and a buggy was the outfit. It was a case of walk up the mountains with any rig, and one horse could come down as easy as a four-in-hand. And then in case we should meet a team, it was so much easier to pass—passing is a matter to be seriously considered on those mountain roads.

But first I must give you a little history of this mountain locality—of Mount St. Helena—and then, if you know Robert Louis Stevenson from his books, you will perhaps know why he went there.

Many years ago hundreds of men, mostly Chinamen, lived on Mount Saint Helena. There were great mines there, silver on one side, quicksilver on the other. Now they are abandoned and the mountain is deserted. The ore in the quicksilver mines ran out and the ledge in the once famous silver mine pinched out.

For miles we climbed Saint Helena to its summit, 4,500 feet above sea level, the old mountain horse going ahead with the reins tied up, following on foot, and there were placidly passing a hazy hub would project over an abyss a thousand feet straight down.

And I thought back to the busy days, the money-mad days of California, when loaded four-in-hand freighters went over these winding dangerous passes at all hours of the day and night.

At noon we reach the summit, two miles of practically level road, and then from a turn in the road we saw what was once a beehive of industry—spread out before us was a deserted mining town.

There stood the big mill, just as it stood years ago when the engineer shut off the steam for the night. There stood the big engine with the drive belt still on. There were the mine dumps, the Chinese bunk houses, the company store, the officers' quarters, the fire-proof vaults, the barns, forge shops, water works and the barn where the quicksilver ore was baked.

And as we passed the silent where many a load of ore had been loaded, a deer jumped out of a brake and ran down the mountain side.

A mountain of itself is lonesome and depressing. A deserted village is even more so. Together they present a picture of lonesomeness one does not care to look at long. The awful silence and desolation get on your nerves, and a loud spoken word or a laugh sounds like false notes—out of harmony with the surroundings.

Once seven hundred men worked in these big holes, worked night and day and over these mountain roads a string of freighters brought in the food and supplies, and guarded rigs carried out the quicksilver tubs. Now it is the home of great silence.

But the mountain village was not entirely deserted as we found out an hour later.

As we drove into the thickest of the village, we saw smoke arising from a chimney, and a woman stood in the door of what was once the main office of the mining company.

We stopped. A man came up the road, a young man, walking lame. We put the horse in a barn and stayed to dinner. Here is the story, in short form.

He was a mining engineer. They had been married two years. An accident in a mine crushed his leg and it was amputated. Crippled, and unfitted for a superintendent's work, he with his wife went up onto Saint Helena, where he purchased the long abandoned mine dumps on a small royalty contract, and began to experiment with and work out a process he had long studied on, a process to work over these mountains of refuse and take out the quicksilver.

Details are tedious, I will not bore you. After weeks of solicitation he found enough men who would take a chance that his process would make good, and he raised \$2,500, with which he bought two concentrators and started his experiments.

That he was making good, there was ample proof. He showed us filled tubes in the vaults and we took off our rings and forced our hands to the bottom of pails filled with quicksilver. And you have to force them. The liquid is so resisting and heavy that you can scarcely push your hand to the bottom.

The young engineer said he could take out at least \$300 a day with one man to help him and that he had enough ore on the dumps to last one

hundred years.

To those unfamiliar with mining I would state that the "dumps" are ore that is considered too low grade to pay, and it is carted out of the mines and dumped into the ravines.

But I started to tell you of Robert Louis Stevenson's old home. We went up the opposite side of Saint Helena, and it takes a long time to get there.

Leaving the young miner after dinner we started down the other side of the mountain, and just before dark we came to the Toll Gate and historic Mt. Saint Helena Inn, a long, one-story building with a saloon at one end, kitchen and dining rooms in the center and sleeping rooms at the other.

Here was where Stevenson came first, bringing his bride and Hill and I slept in the room they occupied.

There is the old toll gate, he describes in his story, a long fir tree, swinging on a pivot and so evenly balanced a boy could open or shut it, and there it stands today, a tribute to the old. It does the one mountain road for one and all who refuse to pay so much per mile for the privilege of driving over the highway.

It seemed to me that the author had not looked further, if he wanted quiet and dry mountain air, for Saint Helena Inn, shut in by forests on every side and overtopped by high mountain peaks, is a place ordinarily so restful that sleep haunts one and so quiet you can hear your hair grow.

But there are intervals of noisy rowdiness at St. Helena Inn, and these intervals doubtless drove Stevenson on. There are times when several four-in-hand freighters and their crews, taking goods over the only wagon road into a railroadless county (Lake) congregate there, and then there are nights when sleep does not come.

As soon as the grey showed over Mt. Saint Helena's crest the next morning, we were up, and not waiting for breakfast, we started up the mountain path to the former home of Stevenson—abandoned Silverado.

And far up on the mountain side we found it—or rather found the place that was once his home—for Silverado has been torn down and carted away, and all that remains of a once mountain of industry is the wooden mouth of the old shaft and the table where stood the miners' shack where Stevenson made his home for many months.

There today are the abandoned shaft, the shoot, the dump, the forge, the rails with a miners cart rotting away on them; there are broken implements, old rusted tin utensils.

All is decay and silence. How Stevenson could have stood it so long and remained sane, I do not understand. There is something uncanny about the whole place and a lonesomeness steals over you. You want to get away, want to run, want to get out where you can yell and not feel as if you were in a cemetery.

Near the forge house was a cluster of thick madrons, where was Stevenson's favorite seat, the place where he passed many hours at his writings. It is a beautiful view, overlooking the Napa valley for many miles—as far as the eye can reach.

And sitting on this ledge, fighting against dread consumption, no doubt yearning for his beloved Scotland he wrote these lines:

"A fine place, after all, for a wasted life to doze away in—the cuckoo clock hooting of the far home country."

For years he fought the white plague, but it finally conquered, and today his body lies buried in far off Samoa, on a mountain top which travelers say has a striking resemblance to Mount Saint Helena.

Several of the characters in Stevenson's sketches are living in Calistoga today.

And just a few lines about Silverado mine—once a hole in the ground whose everyday life was keenly watched by hundreds of investors and speculators.

Either Silverado was the biggest hard luck mine in California, or it was the biggest swindling game ever made a success of. And there are plenty of men in the Napa valley who will take either side of the proposition.

Some say over a half million dollars were taken out of this mine in a short time, while others will emphatically declare there was never an ounce of silver taken out that was not first taken in.

Some say that the wonderfully rich vein suddenly pinched out and no end of drifting could locate it again.

And others state it was the rawest bunco game San Francisco ever devised and every ounce of silver was salted, borrowed from another mine as a basis for selling two million dollars in shares.

If it was a fake it was a beautiful one. A city sprang up like a mushroom, and all California watched the mine. Then the vein was lost and the town went to decay.

There is many a man who believes that the lost seam will again be found. Many a squatter has jumped the claim, believing the mine was plugged, and some day, when stock could be bought for a cent a share, it would be opened again.

I looked into the black hole and thought of the many hopes that were buried there—hopes of wealth.

Then I went down to the madrona thicket, where Stevenson used to sit, looked off across the valley and thought of the one great hope that was lost there, the hope of health.

Silverado is a mine of buried hopes.

OREGON EQUITY NEWS

LITTLE EQUITY SERMONS

Three people in town to be fed, to one in the country to do the feeding.

If all the produce was controlled by a business organization of farmers well, "the bread line" would come our way wouldn't it?

It takes thirty-six train loads of produce every day to feed New York City, and they have to pay for it and they would have to pay a profit to the farmer if the farmer were organized and one organization claims over one million farmers now, and only five million organized, and they are getting better organized.

Is the Kansas farmer to blame for not raising more eggs when 20 cents per dozen is all he gets for his eggs? Is the consumer in Philadelphia to blame for not eating more eggs when he has to pay 75 cents per dozen? It seems there is 55 cents tariff on eggs between Topeka and Philadelphia that Congress has failed to remove.

Organizer Wallace reports another local in Clackamas County and the writer expects to shake the bushes up in Linn County during December. We are slowly but surely building our market machine and someone besides gamblers and speculators will set the price. Every member boost.

They have not passed a pure food and drug act yet that prevents the farmer and his family from eating apples with worm holes in them, but it seems the poor children in Portland are pretty well protected by these laws with the tariff added by the organized dealers. That's a protective tariff.

The American Navy has boycotted the American farmer and is buying its supply of beef from foreign countries. Is shades of Paul Jones and Commodore Perry! What sort of patriotism is this? What will the American farmer think about this kind of patriotism that uses his money to patronize the foreign farmer?

The recent decision of the Supreme Court of Oregon annulling our last registration law is proof that our courts have too much power. Courts should not have power to make or unmake laws or issue injunctions against the enforcement of law. Organized dollars always fare pretty well on court decisions.

When the tobacco trust refused to pay a price for tobacco sufficient to maintain the Kentucky farmer (which was about 1907.) The farmers united pooled their crops and tried to force prices up to a living standard. The courts issued decisions, injunctions and even the soldiers were called to shoot down the farmers. But now the farmers set the price and the day is not far away when the people will make the law and make and unmake our courts, and we will not have then a government of the people made by lawyers for the trusts.

The National Union will meet at Indianapolis December 16th. This is going to be the most important meeting ever held. Our next state meeting will be held in Oregon City in January. The next County Union will be in Oregon City, and election of officers and other business of importance will be transacted. All local unions elect officers in January.

Editor Brown seems to think the legislature is to blame for the registration law being annulled by our Supreme court. Most of the foreign nations leave the question of constitutionality of laws to the law-making body and do not permit their courts to have the power to declare any law unconstitutional. If the common people controlled the courts they also would control their decisions, but organized dollars always find a court to appeal to to get a decision to suit them. Courts of this country are not satisfied with all judicial power but it has been decided by the courts themselves that a Circuit or Federal Judge can call out a militia.

There is no use in having Congress and Legislatures or even Governors if the courts are going to usurp their power. Our national constitution never gave our supreme court power to declare any law unconstitutional. They have usurped that power like other courts are now doing.

We have a new tariff law to lower the cost of living and the cost of living goes higher. Butter has gone to one dollar a roll with foreign butter coming in. There never was a tariff on money and it seems to be scarcer and higher than ever. Mortgages are taking the farms and our land is getting poorer and the farmers who are not organized are just waiting like the city poor for some savior to come and deliver them from poverty and slavery. As long as they have the power within themselves to organize and set the price they need not look for deliverance in any other direction.

Our road laws in Oregon are very queer. Our legislature makes the regular road tax levy and the farmer has nothing to say and the County Court appoints a supervisor and says how it shall be spent and the farmer who pay the tax, has nothing to say and get no benefit from the tax. If the roads should all become impassable the farmer would live about as long as the people in the city and good roads never have been known to raise the price of what the farmer has to sell.

The City of Cleveland was snow-bound three days and ran out of food. Now suppose all the farmers would agree to not market anything for two weeks. The result would be a bread line from New York to San Francisco and the price of everything would soar very high. It would not inconvenience the farmer to rest two weeks.

All the wealth of this nation is produced by a profit system and when the crop has been sold and distributed and the farmer invoices he finds no profit but the banks, railroads and middlemen are singing prosperity and are very proud of the system.

The farmer finds these other people well organized and setting the price on what they sell. Now that is all right that far, but they set the price on what the farmer sells. That is all wrong. The farmer should organize and set the price on his produce because he alone knows what it costs to produce it and what risks he has to run and at what price he has to have to pay all expenses and live like an American family should live. The American farmer should get busy and stay busy.

P. W. Meredith.

Guarding Against Croup

The best safeguard against croup is a bottle of Foley's Honey and Tar Compound in the house. P. H. Ginn, Middleton, Ga., writes: "My children are very susceptible to croup, easily catch cold. I give them Foley's Honey and Tar Compound and in every instance they get prompt relief and are soon cured. We keep it at home and prevent croup."—Huntley Bros. Co.

TO UNITE ALL ORGANIZATIONS

Proposal that Organizations Affiliate under the American Farmers' Federation

The following resolutions were passed at the conference of representatives of Farmers' Associations held at Indianapolis last month, and it shows the end to which the farmers of the country are working:

Resolved, That in the sense of this conference that each and every local and general society, association and organization of farmers be cordially invited and urged to co-operate in a movement to federate all agricultural organizations for the purpose of the establishment of a practical, efficient national system of marketing; and be it further

Resolved, That as the Farmers' Society of Equity has superior facilities for promoting such a federation, with a marketing system already in operation and an organization that covers a large portion of the United States, and a proposed plan for a complete national system, be it empowered to conduct a campaign to bring these important and vital matters to the attention of other organizations and associations; and be it further

Resolved, That in order to strengthen the movement, and build up a working foundation for such federation, other associations be invited to unite with this movement at once as body units, they being granted in return the services of the present system of the Farmers' Society of Equity; and be it further

Resolved, That as soon as possible to secure a satisfactory representation of delegates from other societies and organizations, a convention be held to organize the federation, elect officers, adopt a constitution and by-laws, and firmly establish a foundation for a permanent national system of marketing. To this end the officers and members of all agricultural organizations and every individual farmer who feels the need of reform in marketing are hereby invited to investigate the movement and lend their hearty support to the accomplishment of such a federation.

Resolved further, That we recommend that the new organization be called the American Farmers' Federation.

Doan's Regulents are recommended by many who say they operate easily effects. 25c at all stores.

Equity Warehouse at Mt. Pleasant. The regular meeting of the Mt. Pleasant Local was held on Friday evening December 5th. Several members of the Maple Lane Local were present and the two societies decided upon a plan for opening a warehouse at Mt. Pleasant. A part of the Commercial Club building will be rented at once and a manager put in charge and other preparations made for the handling of farm produce. It is expected that the business will be conducted in conjunction with the Equity Warehouse in Portland. The details of the plan will be worked out by a board of three directors, who shall be chosen from the two locals.

The meetings of this local in the future will probably be held in the new Commercial Club hall and secret work introduced into the society. It will be well for persons interested in Equity work for persons interested in Equity work to have an eye on Maple Lane and Mt. Pleasant for these two locals working together will make a live organization.

New Local at George. A new Local was organized by John Wallace recently at the town of George in Clackamas County with the following charter members: Julius Paulsen, Pres. A. H. Miller, Vice-president; Wm. Held, Sec. Otto Paulsen, Treas; Ed Harders, A. M. Gansman, Henry Klinker, Henry Reimer, Theo. Harders, Henry Schmidt, R. Miller, N. A. Rath. All of these are from George, and John Marshall is from Eagle Creek.

LOGAN. The recent basket social was very successful in every way and reflects great credit for the committee that had it in charge. It was composed of Mrs. Hagemann, Henry Bahler and Effie C. Kirchem. Mrs. Hagemann, as chairman, took an active part in the work. There was a short opening programme consisting of music by Frank Schwartz, Mrs. Goss and W. Kerr, vocal music by Mrs. L. Kirchem and Mrs. A. Gill and a recitation by Lilian Anderson. "The Dress Rehearsal" a play in one act, was given by Earl Gerber, Louis Kohl, Emma Benson, Effie Kirchem, Mahala Gill and Ivan Gerber. Karl Fallert was auctioneer and the baskets went lively for a good price. There was a dance to wind up with. The total proceeds was over \$89.

The new list of officers of Harding Grange, elected on the 6th, is as follows: Master, A. M. Kirchem; Overseer, A. F. Sloper; Sec. Mrs. Gladys Sloper; Treasurer, F. P. Wilson; Steward, Geo. A. Kohl; L. A. S. Helen Tracy; Lecturer, Effie C. Kirchem; Chaplain, Mrs. A. Newkirk; Ceres, Mrs. S. Hagemann; Pomona, Sylvia Brown; Flora, M. A. Gill.

There was a discussion over Jonathan Bourne's National Aid road bill, Louis Funk and Fred Gerber being the leading speakers. All the speakers were opposed to bonding bills of any kind and when it came to a vote there was one vote in favor of the bill and 35 against it.

It was voted to extend an invitation to Pomona Grange to meet here either in January or April. Fred Gerber has put up a railing for the front porch of the grange hall to prevent possible accidents and also an alighting platform in the rear of the hall. Jacob Durig recently had two run-aways in one day while on a trip to Oregon City.

Mrs. L. E. Robbins returned from a two weeks' business and pleasure trip to Oregon City and Portland, and was accompanied by Mrs. Lydia E. McConnell and two little daughters who spent several days visiting relatives and friends before returning to their home at Milwaukie.

The announcement has been made that the Dramatic Club of Stone and Logan young people will give a play at the Grange Hall on December 13th. There was a quilting bee last week at the home of Mrs. Anna Gill. The quilts were the result of a collection taken up for the benefit of Mrs. Bartsche and family.

F. P. Wilson took a load of pork to Portland last Friday. Farmers are losing money by not having a load of pork to sell every week. However, they can cut up money fast enough to keep the farmers from getting into the income tax class.

L. E. Anderson has a man grubbing on the Ole Thompson place. It reminds the writer of old cheese-making times to get a letter from Samuel Olmstead. He and his father, sister and brother-in-laws are at Fremont, Lake County, and have between them 800 acres of homestead land. They ran a cheese factory there last year and are doing well for the limited number of cows. They wish to buy young cows, which are high up there, but we shall have to tell them ditto here. The letter is headed "The Last Chance Ranch."

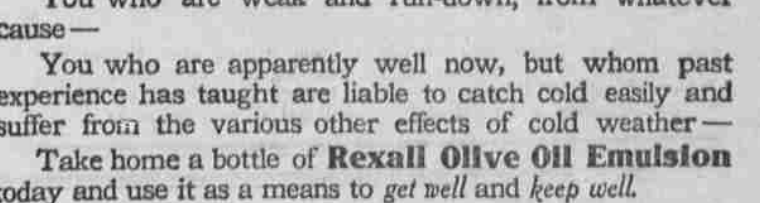
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