

THE RED MOUNTAIN BAR

IT IS GRAPHICALLY DESCRIBED BY PRENTICE MULFORD.

An Unappreciated Paradise—A Settlement in Numbers Small, in Individuality Large—Some Queer Characters and Events—"Old Mac" and Bloody Bill.

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THE California mining camp was ephemeral. Often it was founded, built up, flourished, decayed and had weeds and herbage growing over its site and hiding all of man's work inside of ten years. Yet to one witnessing these changes it seemed the life of a whole generation. Of such settlements Red Mountain Bar was one. Red Mountain lay three miles above Swett's Bar, "up river." I lived "off and on" at the "Bar" in its dying days. I saw it decay gently and peacefully. I saw the grass, trees and herbage gradually creep in and resume their way all over its site as they had done ere man's interruption.

I lived there when the few "boys" left used daily, after the close of an unsuccessful river season, to sit in a row on a log by the river's edge, and there, surveying their broken dam, would chant curses on their luck. The Bar store was then still in existence. Thompson was its proprietor. The stock on hand had dwindled down to whisky. The bar and one filled bottle alone survived. On rainy nights, when the few miners left would gather about the stove, Thompson would take down his fiddle and fiddle and sing "What can't be cured must be endured," or "The king into his garden came; the spicess smell about the same"—a quotation of unknown authorship. Of neighbors, living in their cabins strung along the banks for half a mile above the store, there was Keen Fann, an aged mercantile and mining Chinaman, with a colony about him of lesser and facially indistinguishable countrymen of varying numbers. Second, "Old Harry," an aged negro, a skilled performer on the bugle and a singer who offered at times to favor us with what he termed a "little ditto." He was the Ethiopian king of a knot of Kanakas gathered about him. Third, "Bloody Bill," so called from his frequent use of the sanguinary adjective, and, as may be guessed, an Englishman. Fourth, an old Scotchman, one of the Bar's oldest inhabitants, who would come to the store with the little bit of gold dust, gathered after a hard day's "reworking," complaining that gold was getting as scarce as "the grace of God in the Heelands of Scotland." Fifth, McFarlane, a white bearded old fellow, another pioneer, who after a yearly venture into some strange and distant locality to "change his luck," was certain eventually to drift back again to the Bar, which he regarded as home. Down the river, nestled high up in a steep and picturesque gulch, stood the buckeye-embowered cabin of old Jonathan Brown, the ditch tender, a great reader of weekly "story papers," who lived like a boy in the literature of the Western Frontier. Penny Awful, and who, coming to the store and perching himself on the counter, would sometimes break out in remarks about how "Them that Indians got the better of 'em at last," to the astonishment of the "boys," who imagined at first that he referred to Indians in the locality, suggesting possibilities of a repetition of the great Oak Flat uprising of 1850.

At the "top of the hill," a mile and a half away, stood the "Yankee ranch," kept by a bustling, uneasy and rather uncomfortable man from Massachusetts, aided by his good natured, easy going son-in-law. One rainy winter's day the "boys" congregated about Thompson's store because seized with a whim for the manufacture of little pasteboard men turning grindstones, which, fastened to the stove, were impelled to action by the ascending current of hot air. So they smoked their pipes and wrought all day until the area of stovepipe became thickly covered with little pasteboard men busily turning pasteboard grindstones. Then George M. G., the son-in-law of the Yankee ranch, came down the hill to borrow an ax.

George was of that temperament and inclination to be of all things charmed with a warm stove on a cold, rainy day, a least of good fellows about it, a frequent pipe of tobacco, maybe an occasional punch and the pleasing manufacture of hot air driven little pasteboard men turning pasteboard grindstones. He forgot his ax—sat down and began with the rest the manufacture of pasteboard men and grindstones. And he kept on till a late hour of the night, and staid at the Bar all night and all the next day and that next night, until the stovepipe was covered to its very top with little men, all working away for dear life turning grindstones; and on the second day of his stay the exasperated father-in-law suddenly appeared and delivered himself in impatient invective with regard to such conduct on the part of a son-in-law sent forty-eight hours previously to borrow an ax. Such was the circle off gathered on the long, rainy winter's eve about the Thompson store above. All smoked, Keen Fann frequently dropped in. He stood respectfully, as a hearer should in such a Christian assemblage, on its outer edge,

or numbly appropriated some unoccupied keg, and for the rest—grinned. From his little piggy eyes to his double chin Keen's face was a permanently settled grin.

Keen Fann had learned about twenty words of English and would learn no more. In his estimation these twenty words, variously used, after a sort of grammatical kaleidoscopic fashion, seemed adequate to convey everything required. One of his presumed English expressions long puzzled the boys. Asking the price of articles at the store he would say, "Too muchee pollyfoot." At last the riddle was correctly guessed. He meant, "Too much profit."

For protection Keen Fann built his house opposite the store. The Mexicans were then attacking and robbing isolated bands of Chinamen. At one Bar a few miles below, then deserted by the whites, the Chinese had inclosed their camp with a high stockade of logs. Yet one night they were attacked. The Mexicans besieged their fortress for hours, peppering them from the hillside with revolvers, and at last they broke through the Mongolian works and bore off all their dust and a dozen or more revolvers. Keen Fann's castle was in dimensions not more than 12 by 15 feet, and in height two stories. Within it was partitioned off into rooms not much larger than dry goods boxes. The hallways were just wide enough to squeeze through, and very dark. It was intensely labyrinthian, and Keen was always making it more so by devising new additions. No white man ever did know exactly where the structure began or ended. Keen was a merchant, dealing principally in gin, fish and opium. His store was involved in this curious dwelling, all of his own construction.

In the store there was a counter. Behind it there was just room for Keen to sit down, and in front there was just room enough for the customer to turn around. When Keen was the merchant he looked imposing in an immense pair of Chinese spectacles. When he shook his rocker in the bank he took off these spectacles. He was a large consumer of his own gin. I once asked him for the amount of his weekly allowance. "Me tink," said he, "one gallon hap" (half). From the upper story of the castle protruded a huge spear head. It was made by the local blacksmith, and intended as a menace to the Mexican bandits. As they grew bolder and more threatening, Keen sent down to San Francisco and purchased a lot of old pawnshop revolvers. These being received, military preparation and drill went on for several weeks by Keen and his forces. He practiced at target shooting, aimed at the mark with both eyes shut, and for those in its immediate vicinity with a most ominous and threatening waver of the arm holding the weapon. It was prophesied that Keen would kill somebody with that pistol. None over expected that he would kill the proper person. Yet he did.

One night an alarm was given. Keen's castle was attacked. The "boys," hearing the disturbance, grabbed their rifles and pistols and sallied from the store. The robbers, finding themselves in a hornet's nest, ran. By the uncertain light of a waning moon the Bar was seen covered with Chinamen gabbling and wildly gesticulating. Over the river two men were swimming. Keen, from the bank, pointed his revolver at one, shot his eyes and fired. One of the men crawled out of the water and tumbled in a heap among the bowlders. The "boys" crossed, and found there a strange white man, with Keen's bullet through his backbone.

I experienced about the narrowest escape of my life in a boat during a freshet on the Tuolumne crossing. I counted myself a good river boatman, and had just ferried over a Swett's Bar miner. He had come to purchase a gallon of the native juice of the grape, which was then grown, pressed and sold at Red Mountain Bar. When he crossed with me he was loaded with it. Some of it was outside of him in a demijohn and some of it was inside. Indeed, it was inside of us both. I set him across all right. On returning, by taking advantage of a certain eddy one could be rushed up stream counter to the current coming down for a quarter of a mile, and at a very rapid rate. It was very exciting to be carried in an opposite direction, within ten feet of the great billowy swell coming down. It was a sort of sliding down hill without the trouble of drawing one's sled up again. So I went up and down the stream. The Red mountain wine meantime was working. Night came on, a glorious moon arose over the mountain tops, and I kept sliding up and down the Tuolumne. I became more daring and careless, so that suddenly in the very fury of the mid-stream billows I slipped off the stern sheets at a sudden dip of the boat and fell into the river. I was heavily clad in flannels and mining boots.

Of my stay under water I recollect only the thought, "You're in for it this time. This is no common baptism." The next I knew I was clinging to a rock half a mile below the scene of the submergence. I had been swept under water through the Willow Bar, the walls of whose rocky channel, chiseled by the current of centuries, were narrower at the top than on the river bed, and through which the waters swept in a succession of boils and whirlpools. Wet and dripping, I tramped to the nearest cabin, a mile and a half distant, and staid there that night. Red Mountain Bar, on seeing the mishap, gave me up for lost—all but one man, who was negative on that point, for the reason, as he alleged, that I was not destined to make the final exit by water. I reappeared the next morning at the Bar. When I told the boys that I had been swept through the Willow Bar they instigated comparisons of similarity in the matter of veracity betwixt myself and Ananias of old. It was the current impression that no man could pass through the Willow Bar alive.

Chinese Camp, five miles distant, stood as the metropolis for Red Mountain Bar. It contained but a few hundred people. Yet in our estimation at that time it bore the same relative importance that New York does to some agricultural vil-



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Chinese nuts clustered near the Keen Fann castle. "Old Grizzly" McFarlane went away. So did Bloody Bill. So the Bar's population dwindled. Fewer travelers, dotlike, were seen climbing the steep trail over Red Mountain. Miller, the Chinese Camp news agent, who, with mail bags well filled with the New York papers, had for years centered from Red Mountain to Morgan's Bar, emptying his sack as he went at the rate of fifty and twenty-five cents per sheet, paid the Bar his last visit and closed out the newspaper business there forever. Then the county supervisors abolished it as an election precinct, and its name no longer figured in the returns. No more after the vote was polled and the result known did the active and ambitious partisan mount his horse and gallop over the mountain to Sonora, the county seat, twenty miles away, to deliver the official count, signed, sealed and attested by the local Red Mountain election inspectors. Finally the Bar dwindled to Thompson, Keen Fann and his Mongolian band. Then Thompson left. Keen Fann grieved at losing his friend and protector. He came on the eve of departure to the dismantled store. Tears were in his eyes. He presented Thompson with a basket of tea and a silver half dollar, and bade him farewell in incoherent and intranslatable words of lamenting polyglot English. PRENTICE MULFORD.

A Big Tank. The fish commission's exhibit of aquaria at the Chicago fair is to be immensely attractive. As thus far conceived, though details have not been perfected, the annex for the purpose will be 150 feet square and entirely of glass. There will be 1,000 feet in length of glass tanks filled with all sorts of water creatures, one half being devoted to marine life and the other half to the display of fresh water specimens. The visitor will walk between two lines of aquaria the length of the building.—Washington Star.

Governor Hoad says that during a recent trip through the oldest dairy section of New York state he saw on a day with the mercury down to zero hundreds of herds of cows patrolling the fields up to their ankles in snow. In many instances the owners were foddering the cows, either with hay or corn-stalks, on the snow, rode away from the stable. He wonders if these owners kept cows for profit or for fun.

The average salary paid to men clerks in Washington is \$1,221 a year, while that paid to women in the same departments is only \$569.

According to a German statistician there are 3,955 paper mills in the world, and of the 1,904,000,000 pounds of paper turned out annually half is used for printing, 660,000,000 pounds being required for newspapers alone.

The panorama was invented by a Scotchman named Robert Barker, who obtained a license in London in 1787 and erected a rotunda on Leicester square. He was associated with Robert Fulton, the practical inventor of the steamboat.

The celebrated diamond necklace which the worthy Ismail Pasha presented to the Empress Eugenie on the opening of the Suez canal, and which was sold, together with the rest of the French crown jewels, a few years ago, is again for sale for \$75,000. In Belgium the voting is restricted to those who pay a certain amount of direct taxes, and the whole electoral power of the country is vested in less than 125,000 persons. In Great Britain there is one elector to about six of the population; in Belgium only one to about forty-six.

Teacher's Wanted. To suit applications for membership in the North American Mutual Benefit Association, of Chicago, Ill. Address J. W. Thomas, District Agent, at Malala, Oregon.

Notice of Final Settlement. Notice is hereby given that I have filed my final report in the county court of Clackamas county, Oregon, as administrator of the estate of Joseph Florence, deceased. And the court of Joseph Florence, deceased, June 2nd, 1901 as a day and time for hearing such report and for the settlement of said estate. A. MATHES, Administrator of the estate of Joseph Florence, deceased. 5-8-3-29

Grist Mill For Sale. The mill at New Era will be sold at a bargain. Has the best location of any mill in the county being on both the Willamette and railroad, having a large grain growing district to draw from. Fine water power. Sixteen acres of good timber land go with the mill property. Good terms will be given and an experienced miller with a small capital will find this a paying investment. Call on or address E. C. Maddock, New Era, Oregon.

Assignee's Notice. In the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Clackamas county. In the matter of the assignment of S. R. Green, John Green and C. A. Hanks, partners under the firm name of Green, Bros. & Co., insolvent debtors.

Notice of Publication. LAND OFFICE AT OREGON CITY, ORE., May 19, 1901. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the U. S. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on July 14, 1901, viz: Margaret J. Wall.

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