

by the air of gentility and good-breeding which hung around him in spite of the rough miner's garments that he had chosen to assume. By the time they left Denver for the Blue he was deemed as indispensable to the company as Old Platte himself.

The forest of dark pines and furs that covered both sides of the valley of the Blue grew down to the bars of the river, which along its banks was thickly grown with wild gooseberry and raspberry bushes, and piled up here and there with great tangled heaps of driftwood which the spring floods brought down and left in masses of inextricable confusion along its sides. Back a little distance from one of those sandy flats, and nestled right in the shadow of the forest's edge, they built a long rough cabin early in June. In summer-time the spot was a wild and picturesque one. Green and luxuriant vegetation made a soft and brilliant carpet at the feet of the stately old pines; huge boulder-like rocks, their edges softened and rounded in the grasp of one of Agassiz' pre-Adamite glaciers that had ground its icy way down from the melting snow-caps above—rocks covered with bright lichens and tufts of moss—lay piled on one another at the foot of the steep mountain-side; while gnarled cedars twisted around about them, their rough red roots twining here and there in search of sustenance. Below the cabin a little way lay the bar—Chihuahua Bar they had christened it, out of deference to "Jones of Chihuahua," whose prospecting-pan had developed the fact that gold in promising quantities lay beneath it—and a little farther on the Blue sang merrily in its gravelly bed. Down the river, about two miles, was Blue Bar, where about two hundred miners had formed a settlement, and where a red-headed Scotchman, who combined the duties of a self-constituted postmaster with the dispensation of a villainous article of whiskey, kept a lively grocery and provision store.

During the early part of the season they had prospected up along the river, finding gold all the way, but not in quantities sufficiently large to warrant working. At the place, however, which they subsequently named Chihuahua (pronounced in the vernacular Chee-waw-waw) the perspicacious Jones had given it as his opinion, formed after mature deliberation and a sapient examination of some two or three shovelful of dirt, that there was a satisfactory "colour in that ar bank." Some hard work of about a week demonstrated that there were excellent diggings there, and then work was commenced upon it in good earnest. The Cabin was built, Gentleman Dick's choice of location being unanimously approved; two or three trips were made across the "Range" to the nearest settlement for materials and provisions; and then the real labour began. As they cut through the heavy bank of mould and gravel, gradually eating a long trench to the bed-rock, prospects grew better and better. At last, one day a narrow ledge of brittle, shaly rock came in view, covered with a coating of thick, heavy yellow mud, of which Old Platte gathered a panful and betook himself down to the river-side. A war-whoop from the direction in which he had disappeared came ringing through the gooseberry bushes to their ears, and with a responsive yell and a simultaneous dropping of shovels and picks they all dashed off to his side. He was discovered in a condition of great excitement, dancing wildly around the pan, in the bottom of which about half