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Late John McKane, "Fife Millionaire"

A Scottish Newspaper Has An Extended
Account of His Adventurous
Career.

Under the heading "Fife Millionaire—Adventurous Career of a Policeman's Son," the Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette (Scotland) of June 21 has the following account of the life and death of the late John McKane.

A cablegram was received in Dunfermline on Saturday from Oakland, California announcing the death of John McKane known as "The Nevada Man."

Born at Markinch in 1862, the deceased had a remarkable career, during which he is reputed to have amassed a fortune of more than a million pounds in gold mining and other enterprises. The son of a constable in the Fife county police force, he spent his boyhood in the Dunfermline district, his father at that time stationed at North Queensferry. Finishing his education at Dunfermline High School, he served his apprenticeship in the Royal Bank of Scotland under Dr. John Ross, and in 1884 emigrated to New Brunswick, where he entered the service of the Royal Bank of Canada.

Without the faintest idea of becoming a mining king, McKane toiled for a decade as a banker. Then the fame of Rossland's silver mines was bruited about, and he was stirred. He "yearned toward the sky line where the strange roads go down," and, taking Horace Greely's advice, he, as he said, "hit the trail." He came home, and interesting many of his life friends in the Rossland boom, he in 1896 floated a company. McKane plunged but the venture was not successful.

Turning his attention to politics, he was a candidate for the legislative house of British Columbia, and also ran for membership in the parliament of the Dominion at Ottawa. On both of these occasions he was beaten, but beaten only by a small majority and after a hard fight. Of one of these instances he was wont to tell the following story that will illustrate the customs of the mining camps of the west.

MINERS METHODS.

"It was when I was making the race in the district of Yale-Cariboo," said he.

"My opponent for the franchises of the miners was a lawyer named Gallagher, who was known far and wide by the sobriquet of 'Big Bill.' He was six feet four—that's why. There is nothing small about Yale-Cariboo. The constituency stretches from near the boundary line of the United States far northward into the uttermost parts of British Columbia—hundreds of miles. After I had campaigned the more settled of this tract there was still one polling place I had not visited, the 'Hundred and Fifty Mile House.' Neither had Gallagher. Then we decided to go together.

"Peary may have got farther north than that but I doubt it. However, after days of travelling through the mountains we arrived. The free and independent electors were gathered in the largest saloon in the place, and the opening having fallen to me, I started to deliver my address. I hadn't twenty words out when a big miner stood up and motioned to me to stop, and turned around and said:

"Boys, we dont know McKane, and we dont know Big Bill Gallagher, and we dont care about the election. Let's cut the talk, settle it by a draw and the forty-five votes in the camp goes to the winner of the first jackpot."

"Well that was popular. It took. The meeting adjourned right there, and had not Big Bill Gallagher won the first jackpot and the forty-five votes in the camp he would never have won his seat in parliament, and I would probably never have seen Nevada."

McKane became known as the "Nevada Man," because he was credited with doing more than any other to make the state containing Goldfield, Bullfrog and Tonapah, famous. With the advent of Schwab into the affairs of Nevada was started the stream of capital necessary for the mining development of the state, and the result was soon seen in more stable values of the properties and the steady stream of gold they produced.

To his credit, be it recorded, that after he had gained some wealth in Nevada, McKane returned to the old country, and

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not only did he repay the shareholders who had invested money in his unsuccessful Company all their money, but added 5 per cent interest from the day of subscription. Mr. McKane, it may also be mentioned, also owned miles and miles of timber in New Brunswick.

AN ANTHEM WRITER.

When the McKane fortune was established on a firm basis, he took a brief vacation from the Alkali dust and the meagre comforts of the camps. For a holiday he went far into the woods of Canada, sunk the man of action in the dreamer, and communed with nature in her wildest mood.

While there came to him the news of the death of Sir Henry Irving, whom, of all the actors, he most admired. Steeped in the melancholy of the woods, with the poems of Burns and Shakespeare set to music in the murmuring of the pines, and passing thus in cadence through his brain, the parting words of the actor-knight stamped themselves upon his brain—"Through night to light. Into thy hands, O Lord; into thy hands," as they were uttered as the curtain fell on that last performance of "Becket" at Bradford. And the sighing of the wind in the lonely forest took up the refrain, "into Thy hands," and there, in the solitude, John McKane's first anthem was born, and today it is being published in New York:

(Continued on Page Three.

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