

ing miners bear him a few paces back of his tent, and deposit him in the ground. Hurriedly, the coarse gravel is thrown in upon the uncoffined corpse. He is buried. There, by the side of that cool spring, at the foot of the Sierra Nevada, sleep the remains of Charles Mason. No marble monument marks the spot; no lettered tomb-stone stands at the head of the grave; no rose-bush or weeping-willow grows there, planted by the hand of affection; that dear mother cannot pay her weekly visits there, and shed burning tears over the grave of her only son. But there the mournful howl of the coyote is heard; the wild birds scream in the mountains, and the hoarse winds whistle through the branches of the tall pines. As the widowed mother gathers her little family around the domestic altar, and lifts her feeble voice to heaven in prayer on every returning eve, one seat is vacant; one seat is vacant around the fire-side of the family circle; one vacant seat at the table; one in the old church pew.

More than two years elapsed before that sorrow-stricken family could hear anything of the fate of Charles, and then not till accident enabled me to forward them the melancholy intelligence.

How many have thus found their graves among these mountain ranges, who left home with strong hopes and stout hearts--visions of gold dancing through their minds. How many sleep thus lonely on the plains; how many on the Isthmus; and over how many have the curling waters closed, as their lifeless remains were cast unceremoniously over the railing of the steamboat and the unseaworthy sail-vessel. Many an unrecorded tale of sorrow, suffering and death has followed in the train of California gold-hunting.

Call it weakness if you please, but when the life-giving spirit shall quit this mass of flesh and bones, my prayer to Heaven is that this lifeless form may find a lodgment in the old family church-yard by the side of my mother.

“ Let my death-slumber be where a mother’s prayer,
And a sister’s tear shall mingle there;
For ’twill be sweet, ere the heart’s throb is o’er,
To know, when its fountains shall gush no more,
Those I so fondly have yearned for will come
To plant the first wild-flower of spring on my tomb.”

—*Selected.*