

PALLAS.

I sat at home, in easy chair,
Near Pallas with her golden hair.

The mellow lamplight on her tress
Trembled with untold tenderness.

Her eyes, with far-off, distant gaze,
Were penetrating future days.

"Reveal," quoth I, "what vision lies
Within the dreams you catechise?"

What wondrous land of love and song
Has traced my dreaming bride so long?"

She slowly turned her graceful head,
That Phidias might have carved, and said:

"I had a foolish, passing thought—
A vain regret the moment brought.

Our quiet lives have no great needs;
Our kindly friends do no great deeds;

I do not care to walk where kings
Receive the homage power brings;

But long to know those few of earth
Within whose minds grand thoughts have birth.

To breathe with them an ampler air,
To feel with them a nobler care.

But we are chained by circumstance;
We stand, but seem not to advance."

I pointed where the open door
Showed shelves well stocked with motley lore;

"There is the company you seek,
The ancient Roman and the Greek;

There, by the sunny southern wall,
The blind old Homer waits your call;

Imperial Caesar bows most low
Beside the courtly Cicero;

While, strangely out of place with these,
Mark Twain cracks jokes at Sophocles;

There stands the king of bards, sublime,
'Not of an age, but of all time!'

Rare Jonson, side by side with Poe,
And Hawthorne chatting with Defoe;

Poor Goldsmith claims our tender heart,
And Fielding charms us by his art.

There Humboldt, erst inspired of God,
Now learns what wids our Stanley nod;

While Newton bows his mighty head
To catch the last word Tyndall said;

The monarchs of the ages these—
One perfect line from Socrates!

The old world and the new one, too,
Are waiting on those shelves for you."

She spoke intensely then: "A man
Must find his learning where he can;

A woman, in her slightest looks,
Sees what is written not in books;

And I would rather learn to know
By keenly watching one great brow,

When inspiration flashed its light
Like some great meteor in the night,

Then sit, and plod, like common clay,
On what the master cast away."

She rose, and passed from out the room,
Which straightway seemed enwrapped in gloom.

Ere long I heard her rich voice rise,
Breathing angelic melodies.

She sang with sympathetic tone,
The notes divine of Mendelssohn.

I stole to where the door ajar,
Revealed her like a glorious star.

I knew she felt within her heart
Impassioned longings after art.

As, mute, I stood to hear her sing,
She was to me a holy thing;

And, as I gazed, I breathed a prayer
And benediction on her there.

THE HERMIT OF TREASURE PEAKS.

In 1858, a couple of ragged and vermin-inhabited prospectors, wandering about one of the spurs of the Sierra, discovered gold, an article for which they had been assiduously searching for some months. Immediately on fixing their hungry optics to the fragment of auriferous rock, they gave a shout of delight, drove down a stake, fixed a notice of location, and announced the birth of a new town, calling the same Treasure Peaks.

When the place was dubbed Treasure Peaks, even the visionary minds of the two unkempt gold hunters did not for a moment imagine that the mountain side would ever be graced by any more than one or perhaps two miners' cabins. They were not selfish men, and the next time they visited the town of Forks Flat they proclaimed their golden discovery at the first public bar of the place.

The idle population of Forks Flat was not slow in availing itself of the travelling facilities which led to Treasure Peaks. The trail up the mountain side was a rugged and tedious one and took the better part of two days to traverse; yet inside of six months a passable waggon-road was worn to the camp, and the place witnessed all the scenes of life and activity incidental to the birth of a new city.

When Treasure Peaks contained about a thousand inhabitants, the little town began to swell with importance. The mining prospects were, indeed, flattering, and the quartz ledges in the hills were rapidly being developed. Besides, they were productive, and the deeper the workers went, the richer and wider grew the veins. New cabins grew up every day, the prospect-holes became shafts, the bucket and windlass gave way to the donkey-engine, people poured in from all directions, and the village

child began to assume the airs of the municipal man.

In the midst of the bustle of business and money-making, the inhabitants of the Peaks did not forget that they had a rival—a small one, it was true—in the shape of the town of Forks Flat, and to wipe out the Flat from all commercial and geographical recognition was their sole aim. Joe Beggs, a man whose opinions had the advantage of considerable weight—as he ran a first-class blue-chip faro game—insisted on a newspaper:

"What we want for this growing camp is a first-class newspaper, that can properly set forth the interests of this mountain metropolis."

One of the crowd suggested that a man named Lightner in San Francisco was the party wanted.

"Has he got the classical education necessary to run a newspaper in a town like Treasure Peaks? Is he a man of elevated thought and vigorous expression? Is he a man that's well read?—one that we can refer gambling disputes to with a guarantee of a proper rendering of the points."

The party who had suggested the name of Lightner vouched for the thorough capacity of the man, and by the next day \$3,000 were raised as a bonus to induce him to come. Lightner was sent for, and in about a month the citizens of the Peaks began to look for the advent of the printing-office.

One sultry afternoon, a horseman came up the grade at a brisk pace, to announce that the printing establishment was on the way, and would arrive in a few hours. This intelligence caused an extraordinary commotion in the camp, and as soon as the first flush of excitement was over, preparations commenced for giving the new editor a fitting reception—something which would glorify the Peaks forever, and correspondingly humiliate the commercial pride of Forks Flat.

It was just at nightfall when John Lightner, with two loaded freight waggons, came in view at a bend of the grade, half a mile below town. The sighting of the teams from the top of the hill was signalized by the explosion of an anvil—a mode of firing salutes much in vogue at that period. In an instant more, an American flag was hoisted to the top of a pole, while on a neighbouring eminence the welcoming bonfires were lighted, and there was a general rush to the foot of the main street.

When the teams halted, steaming and panting, at the town level, the journalist was considerably astonished to find a delegation of citizens drawn up to receive him. It had been agreed that Joe Beggs, the leading faro-dealer in the town, should deliver the address of welcome; and, for the first time since attaining his majority, the man of notable nerve and coolness was in a state of excitement which required a stiff horn of brandy, taken every fifteen minutes, to allay. When Lightner got down over the wheel, however, Beggs advanced, and with half-lifted hat, grasped him warmly by the hand, cleared his throat for the first oratorical effort of his life, and, after a slight pause began:

"MR. LIGHTNER.—In behalf of the citizens of this growing commercial metropolis and mining centre, I bid you thrice welcome to Treasure Peaks. [Here he threw his weight over on the other leg.] I assure you that the fact of my being the first man to be afforded the opportunity of welcoming a writer of your brains and ability to our midst, causes my breast to swell with a pride which would be impossible for me to conceal, even if I so desired. It is the happiest moment of my checkered and eventful existence, and I will not efface it from the tablets of my memory till my dying day."

At this point, the speaker, whose remarks had fully realized the most sanguine expectations of his friends, looked about him in a dazed way, and it was quite evident, to those who knew him best, that his stock of English had given out. Nothing daunted, however, he plunged boldly into the more congenial and familiar parlance of his profession, and struck out as follows:

"You will find the journalistic lay-out in this section a bang-up game to buck at, and with a man of your heft in the look-out chair we can call the turn on the whole coast. We boys, propose to play you open-up from the start and chip up our subscriptions to the last cove in the camp and to the full limit of the game. As long as you don't ring in a brace deal and keep clean cases you can bet heavy on the square-up support of this camp, and don't you forget it."

Three rousing cheers greeted Beggs' closing words, and one of his critical admirers critically remarked:

"He made some awful wild play at the start, but called the turn beautiful at the close."

Lightner thanked them cordially in a few quiet, well-turned remarks, and introduced his wife, who had remained on the elevated seat of the freight waggon, curiously contemplating the lionizing of her husband. She heard the three cheers given in her honour, saw the waving hats and bristling hands of welcome, and wished, more than at any other time in her life, that she had a thick veil to cover her beauty and blushes. Then came a fusillade of small arms, as a sort of gunpowder supplement to the cheering, and the boom of another anvil shook the air. A moment later her hand was grasped by the supple fingers of Beggs, who hastened to extend his apologies for the incompleteness of the preparations for the reception, and the utter poverty of their execution.

After having made the speech and chatted with the first respectable woman ever seen at the Peaks, Beggs seriously considered the propriety of securing a municipal charter for the town and getting elected mayor. When the reception was over and the ruddy light of the bonfires had ceased to gild the rough crags lying behind the Peaks, the crowd dispersed and for the rest of the night the public sentiment could be summed up in a remark of Beggs: "Now we'll make them Forks Flat fellers sick."

It took some weeks to set the little printing office on its legs and the constant presence of squads of inquisitive visitors did not materially facilitate matters. Over a hundred men came in to suggest a name, and such names! *The Tidal Wave, The Mountain Thunderbolt, The Mining Blast, The Sierra Snow Slide, The Voice of Truth, The Forks Flat Crusher, and The Treasure Peaks Howitzer* were a few proposed. The excitement incidental to the baptism of the new journal ran so high that one man was shot dead in his tracks, in a street debate over it.

The editor finally announced *The Treasure Peaks Standard*, and the first issue was hailed with a general outlay of enthusiasm, liquor and gunpowder. The proprietor of the leading saloon purchased the first copy, damp from the press, for twenty dollars, and put it proudly on exhibition in his cabinet of curiosities. The leading article dilating upon the prospects of the town, its growing industries, and inexhaustible resources, was voted "just the business" by everybody. Subscriptions and advertising poured in, and Lightner came to the conclusion that he had reached a spot where a small fortune awaited him.

Time showed that the editor had, indeed, wielded a prophetic pen. Treasure Peaks progressed with a steady development, and the founders of the city began to regret that they had not built on some spot where there was more room, instead of being huddled up in the confines of a mountain, with a precipice below, and a wall of rock behind them. Claims increased in value, corner lots advanced, the saloons were crowded and the gambling-hells resounded with strains of music and revelry; while the abodes of vice and the resorts of commercial industry literally made money "hand-over-fist."

The *Standard* was a weekly and Lightner and his wife did the work, both setting type, and each assisting the other in the odd jobs which are found in a printing office. As business increased Lightner concluded that his wife was overtaking herself, and finally the following was inserted in the paper:

WANTED.—A good, steady compositor to whom the highest wages will be paid. Apply at this office immediately.

Next day a young man called, and said he had come to answer the advertisement.

"I've been keeping cases at Beggs'," he said, frankly. "I could get nothing else to do, except mining, and my health won't stand it."

He said his name was Houghson, and he was from Maine. He was set to work at once, and proved to be a rapid, careful compositor, and just the man for the place.

There was no longer any necessity for Mrs. Lightner working as a type-setter, yet, after a few days, she came down and took a case by the side of Houghson. Presently, Houghson changed his slouched attire for new clothes, and manifested a decided interest in clean shirts.

One day Mrs. Lightner left a composing stick half full, and when she returned from dinner noticed that the balance of the type had been set. Next day Houghson found some wild flowers on his case. The new compositor assisted Mrs. Lightner whenever she "pied" a line, or fell into any vexatious troubles with the type. She needed assistance quite often, and Lightner was delighted with the thrifty ways and accommodating spirit of his new employe. On one occasion, in correcting Mrs. Lightner's type, their hands touched, but she made no effort to withdraw hers, and they lingered in contact. The woman's eyes met Houghson's, and in her confusion she "pied" a line, and the type, rattling upon the floor, caused her husband to look up. He saw, however, nothing but two people absorbed in their work.

Soon after, the new compositor resolved on a desperate adventure. He was setting some reprint, and a fresh piece of copy began with the words "I love you." He set them in his stick, and held it where she could see it. She gazed at it steadily a few seconds, and bit her lip with an angered expression, as if she considered such a liberty unwarrantable. Lightner went out a moment after, and Houghson took advantage of the opportunity afforded to make an explanation and apology, saying that the words he had set were in his copy.

"Then you did not mean it seriously?" she said.

"No."

The anger which Mrs. Lightner had assumed a few moments before now changed to genuine discomfiture. Houghson saw that the point so daringly won had been lost by sheer cowardice. She noticed his troubled face, and a few minutes later they exchanged smiles which spoke louder than the type.

It was a day or so before they began to renew their conversation, and then they did so by touching, successively, the boxes containing the letters, thus spelling words and sentences quite rapidly. Houghson grew bolder every day, and finally, using their system of dumb signals with-

in a few feet of the unsuspecting husband, they talked without reserve; the expressions of affection, born of a finger-touch upon piles of inanimate type, leaving no trace.

One night the woman contrived to have Houghson invited to the house. After accepting, Houghson gave her to understand that she must search the right pocket of his overcoat for a letter, when he came. That evening he called, and, taking off his coat, handed it to his employer, who was assisting him. He passed it to his wife, instructing her to hang it up, and, the instant his back was turned, the letter was extracted and another put in its place. Houghson smiled in the husband's honest face at the idea of making a letter-carrier of him, and Lightner smiled cordially in return.

After that, Houghson spent his evenings at Lightner's quite frequently—the husband pressing him to come, and the wife professing that she considered him a bore. They exchanged letters daily—each seeming to be endeavouring to outdo the other in expressions of affection; and all this time the woman treated her lover so coldly in the presence of her husband that on one occasion he took her to task for it.

"If you don't like the man, you should at least remember that he is a gentleman, and treat him with politeness."

"I can't endure his ways," was the reply, and the subject dropped.

The crisis in events was bound to come, sooner or later, and it came in due time.

One night, Lightner was standing on a knoll, in the rear of the printing office. It was an evening sweet with the delicious atmosphere which characterizes the mountains, and the strong scents of the pines loaded the breeze with a fragrance so suggestive of woods and glens that one could almost see the splendid scenery with closed eyes. He watched the rush of busy life beneath him. The roar of machinery, the clamour of the stamp-mills, and the cheery songs of the men blended grandly together. As the doors of the furnaces were opened at intervals, the glow of the fires penetrated the dark recesses of foliage beyond, and lit up the bleak rocks with mellow reflections. Lightner's mind reverted to the business of the past year, while he considered the prospects of the future; and when he thought of his cheerful though humble home, and devoted wife, he was indeed a happy man.

As he sat gazing upon the works below, he fancied that the glare upon the pines and rocks suddenly grew more pronounced. A moment later the shout of fire rang out; it was the first time that cry had ever been raised in the Peaks, and the camp was a scene of confusion at once.

The main mine of the place was burning; and there being nothing to check the rush of the flames, and no water facilities to speak of, the whole line of works went, one after the other. All night the pillars of fire shot upward from the shafts—as the underground workings communicated with each other—and these pillars rose above the tallest crags, while the thick, dun smoke shut out the sky. Below, the mines were filled with men perishing in the flames that swept from drift to drift, or suffocated long before in the sulphurous gases that on such occasions find their way to the remotest corners.

In the morning the flames were flaring from the shafts. The town had escaped, but every vestige of the mining industry had been swept away. It would not pay to rebuild. There was no longer any reason to conceal a fact, well known to the insiders, that the vein had "pinched out." Treasure Peaks was already a thing of the past, and the exodus began. The grade was filled with men and horses, leaving the stricken town as fast as possible. They did not even remain to take out the dead from the lower levels.

"Why should we dig 'em up from the ground to bury 'em again?"

No one could answer such a question, and the subject was not agitated. Business men did not sell out, they simply vacated the premises—finding, in many instances, that it was cheaper to leave provisions and merchandise than to remove them—something not at all uncommon in those days. Stores were gutted, and barrels of liquor rolled out for the mob. The streets were filled with howling drunkards, most of them singing snatches of the wild refrains which were born of the rush and riot of '49. Thus the town passed out of existence, with the inhabitants singing, fighting, drinking and drowning their troubles in a delirium of revelry.

The night after the fire Lightner's wife advised him to go down to the office and look after affairs. As he left she remarked that she was indisposed and would go to bed early, but he need not hurry back.

Half an hour later, as Lightner was sitting in his murky office, he thought he heard the clatter of hoofs, and went to the door; as he did so he saw two figures disappear over the grade, but thought no more of it.

By midnight he had put things to rights about the place, determining to move away with the rest in a day or two. As he went home he thought of his brave little woman who had faced the trials and privations of the past two years, and all for him. He entered the room where she was sleeping, but did not light the candle, for fear of waking her. He sat for half an hour beside the bed, filled with gloomy reflections and miserable foreshadowings. Then he bent over the pillow where he knew her head lay, and tried to kiss her cheek. He found nothing, and his hands wandered nervously over the bed-clothes a moment. Rushing to the window he