

RED ROCK CAMP.

AN EPISODE OF EARLY COLORADO.

My simple story is of those times ere the magic power of steam
First whirled the traveller o'er the plains with the swift-
ness of a dream,
Reducing unto a few days' time, the journey of many a
week.
That tell of old to the miner's lot, ere he "sighted" tall
Pike's Peak.

'Neath liquid sunshine filling the air, 'mid wild flowers
varied, gay,
A prairie waggon followed the track that led o'er the
plains away;
And most of those 'neath its canvas roof were of lawless
type and rude.
Miners—broad-chested and strongly built, a reckless
gold-seeking brood.

Yet two of the number surely seemed most strangely out
of place,
A girl, with fragile, graceful form, shy look, and beau-
tiful face;
One who had wrought out the old, old tale, left her home
and friends for aye.
Braved family frowns, and stranger's smiles love's
promptings to obey.

And the lover husband at her side, no miner unlettered
he,
Not such the tale told by well-shaped hands as a wo-
man's fair to see;
But his tall, lithe form, stalwart, well-knit, firm mouth
and look of pride,
Told of iron will, resolved to win a fitting lot for his
bride.

Tender he was, but the plains were vast, toilsome and
tedious the way,
Developing soon the fever germs that within her latent
lay;
And daily the velvet, azure eyes with a brighter lustre
burned,
And the hectic flush of her waxen cheek to a deeper car-
mine turned.

Oh! the dread time 'neath that canvas close, when she
bravely fought for breath,
Fire in her veins, whilst more panting came each labor-
ing painful breath.
At length one eve, she clasped his neck, with a wild and
wailing cry,
"O, darling, lay me on God's green earth, 'neath His
sun-bright clouds to die!"

Mutely the bridegroom caught her up after that touching
appeal,
Why refuse her prayer when on her brow was already
set death's seal?
To proffered help and rough words of hope, to protests
whispered low,
He murmured, "Leave us—go on your way! Good
comrades, it must be so!"

Then in the eyes of those reckless men bright tears were
glistening seen,
For in their rugged, though willing way, most kindly
had they been;
And no selfish fears of sickness dire had they showed by
look or word,
For whate'er of good dwelt within each heart, that help-
less girl had stirred.

They raised a rude tent, and from their stores they
brought of the very best,
Whispering of speedy help to be sent, as each clammy
hand they pressed.
"Nay, friends," he said, with a short, sharp laugh, more
painful than sob to hear,
"No help send back, for myself and wife must perforce
both settle here."

Then he sat him down and placed her head on his ach-
ing, throbbing breast,
While the sweeping rush of prairie winds seemed to
bring relief and rest,
And her dim eyes watched without a shade of regret or
passing pain,
The receding waggon, soon a speck on the wide and
boundless plain.

"Oh, Will! on your true and tender heart, tranquil
and happy I die,
Knowing our lives, though now severed here, will be
joined again on high;
One kiss, my husband, loving and loved, one clasp of thy
strong, kind hand,
One farewell look in thy mournful eyes ere I pass to the
Spirit Land!"

But, God! what is this? she wildly asks, with hurried
panting gasp;
Her fingers have touched a weapon of death in her hus-
band's hand close clasped;
"O, surely, you would not—dare not go, uncalled, to
your Maker's sight!"
"Wife, when passes your spirit away, mine, too, shall
take its flight!"

It boots not to tell the loving prayers that welled from
that true wife's heart,
She sued with an angel's holy power, a woman's win-
ning art,
Till that despairing man, with quick, low sob, his weapon
teased away,
And promised, till came his Maker's call, on this cheer-
less earth to stay.

Then sunshine lit up her wan, white face, and bright-
ened her failing eyes,
Enkindling upon her marble cheek the glow of the sun-
set skies;
Closer she nestled into his breast with a smile of child-
like bliss,
"Already a foretaste of you bright Heaven is given me,
Will, in this!"

A little while and the lashes drooped, unstirred by life's
faint breath,
Whilst the sweet smile on the perfect lips was sealed
there, for aye, by death.
With the second sunset he laid her in her lonely prairie
grave,
Then joined a passing miner's band that a friendly wel-
come gave!

But as time sped on, all wond'ring marked his silent, un-
social ways,
And the brooding nature, reeking nought for blame, nor
mirth, nor praise;
At direct tasks of the miner's toil with fevered zeal he
wrought,
But unto its tempting golden spoils he rarely gave word
or thought.

Then want and work and cold autumn rains brought
fever in their train,
And Red Rock Camp—echoed, alas! to delirious moans
of pain;
And the healthy shrank from the fevered, with hard un-
pitying eye,
And listening but to their selfish fears, left the sick, un-
nursed, to die.

Then unto the stranger in their midst new life, hope,
vigour came,
Enkindled swift in that nature grand, by charity's ardent
flame.
He nursed the sick and buried the dead, by the dying
watched until
The miners' rough low blessed the chance that had
brought them "Parson Will."

'Twas thus they named him. When health returned to
the stricken camp again,
Yet one victim more the fever claimed, it was him; nor
grief, nor pain
Looked forth from his earnest eyes, instead, they shone
with a radiant light,
As he whispered, "Joy and brightness come close after
the cold dark night."
A few short hours and from life's dull chain will my
weary heart be free,
Then, angel wife, my promise kept, I go unto God and
thee!"

Montreal.

MRS. LEPROHON.

HEARTS AND HANDS.

I am a widow with one son and one daughter.
We live on the north-western coast of Scotland,
in a spacious house, built one hundred and fifty
years ago by one of our ancestors. I have heard
that he was a naval officer in the British ser-
vice, and had lived under the British flag,
"wherever the breeze could bear or ocean
foam," until, weary with roaming, he sought
this world-forgetting spot, manifesting his en-
during love for the ocean by settling within the
sound of the siren's voice, yet safe from her
embrace. The mansion which he built must
be an emblem of herself—half-feudal, half-
modern—clinging to graceful tradition, yet
mindful of living facts. Everything in and
around the dwelling and the place suggests to
me the symptoms of family traits; the wild
shore, unvisited save by the heaving ocean; the
dark forest in one direction, looking as though
its recesses might be the abiding places of bogies
or of beautiful fairies; while on the other hand
lay the desolate yellow hills, crowned by gray
clouds that seemed ever unwilling to yield to
sunshine.

The house itself suggested refined comfort.
It was spacious and substantial. Every part of
it was moulded with a symmetry that lent grace
to its strength, and clearly bespoke a nature
cultivated and proud, secure of its own claims
and confident of its own taste; but the lofty
vestibule, the wide stairway, and the spacious
halls were imbued with the gloom that no fancy
decoration, nor music nor laughter, nor the in-
toxication of wine could unbend, for there was
an invisible presiding influence that seemed to
penetrate the hollowness of mirth and predict
the briefness of joy. From long seclusion from
such a haunt, my own mind has become as-
similated to the atmosphere, and when I attempt
gayety it is in that subdued form which ex-
presses due reverence for the stately gloom of
surrounding associations.

It was a gloomy night, the rain poured
heavily, but the winds lay still as if spectators
of the performance of the pitiless flood—a slow
heaving of the tide that was coming in from
the sea. The fire roared and crackled as if try-
ing to be hilarious in spite of the sullen gloom
without. Cousin William, my children and
myself sat around the broad hearth and a sym-
pathetic seemed to fall upon us all. I tried in
vain to think of something pleasant or cheerful
to say, but as each idea presented itself I found
some fault with it, as being too light, too
sombre, or too commonplace to be worth the
utterance.

At length, Cousin William—more in a tone,
however, of soliloquy than of conversation—
said:

"Yes! just thirty years to-night since he
died."

Anything was a relief to the long silence, and
we all eagerly caught at the opportunity.

"Since who died?" "Whom do you mean,
Cousin William?" "How strange that you
should remember so well anything that trans-
pired so long ago!" "Who was it that died?"
"Any one in whom we are interested?" I
asked.

"Only as a kinsman," he said, "and one of
whom you have sometimes heard—our cousin,
Sir Hugh, who was once possessed of these
domains; one who enjoyed the position and
advantages which wealth and title gave; one
who had a brilliant career, who should have had
a happy life, but whose death was strange and
sad."

"Do tell us," I said, "something about him.
I have always felt a curiosity about him, for all
the intimations I ever had of him have been
faint, indistinct glimmers—nothing plain and
explicit like the details of our other dead kins-
men; and I am just in the mood to-night to
enjoy a rummage into the secret drawers and
hidden passages of the past; so, Cousin Wil-
liam, if you will lay aside your cigar and drink
this glass of wine, I know you can make your-
self so entertaining that the beating rain and
moaning sea will be forgotten. I will even
volunteer to place you on the train of the for-
saken past by asking if our cousin, Sir Hugh,
was not a very eccentric sort of a person?"

"Rather strange, I might say," replied
Cousin William, "because his unlikeliness to
others did not show itself to overt actions, as do
the whims of eccentric men. Society recog-
nized him as one conforming to her rules, and
welcomed him as a leader who could dictate its
opinions or grace his pleasures. His strange-
ness was known to those who mingled in his
daily life, and who, like myself, looked up to
him, and, by chance, looked into him. He had
the faculty of obtaining the entire confidence of
his associates without yielding anything in re-

turn, and while seeming to open his mind to
you, he was only penetrating your thoughts; so
that, on comparing your relations with what
you had heard, you were made to know that you
had given all and received nothing."

"Was he handsome?" asked my daughter.

"That was always a mooted point," said
Cousin William; "those who had only a passing
view pronounced him almost homely, while
those who knew him well considered him incom-
parably handsome, the influence of his voice
and manner being irresistible."

"I can understand exactly how it was," said
I; "even at this distance, I know that big
cousin of ours and feel his power. I believe I
can even tell you what portion of this house he
built, for I can see it has some touches greatly
differing from others. I believe that he built
those two towers on the west side, that look like
far seeing eyes, trying to catch visions of some-
thing longed for which never came and never
was to come for him: I feel as though his heart
longed always for the taste of some joy it could
never reach, or was embittered by the thought
of something foolishly thrown away."

"You are romantic," said Cousin William.

"Not romantic, if you please," said I, "only
very impossible, for although, as you already
know, I am a widow, possessed of a stout boy
and budding daughter, I am not one of those
dutiful dames who confer all their bloom upon
their daughters and all their heart upon the
sons. I still can boast roses on my cheek and
acknowledge some flushing of the heart when
either dead or living heroes are the subject of
conversation. No," I reiterated, "I am not
romantic, but I can enter into some people's
natures, though their possessor have been long
dead, and I can gather them close to my heart,
and suffer the longings that made them sick
and mourn for the faults that made them for-
lorn. I wish I had lived when he lived, and
had been his sister, or—"

"Or perhaps his sweetheart?" continued
cousin William.

"Did he have a sweetheart?" eagerly in-
quired my little son. "Did he not love any of
the pretty ladies?"

"He was married," I said, anticipating
cousin William's reply.

"He was," said cousin William, "but un-
fortunately marrying and loving do not always
go hand-in-hand, and his was one instance in
which, I think, they walked very far asunder."

"And yet," I said, "from all you tell me, I
imagine he might have chosen and been satis-
fied."

"His success with women," replied cousin
William, "was without parallel. His slightest
attention seemed to have more weight than the
earnest devotion of other men. I might even
say he was sought of women. Wealth, family,
position, personal fascination, all tended to
make him the marked ideal of the female sex;
but I fear that his choice fell in what he con-
sidered an unpropitious spot, and in this fact
lay the secret of his strangeness. It was during
the summer preceding his death that I became
acquainted with incidents which opened many
incidents to me. He and I were affectionate
companions, I being the younger of the two;
and, as I have said, during the summer preced-
ing his death he proposed that we should pro-
secute together a pleasure tour among the High-
lands; so we set off provided with hunting and
fishing implements, and for many days pursued
our sports with much avidity—at least, I did,
but I could afterward, in thinking of the expedi-
tion, recall the restless desire which Sir Hugh
seemed to repress, while he exhibited an un-
conscious anxiety about something not present."

"We had pursued our sports for the space
of ten days, when, on the afternoon of the
eleventh, we suddenly and without any warn-
ing, arrived at a cottage situated snugly in the
cleft of the mountain, looking like the nest of a
bird. I was startled by the cultivated beauty
of its surroundings, just in the midst of the
mountain winds, reminding me of some rare
flower borne by the winds from a foreign shore,
with no kindred blossom to bear its companion-
ship. The welcome accorded to us by the heads
of the family proved that Sir Hugh was a valued
if not a frequent guest. A look of inquiry
showed me that all the usual family were not
there; but the rustling of a dress, the sound of
a light footstep, and in the door stood a young
woman whose presence certainly answered to
Sir Hugh's unuttered question. 'Miss Esther
Montrose, allow me to make you acquainted
with my cousin,' and I felt a soft hand for a
moment within my own, a frank pressure, as
though the introducer were a guarantee for any
one, and in a few minutes I was feeling myself
unaccountably at my ease among total strangers.
The father and mother, though their faces re-
minded one of the old Covenanters, were plain
and kindly in their manner; and the daughter
had the sweet graciousness, that dignity of
innocence, that no fashionable training can
ever confer, but which always accompanies a
tender heart and refined imagination. The
hours passed unheeded; and the days grew into
weeks almost unheeded by either of us. I
think, for the only time in my life, I saw Sir
Hugh seem quietly happy."

I cannot recall any of our conversation, but
my memory of her is like the effect of an autumn
day, and her beauty seems to have been made
of the tints of the sea-shell, the odor of jessa-
mine, and the fettered rays of sunshine. I
watched Sir Hugh closely, and he did not for-
get his usual caution. His bearing toward her
assumed a high tone of gallantry, mingled with
sternness which I knew was affected; for

several times when he thought himself un-
observed, I read in his glance a passionate de-
votion which made me feel that there was the
talisman which in society shielded him from all
the charms and wiles spread before him by
courtly dames.

"I have said hours became weeks in this
dream of happiness, when at last I announced
that I must be turning my face homeward. Sir
Hugh immediately sanctioned the movement,
and it was agreed that two days more should
conclude our visit. Esther was not present
when we spoke of our intention to leave, nor
do I know how she became informed of it. I
only remember that when it was alluded to she
seemed not at all surprised."

"The last evening of our stay was unusually
beautiful. The clear orange sunset was soon
suffused with the silvery beams of the full
moon. Tea was served in the arbor, where
music, song, and subdued conversation beguiled
the time until midnight. I know I reproached
myself at the time for intruding on the parting
hours of those whom I felt were lovers. I think
they watched the night out together, and with-
out any endeavours on my part, I heard so
much of their conversation as served for a key
to his past and his future life."

"Are you in earnest about not returning
here?" I heard her say.

"I said I would not return until I brought
my bride."

"Your bride!" she said. "Is she already
selected?—and how long have you loved her?"

"That is a question," he said, affecting to
laugh, "hard to answer. I have known her
these two years. As to loving, you are the only
person authorized to speak on that matter.
Surely you know that no living woman, except
yourself, has ever caused my heart a throb."

"You love me and yet you leave me! Strange
contradiction," she said. "But it shows
me that what has been my entire life has been
with you only a passing episode."

"If your design is to be severe," he said,
'you certainly have driven home the weapon
this time, and given me an undeserved thrust.
I am glad to say you have done me the greatest
injustice.'

"I judge you by your own actions," she
said. "Surely no man should demur to such a
tribunal."

"You forget," he answered, "that I am not
my own master. Position has its demands."

"None," she said, "but such as a strong
man could control without any detriment to
his manhood."

"You mistake," he said. "You do not
know the world and its dictates—how it sets
aside feeling when it conflicts with custom and
public opinion."

"I confess that I know little of the world
and I wish to know still less of institutions
that demand falsehood in the holliest ties of
life; but I do not know that the world, nor
death should sever me from that fealty which
should be governed by higher laws than man
ever enacts."

"You should know that rank pays heavy
penalties for its privileges, and the heaviest
penalty is the one which concedes the choice of
wives and husbands to the dictation of our
peers. As a prince seeks a princess, so must an
earl seek a countess."

"Can I ever forget how my chivalry fired at
this expression! Sir Hugh was my kinsman,
yet how I longed to stand before him as her
champion, and tell him that the wealth of her
heart was richer than the rubies of the bridal
gifts, and her brow a throne before which
coronets might kneel."

"I heard but little more of the conversation.
I thought I heard a sob, and then he seemed to
be pleading earnestly and tenderly for some
token or privilege. Her last words were these:

"Promise me that, whatever betide, you will
come at my summons."

"I promise," replied he. I heard no more.

"Early the next morning we set off. Esther
pleaded indisposition as an excuse for not ap-
pearing, and through her mother sent her fare-
wells and kind wishes for our journey."

"Our journey home was anything but pleas-
ant. Sir Hugh was moody beyond power to be
roused. Had I known less of his secret, I might
have rallied him on the subject of his pretty
treasure; but I knew too well where the for-
bidden ground lay to dare place my foot upon
anything concerning her. To me she seemed
so holy, so far above the ordinary level of ba-
dinage, that for her sake, even more than for
his, I refrained from all reference to the subject."

"We had returned from our excursion only
about one month, when Sir Hugh made known
the fact that, ere long, Lady Louisa Page would
be the mistress of Darkwood Place. I had never
seen the lady, but rumours of her beauty, high
birth, and fashionable prestige had reached me
and I felt no little curiosity to see the future
bride."

"The day of her arrival was exceedingly sunny
and with the bustle of arrival, the reception of
strangers, the supper, the loud music and merry
laughter, the old house seemed for a time com-
pletely transformed, and I almost wondered if
all my former life had been a concatenation of
dreams, and if this were not my first awakening
to actual life. Nothing had before ever worn
such a look of reality. The bride was a stately
beauty, her personal charms being such as were
grasped at a glance, consisting of regular fea-
tures, fine eyes and noble carriage."

"Some of the guests remained several weeks;
for Sir Hugh was a gracious host; but I could
see how little his heart was in all these gay