

BLACKHILLS MINING STORY

Smallpox Was the Dread of All Save Washoe Joe

Defied the Disease, His Friends and the Camp to Save a Child's Life.

One day in the early spring a pioneer's wagon approached within a mile of Black Hill diggings, and a rough looking man got out and started to climb the trail. He was yet half a mile away when he fell down exhausted, and half a dozen miners hurried down to succor him. He struggled up before they reached him, and, waving them back, he shouted:

"Don't come near me, for I've got smallpox, but for God's sake bring me some provisions! Me and my gal hev not had a bite to eat fur these two days."

Smallpox was the dread of the camp. When a miner was taken down with the loathsome disease, he was as good as dead. The miners stopped dead in their tracks as they heard the pioneer's words, and after a brief consultation he was warned to remain where he was while they returned and gathered up a liberal lot of provisions. These were placed on the trail, and when he had picked them up they threatened him with their pistols to hurry him away. The man neither returned thanks nor berated them for their seeming harshness. They saw him reach his wagon, they saw him feebly climb up beside a child on the seat, and when the vehicle slowly rolled on they heaved sighs of relief. That night Joe of Washoe arrived at Black Hill. It was dark, with a cold rain falling, when he heard the incident of the day. His face went stern and his eyes grew hard as the story was told, and when it was finished he rose up and asked:

"Did the man say thar was a gal with him?"

"Yes."

"And you saw her in the wagon?"

"Yes."

"And you driv 'em off to die when you could hev 'lowed 'em to camp at the foot of the hill! If that's the kind of men you ar' at Black Hill, I want to get out quick."

"But it is smallpox," persisted one of the men.

"More's the pity. Think o' that sick man drivin away with that little gal alongside o' him—drivin away to his bath! There may hev bin a wife and mother—other children. Mebbe they was dead in the wagon. Men, you did a cruel, wicked thing!"

"But think of the 90 men the smallpox took out o' the camp at Red Rock last fall!"

"But I ain't thinkin o' that. I'm thinkin o' a man drivin off to die, with a little gal sittin up alongside o' him!"

He packed up some provisions, rolled up his blankets, and, picking up a water jug and his rifle, he said:

"I'm goin to overhaul 'em and stand 'em unless I find both dead!"

A score of protests were hurled at him, but the man stepped forth into the black night without a word in reply and almost instantly disappeared from sight. At noon next day the wagon reappeared. Joe of Washoe was driving, and on the seat beside him was a child. When the wagon halted, he unharnessed and turned loose the horses, made a fire, and then, climbing half way up the hill, he called to the men 20 rods above him:

"When I found the wagon last night, the man was dead and the little gal was prayin to God. Thar was a mother and two more children, but they ar' dead. Don't come a-nigh us. The little gal's touched, and I'm sure to come down!"

That night the fever came to the child, and men who crept down the trail heard her crying out and heard Joe talking and singing to her. The next day he reported her as dreadfully sick, and so it went on for days and days. It was time for him to develop the disease, and each morning as the men crept down the trail to leave provisions on the flat rock they feared he would not show up. But, strangely enough, the danger passed him by. One morning, when he stood up on the wagon with the girl in his arms, it was taken as a sign that the crisis had passed, and 300 men gathered on the hill above and cheered the pair. It was a week after that when he set fire to the wagon, called for fresh clothes and came up the trail into camp, with the girl wrapped in a blanket. Nobody was permitted even to see the tip of her nose until she had been dressed up as a boy from old garments cut over. Then she was placed on the top of a barrel in the center of camp, and half the men cheered and the other half wept. She was a girl of about 7, pale and wan from her sickness, but there was never a pit or a scar to show how she had suffered. By that time she knew that Joe of Washoe had watched over her with more than a father's care. She was fatherless and motherless among strangers. Fright and illness had so benumbed her brain that

she could remember nothing, not even the family name. She said that they had traveled for days and days, but from whence she could not tell. The

one thing that she did remember was that her name was Rose, and she had insisted from the first, that Joe was her uncle. It was queer to see this prospector and miner, this man who had fought Indians and renegades and knocked about through a hundred adventures and was not supposed to have a soft spot about him—I say it was queer to see how he was knocked out when the little girl kissed him and called him her dear Uncle Joe. He looked so sheepish and shamefaced that we had to turn our faces away, and I tell you in the same breath that we also felt ashamed of ourselves that we had left that father and child to drive away from our camp as we did. In the mining camps a case of smallpox meant isolation, neglect and death. The partner with whom you had worked and hungered and suffered for years would flee from you in terror at the first sign, and if a patient got up and walked about in his delirium no hand was outstretched to prevent him from stumbling over a cliff.

In our shame we gave Joe all the respect and admiration he could demand, and it did us good to see the little one take to him and realize that she owed her young life to his heroic sacrifice and fatherly care. As we crowded around the pair the child knelt down on the barrel and clasped her hands and prayed:

"Mother is dead, and father is dead, but God bless Uncle Joe and everybody else!"

A good many of us turned our heads away at that, and, to our surprise, we found that years in the camps hadn't turned our hearts quite as hard as the quartz among which we labored. I caught a glimpse of Joe of Washoe shutting his teeth hard together and looking up at the clouds, and I wondered if he was more strongly affected when he changed a camp of five outlaws single handed and left three of them lying dead for the sheriff to bury.

That evening we had a public meeting on the public square, and Judge Watkins hushed the crowd to silence and said:

"Thar will be fustly, secondly and thirdly in these remarks o' mine. The fustly is that if Joe Washoe will accept this yere airth we'll gladly buy it fur him; secondly, the gal has got to hev another name, and I'm fur callin her Rose o' Washoe; thirdly, she's an orphan, and Black Hill diggin's is goin to adopt her and provide fur her and be the biggest kind o' father to her. Now, then, let every critter give three cheers and yell his loudest!"

A month later, when Rose of Washoe was sent to the states to be properly cared for, the sum of \$1,000 went with her. She was brought out and stood on the same barrel again, and 300 men filed before her and shook hands and said goodby. Joe of Washoe came last. He lifted her up in his arms and kissed her and patted her head, and her voice was broken with sobs as she said:

"God bless all, but God bless Uncle Joe most of anybody!"

When she was lifted to the saddle to ride away, Joe turned his back and seemed to be gazing off over the foothills. The crowd cheered and cheered, but he was mute. As the girl disappeared from sight down the trail some one asked:

"What the blazes is the matter with Joe that he don't yell with us?"

"Hush, you fool!" cautioned Big Jim. "Fall back, all of you! He'll be turnin purty soon to catch a last glimpse o' the gal, and it might shame him if we saw the tears in his eyes and knowed that his heart was swelled to bustin over her goin away!"

Our Knowledge of English.

The growth of the English language is so enormous that it would be practically impossible for the most learned man to be acquainted with every word. Intelligent persons, even those engaged in the learned professions, do not make use of more than from 6000 to 8000 words; all told, although there are properly belonging to our language over 200,000. The famous writer or authority of today, whether he uses words to express nice shades of meaning or as technical tools of thought in his own department, must have at his command a vocabulary of from 30,000 to 40,000 words, the latter being the maximum [acquired] by any man now living. There is a large number of words which until recently have escaped the attention of lexicographers. In the text of the Encyclopedia Britannica there are 10,000 words which have never been formally entered and defined in any dictionary. In the Century dictionary there are 70,000 words found in no other, and it has been said that there is not today any man living who is sufficiently learned to write one average page of 7000 pages of this dictionary. To give some idea of this tremendous growth of the language the words and phrases under the letter A have increased in 750 years from 7000 to 60,000.—Ex.

Diamond mounting by Soggs & Vesco.

A new and large jewelry store now occupied by Lindeman, Monte Carlo building.

COMING AND GOING.

T. C. Healy is confined to his room by rheumatic fever.

Information is waiting at the police station for E. M. Houghton concerning his watch.

Mrs. F. C. Wade has devoted Friday afternoons to the entertainment of the Guild of St. Paul's church.

Mr. Al Smith, of the Nugget reporter staff, is laid up with a severe cold, being confined to his bed yesterday and today.

R. M. Young and D. D. Sawyer left for Whitehorse this morning on bicycles. They expect to cover the trip in less than six days.

Adolph Kreuzer who was released from jail Saturday morning after serving seven days for having beaten his wife, was bound over to keep the peace for one year. His bonds were fixed at \$750.

The incoming mail passed Selkirk yesterday morning and is due to reach here tomorrow evening. Good time is now being made by the carriers, the trail being in first-class condition for speedy travel.

Late Saturday afternoon a man whose name could not be learned, was discovered alone in a cabin on the hill back of town, suffering from a severe attack of typhoid. He was taken to St. Mary's hospital.

Two four-horse freight teams were on the street this morning advertising their departure for Whitehorse. The sleighs in which passengers are taken are covered and a stove is placed inside.

The A. C. Co. are engaged this afternoon in putting up their fixtures on which in case of fire from surrounding buildings they hang immense blankets. A large crowd was collected this noon watching the work, strangers seeing the flaming red blankets hanging from the roof speculating as to their use.

The regular semi-monthly concert and entertainment will be given tonight at the free library and reading room, corner of Third avenue and Harper street. An excellent program, as usual, will be rendered. These events have come to rank with the most enjoyable of all Dawson's social happenings.

But for the ubiquitous collector of bills there are a number of people in Dawson who are ready for the trip to the outside that would start at once; but like a spectator, the bill collector haunts them and they know that if they start without settling with him they will be "capiased" and brought back.

Several weeks ago and about the time of the first snowfall a large drift accumulated on the sidewalk just by the end of the barracks warehouse, where it was allowed to remain a menace to life, limb and the habit of cultivating jags until everybody learned to never go that way except in times of the strictest sobriety, for which condition there is no longer any excuse, the sidewalk having been cleared of the snow drift.

May Return a Benedict.

Early next week John R. Gray, one of the proprietors of the Dawson Hardware Co., will leave for the outside on an extended trip through Canada and the States, arranging for next year's shipment to his flourishing concern. It is rumored that his journey will not be all for business as those who know him best say that in distant Ireland, to where he will make a flying trip, there awaits his coming a young lady who will, upon his return be introduced as Mrs. John R. Gray.

Granulated fresh laid eggs at Meeker's

No creosote in coal. It's safer as well as cheaper. It's also handier. These and its other virtues will prove themselves on trial. Phone 94. N. A. T. & T. Co. crt

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For store, lodging-house, hotel, etc., Binet block, formerly used as the offices of land commissioner and registrar. Apply to J. O. Binet, Madden house.

Buy of the leading jeweler's, where you get a variety to select from. J. L. Sale & Co. have everything.

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General Manager

S. M. IRWIN,
Traffic Manager

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Agent

You Fellows

From the Creek

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You know you were always welcome to sit on the counter and whittle in '97 times, and it's just the same old place now.

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Incidentally we can swap yarns about how much cheaper goods are, and possibly fit you out for the season for about what you used to pay for a sack of flour.

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