

MINIATURES OF OLD YALE

By D. W. Higgins, Author of "The Mystic Spring," "The Passing of a Race," etc.



ABOUT a year ago, after an absence of nearly fifty years, I paid a visit to the beautiful town of Yale, situated on Fraser River, the scene of my early manhood's adventures, and a place about which cluster pleasant memories of men and women who, alas! have gone from this sphere, and exist only as pictured memories of the past, to be recalled by the pen of the historian who strives to convey to people of the present day an idea of the sorrows, the joys and the temptations of the gold seekers who came here many years ago, and who have left an imperishable record on the towns, the rivers, the rocks and the hills of this province.

Those were indeed strenuous days when miners converted themselves into pack animals and scaled the formidable steep slopes with provisions for their sustenance while exploiting mines in the hills. Women, too, were often not far behind their husbands in manifestations of courage and pluck, and trudged by their sides through the trackless wilderness and encouraged their partners by a sturdy example and cheerful words to continue their efforts. The women of 1838 were a noble and self-sacrificing set who toiled bravely and sometimes delved beside their husbands in the claims. The cooking always fell to the lot of the gentler sex, and where there were children their care was the wife's greatest responsibility. In 1860 two large families of children were taken in boats through the swift rapids of the river to Cariboo by their parents. The risks these families encountered (one family numbered nine children, all of tender age) while running the riffles and traversing the Indian trails that wound around the perpendicular mountains, have never been and cannot be described. We only know that they overcame difficulties and dangers that often appalled the stoutest hearts and caused strong men who came up against them to turn back in dismay and fright. These women and children passed safely through the perils and dangers of that trip, and after a long stay returned travel-stained and worn, but hale and hearty, to Victoria. Whether the parents profited by their adventures I never heard, but if they came back poor in pocket they were rich in an experience which enabled them to rear their families respectably and well and send them out into the world to look out for themselves.

But to return to Yale: I left it in February, 1860, a collection of poor huts and small stores with here and there a smart residence. Occasionally there was in front of these residences an attempt to raise flowers and a few nasturtiums and morning glories welcomed the rising of the sun. Of roses, dahlias or twining honeysuckle there were none, but there was a solitary lilac bush which was too young to flower and spread its delicious perfume around for the delight of humanity.

Forty-six years later I found that solitary lilac bush had assumed large proportions and filled the air with its sweet perfume, besides contributing from its roots numerous offspring that had grown up and were following the example of the parent bush.

The plat of Yale is now a lilac parterre, which imparts pleasure to the senses and hides the scars that the men who went there to dig gold left in their wake. These lilac bushes in early spring charm all lovers of the beautiful. Seen from the car window as the train pauses in its rapid flight to renew its supply of fuel and water the scene is a poem, but to the wayfarer who alights and wanders through the lovely garden and inhales a whiff of the glorious perfume, it is a beautiful dream and a joy that long remains to gladden his heart and charm his senses.

What formed the business part of Yale fifty years ago is a picturesque ruin now. I walked through the deserted and fallen warehouses and my heart ached as I called to mind the busy scenes of other days when Yale was the head of steamboat navigation and before the trains of the C. P. R. had drawn trade and population away to other centers. In 1858 Yale was the busiest and worst town in the colony. There were many God-fearing men and women but there were many of the bad sort, too, who never attended church and sneered at those who did. Every other store was a gambling den with liquor attachments. Ruffians of the blackest dye, fugitives from justice, deserters from the United States troops who had stolen about in army overcoats which they had stolen when they deserted for the British Columbia gold mines, vigilance committee refugees who had been driven from San Francisco under sentences of life banishment, ex-convicts, pugilists, highwaymen, petty thieves, murderers and painted women, all were jumbled together in that town and were free to follow their sinful purposes so far as any restraint from the officers of the law were concerned.

There were but two constables and a gold commissioner at Yale at that time, and they were expected to police the shifting population of all sorts and conditions and to keep it in order. The force was too weak to be of much use. An unknown drunk without friends when picked up in the street was taken to jail and imprisoned; but high class criminals, if taken to jail either broke away or if retained in confinement were acquitted because witnesses failed to testify or were bought off and made themselves scarce.

On one occasion a miner was shot down because he refused to pay for a drink of whiskey. His murderer went into hiding. On the third night after the killing invitations were issued to a ball, which the gold commissioner and the two constables attended. All these men had associated themselves in the hope of tracking the murderer. While the ball was at its height the murderer emerged from his place of hiding and made off in a canoe. He was never caught. But in spite of this event the evil doers were somewhat held in check by a wholesome dread of British law. This was before Chief Justice Begbie made his appearance and awed the wild multitude into a condition of sullen lawfulness—anxious to commit depredations but fearing to face the giant judge arrayed with his judicial gown and wig with his thunderous voice and almost savage words. The words that fell from his lips were like the stab of a poniard—they cut deeply and cowed the most hardened criminal into a state of obedience to the law which in his own country he had defied and trampled under foot.

As I gazed at the sinking walls of Oppenheimer's fireproof warehouses, which were in a state of decrepitude and presented a woeful picture of decay and neglect, I noticed that the fireproof doors and shutters remained fastened just as they were locked when the firm closed the place for the last time and departed to seek their fortunes elsewhere. The walls are fast decaying and soon will tumble beneath their own weight, and leave not a wrack behind to mark the spot where the principal business of the country was transacted fifty years ago. As I stood musing over the remains of other days and scenes a cheery voice addressed me, "Good morning, stranger, this is a fine day." I turned and saw standing near a short, stocky man who carried a shovel on his shoulder. Before I could reply he exclaimed, "By Jove, I ought to know that face. Ain't your name H?" I nodded my head.

"Well, my name is Ned Stout. Remember me?"

"Indeed I do," I said, "you were here in 1858, and you afterward went to Cariboo and

gave your name to a rich piece of mining ground. Stout's Gulch was famous once."

"Yes," he said with a sigh, "I made a good bit of money out of it, but I did not keep it. It all went somehow, and after many years I have come back to Old Yale to live and die. It is the prettiest and best place on earth anywhere."

"But," I said, "you have not changed much in the last half century. Have you found Ponce de Leon's fountain of eternal youth? Or have you died and come to life again in a revised form? You do not look over fifty, and you were well on in years when I left Yale."

"I am eighty-six," he replied with a laugh, "I have outlived all the early inhabitants except you and Bill Aldway there."

As he spoke he pointed to an old man who hobbled up painfully to shake hands with me, having been told of my presence in town. I had known Bill Aldway and his brother Mose. They were packers—strong, active young fellows. Mose, he told me, had died, and he himself was only awaiting the call. There was fire in the old man's eyes when he spoke of the days of old, the days of gold, the days of fifty-eight, and like Ned Stout he lamented the change and lost opportunities.

"But," he added with a short laugh, "I have had lots of fun, perhaps a lot more than I ought to have had, and I am paying for it now. I am a sick man, and it is no wonder, for I am seventy-nine."

"Ah! I remember," broke in Ned Stout, "John Kurtz, Hugh Nelson and you, and Walter Gladwin and old man Kimball whom we used to call 'Goodness Gracious,' and the Barry brothers and Sam Adler, the Oppenheimer brothers and Frank Way, the greatest practical joker on the river, and Ben Bailey, who lived all one winter with his wife and children in a tent on the bar, and come out in the spring rosy and happy. Bailey said he had never passed a winter so comfortably and he and his wife and children had never a cold or headache the whole time."

"Do you see that hole in the face of the old

mountain?" Ned asked. "The Indians used to say the Great Spirit lived in that hole or cave, and when the tribe was in danger of foes he would come down and fight for them. They said that on one occasion a mighty host of hostile Indians came to Yale in their war canoes and that the Yale tribe were hard pressed by their adversaries and the Great Spirit descended from his perch and broke up the invaders' canoes and drowned them to the last man."

"Well," Stout continued, "I made up a little party of boys in '58 and we took ropes and climbed up that mountain and the boys lowered me down so that I could look into the cave. It was not very deep or wide and was only a hole which had been caused by the rock decaying and falling down, may be many centuries before. At any rate there was no sign of the Great or any other spirit (not even a bottle of whiskey) and I guess the story was a yarn invented to frighten the wild Indians in old times into being good."

As I gazed at Stout and listened to his talk I felt as though I was transported back to the days when we were first acquainted; when the scenes he had depicted were being re-enacted and the men he recalled really stood by his side. The men and women of that far away time are now spirits in the Great Beyond. Everything had changed since I was last there—everything except the mighty mountains that overhang the beautiful town, the dark, foaming river whose swift current laves the foot of Yale Flat in its haste to reach the ocean and—Ned Stout! There was a little change in the one as the other. If anything the mountains and the river were the worse for the wear and tear, but the man—there was not a new line on his face, a new furrow on his brow, a dim spot in his eye, a gray hair or bald spot on his head.

Surely, surely, I thought, he had drunk of the waters of eternal youth, for at 86 he is still a kid! As I walked along the flat I peopled the spots where the various establishments stood in those days, and where the old and young, the grave and gay, the good and

bad, consorted in common companionship. I picked out the site of Billy Ballou's express office, Barry's saloon, Oppenheimer's warehouse and residence (the latter the handsomest in the town), Bennett's gambling house, where a youth was done to death for objecting to the way a sharper attempted to stack the cards on him, the door from which Foster fired when he shot Barney Rice for refusing to pay for a drink, the place where stood the tiny hall in which Reverend Ebenezer Robson, the pioneer Methodist minister, delivered his first sermon; the Hudson Bay Company's store over which Ovid Allard presided with profit to his company and satisfaction to his customers; the gambling house in which in 1859 Chief Justice Begbie held his first court, in a room where three nights before a man had been shot. Gambling was suspended while the court was in session, and resumed immediately after it had adjourned. The house in which that matchless lawyer, Attorney-General Cary, whose only fault was an uncontrollable temper, which he indulged on all occasions, in court or out, to the annoyance of his hearers and the irritation of a too-indulgent bench—the house, I say, in which the Attorney-General was induced to join in a game of poker with experienced sharpers in the belief that, being an Englishman, he would not understand the "great American game" and where after an all-night's sitting he arose a heavy winner to the confusion and consternation of the company. It is but justice to the memory of Mr. Cary to explain that his friends attributed his ill-temper to an affliction of the eyes from which at times he suffered severely, and which at last destroyed his reason and finally caused his early death. All these scenes and events passed through my mind that day like a series of motion pictures on the stage. I could recall every face and incident as I called up the past and in my mind's eye could follow the men and women through their various careers until the grave closed over them. It is sad to think that of the busy multitude whom I knew at Yale fifty years ago only two remained on the scene to welcome the returning pioneer and run over with him the incidents of the past.

I turn away from the contemplation of the scenes of early life with a feeling of deep regret and sorrow. As I ring down the curtain on the moving mind pictures and turn off the lights I return the films to the memory cells where they have long slumbered, and from whence they may never again emerge. As I dismiss my audience I am tempted to exclaim with L. M. Tim, "God bless us all."

BUYING THE WIND

In the old days of sailing ships it was a common thing for a sea captain to "buy the wind" for his voyage, though, strangely enough, the only people supposed to deal in it were the Icelanders. When a constant succession of baffling winds or dead calms had persistently followed a ship for more than one cruise, it was not at all unusual for the skipper of a big windjammer to pay a visit to Iceland for the sole purpose of purchasing wind enough to last him on his next voyage or two.

In every port in Iceland one or more "wind wizards" were to be found, who were ready to sell a favorable wind for the next six months or a year to any sea captain willing to invest in something he could not see. The sailor having found his way to the magician's house, first proceeded to spread out upon the floor the articles offered in payment for the wind—tallow candles, cloth, beads, knives, powder and lead. After a good deal of haggling, and many times adding to or taking away from the little pile of merchandise between them, the price was finally agreed upon, and the captain passed over his handkerchief to the Icelandic.

The wind merchant muttered certain words into it, tying a knot in the handkerchief at the end of each incantation. This was done to keep the magic words from evaporating. When a certain number of knots had been tied the handkerchief was returned to its owner, with a strict charge to keep it knotted and guard it with extraordinary care until he arrived at the desired port, and at each port a knot was to be taken out.

One old captain had been so bothered with head winds that he kept crying out to the Icelandic to tie another knot in the handkerchief, and another and another, so as to be sure of plenty of the wished-for zephyrs, until finally there was no room for any more knots, and three knives and 30 candles had been added to the heap on the floor. But when the wind-greedy captain was two days at sea a terrific gale began to hurl the ship ahead of it, ever increasing in fury, until she plunged along under bare poles, with her nose deep in the brine and tons of water washing her decks. Darker and darker grew the sky, and higher and higher rose the racing, foam-crested waves, hammering the laboring vessel with ceaseless blows until her seams began to open under the strain and let in the sea.

Then, believing he had the devil in his pocket, the badly frightened skipper drew forth the much-knotted handkerchief and threw it overboard. In a short time the tempest abated, the clouds cleared away and the waters subsided, but one seaman never again bought wind. He was content with the kind that comes by chance.

Stag Hunting Is Popular in England



EXCEPT golf, there is no sport which has increased so much in popularity in recent years in England as stag hunting. Fifty years ago there were very few deer in the Exmoor district; but for the late Mr. Bisset's perseverance and tenacity, they would all have been killed off by now. The deer are now numerous, and the chase of the wild red deer, for all its antiquity, would have come to an ignominious end. In twenty years, however, the increase of the herd was already beginning to cause anxiety, the fame of the pack had spread far and wide; and for the last thirty years visitors in ever-growing numbers have been coming to the West Country to share in its peculiar sport. The deer are now so numerous that the reasons that bring over three hundred people on horseback to such a fixture as Lankbarrow—a place five miles from anywhere and fourteen from a station—must be many and various. Some of the enormous fields are mere trippers who are throwing into their holiday a day with the hounds, which shall include, as they hope, a sight of a real wild stag; but the majority are hunting men and hunting ladies, British and foreign, who may be divided into those who have come to see what the sport is like and those who, having gone stag-hunting before, come back year after year to enjoy it again.

The latter are numerous, for the attractions are many. There is no other hunting to be got in August and September, the months in which London men take holiday; the only months when officers on short leave from India can hunt at all. The country is very beautiful, and the sport itself has many merits. There is no jumping, the fences being unjumpable; and while to some this is a drawback, it is to some a recommendation. The chase is a hard and honest work, plenty of galloping over ground that tests both horse and rider, and the interest of the contest between man and a quarry which, the wolf excepted, is the strongest and most cunning of all beasts of the chase.

There is also to many the charm of novelty and variety, for much difference exists between the methods of stag-hunting and those appropriate to fox-hunting. The Exmoor Valley is three miles long; both sides are clothed with deep woodland, and there are many acres more of coppice and gorse in the combs adjoining. To seek a stag in such a place suggests looking for a needle in a bundle of hay; but so well is the harrier's work done that the right animal is often found by the tufters within ten minutes; and, hopeless though the prospect appear of getting away from such a strong deer, the pack is often forced to the open in half an hour, the pack being laid on as soon thereafter as is possible.

Then, and then only, to the majority of the field goes the day's sport begins. The harrier is abroad in the early morning with at most a single companion. He no longer takes with him the lymmer, or hound in leash, used by our forefathers and still used in France; but his woodcraft will enable him, whether he has seen his deer or not, to tell the master whereabouts the stag is, what he is like, and what companions are with him. Often he will know within a few yards where the stag is lying, and be able to put hounds right on him. Indeed, Mr. Bisset records in his diary that that "wonderful old hound Blackmore" (the then harrier) on one occasion found a stag alone, without a hound to help him, after a cover had been drawn apparently blank.

It is not often, however, that the tufters, a few steady hounds selected for the purpose, fail to find their stag. It is to be found by the harrier. Occasionally, very occasionally, they may draw over their game, but the scent of a deer is so strong and so lasting that except in unfavorable weather they can generally find him to his bed. The routine of the stag, however, is but the beginning. He must be forced to break cover, and to go away by himself; and often this is no easy task, for where there is one deer as a rule there are more, and their noses are good; they have little difficulty, unless kept moving, in finding each other out. Here the modern practice of turtling with four to six couple of hounds with plenty of pace and drive is a great improvement on the older system of selecting only three or four steady and slow old stagers. The deer now has less time to play tricks while the younger hounds are as well under control as ever the old ones were. A rate from a voice they know is sufficient to stop them, and there is nothing prettier than the steadiness and good discipline of the pack which the officials can stop without whipcord though they be running in view.

The field are only in the way out turtling, and it is not etiquette for any but a few invited experts to join in these preliminaries. The only exception is when the deer, generally a small one, are lying on the open treeless waste known as the North Forest. Then the

master, as a rule, tells the assembled company that they are welcome to follow. Usually they do, but many half-joke, saying that the deer are so numerous that they will have to face the forest in seamed with grass covered drainage gutters, and the ground between, notwithstanding the gutters, is seldom dry; so that it is anything but easy to live with the flying hounds. A hind in the open is, however, a better sight, and a certain amount of galloping is sure to follow; yet it is seldom that the best dogs so begin. The finest chases are with stags found in some great stronghold where their faces are the most numerous, and many miles away. Such were the runs from Lord Lovelace's plantations nearly to Castle Hill Park in 1888; from Haddon to Emmett's Grange in 1889 and again in 1901; from the Bratton covers to Lanchester in 1889; from Hawke's Glen to Glen-thorne in 1899, and the five chases from the Bray Valley which on five successive fixtures the lucky followers of Mr. Sanders enjoyed in a single happy season.

There is great change in a gallop with the hounds over the sedge grass and heather of the moorland, and there is the same satisfaction in crossing difficult

WAGES IN GERMANY

Some remarkable statements as to the combined effects of Protection and the depression in trade on the welfare of the German people are made in the report of Sir Francis Oppenheimer, our Consul-General at Berlin.

He says: "The agrarian duties have affected not only the prices of corn and flour, but the price of all agricultural and dairy produce. The cost of all necessary foodstuffs is so high that the chamber of Commerce of Bremen, in its annual report, openly speaks of a general dearth of victuals. The price of agricultural produce proper was highest in 1901, except in the case of potatoes and butter."

The industrial efficiency of the workers is suffering because of the insufficiency of nourishment. Sir Francis says: "There is a consensus of opinion that the German worker is no longer so efficient, certainly no longer as physically efficient, as formerly." This is ascribed to the migration of the people into the towns, and under urban conditions they deteriorate, and it is added, "Though the daily working hours have been reduced, and though wages have increased the workman accomplishes a less amount of work in the same time than he did formerly." Here are some of the reasons.

The scarcity of labor has made the workman independent. The various insurances of which the workman profits by law have made him less keen.

He leaves work which demands a certain amount of skill for ordinary routine work which is more easily accomplished.

He absents himself from work for reasons which, but for the insurance would formerly not have kept him at home.

The disinclination to work more especially amongst younger workmen, has become so notorious that it is mentioned as a characteristic of the times in reports of Chambers of Commerce. "As the whole population is a consumer of food" (Sir Francis goes on to say) "the need for an increased output has become hence more pressing. Beyond the workmen to all classes earning a fixed income, e.g., the technical workers, clerks, government and municipal officials, etc. For the last two years of the decade the demand for food has been greatly increased, and particularly so during the year under report; they extended to all commercial and industrial undertakings, except the few branches laboring under difficulties."

Under present circumstances the increase in wages in no way better the workman's position, because it is swallowed up by the increased cost of living. The consequence is it is no longer true that the increased aggregate of wages strengthens the home market—an answer too readily presented to the complaints brought forward by the manufacturers of finished goods. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that a general rise of wages must necessarily lead in a variety of ways to increased cost of food. "Owing to the modern process of manufacture, protection must become protection." The tendency is to increased specialisation; each intermediate step is an industry of its own, increasing the cost of all subsequent steps, the profits of which it narrows down. Thus the last stage of manufacture is the most in need of protection.

It is also found that intense protection, while benefiting manufacture at home, impedes its sales on the world's markets."

WALNUT CROP IN FRANCE

Vice Consul T. W. Merton of Grenoble submits the following report, dated July 25, on the growing crop of walnuts in that consular district in the French valley of the Isere: "The weather thus far having been variable and temperate, with frequent copious rain-falls and comparative freedom from excessive heat and the damaging hail and thunder storms that usually follow, vegetation has prospered, and all standing fruit crops, grapes more especially, give promise of excellent yields. As to walnuts, while the fruit bearing trees of the finer qualities, commercially known as Mayettes, Franquettes and Parisiens, are luxuriantly foliaged and healthy in appearance, it is not expected that the production in nuts will much exceed 15,000 to 20,000 bales of 100 kilos one kilo is equal to 2.2 pounds.) The fruit is well developed, being unusually large for the season, and promise to be of excellent quality. The reason assigned for small crop is the prolonged drought of 1906, from the effects of which the trees have not yet entirely recovered. Of the smaller varieties known as Charbertes and employed exclusively for confectionary purposes, a plentiful crop is expected—estimated at 45,000 to 50,000 cases of 25 kilos each. The quality also should be good, always provided weather conditions continue favorable for the growing crops until maturity. In such cases harvesting time will be in advance of last year by about 15 days."



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