

Side Lights on the Civil War

1861 - - 1865

Early Days in Nevada

By CHAS. S. COTTON

Sweetsburg, Que., Can.



April 1912

Cotton's Co-operative Publishing Co., Inc.
Cowansville, P. Q.

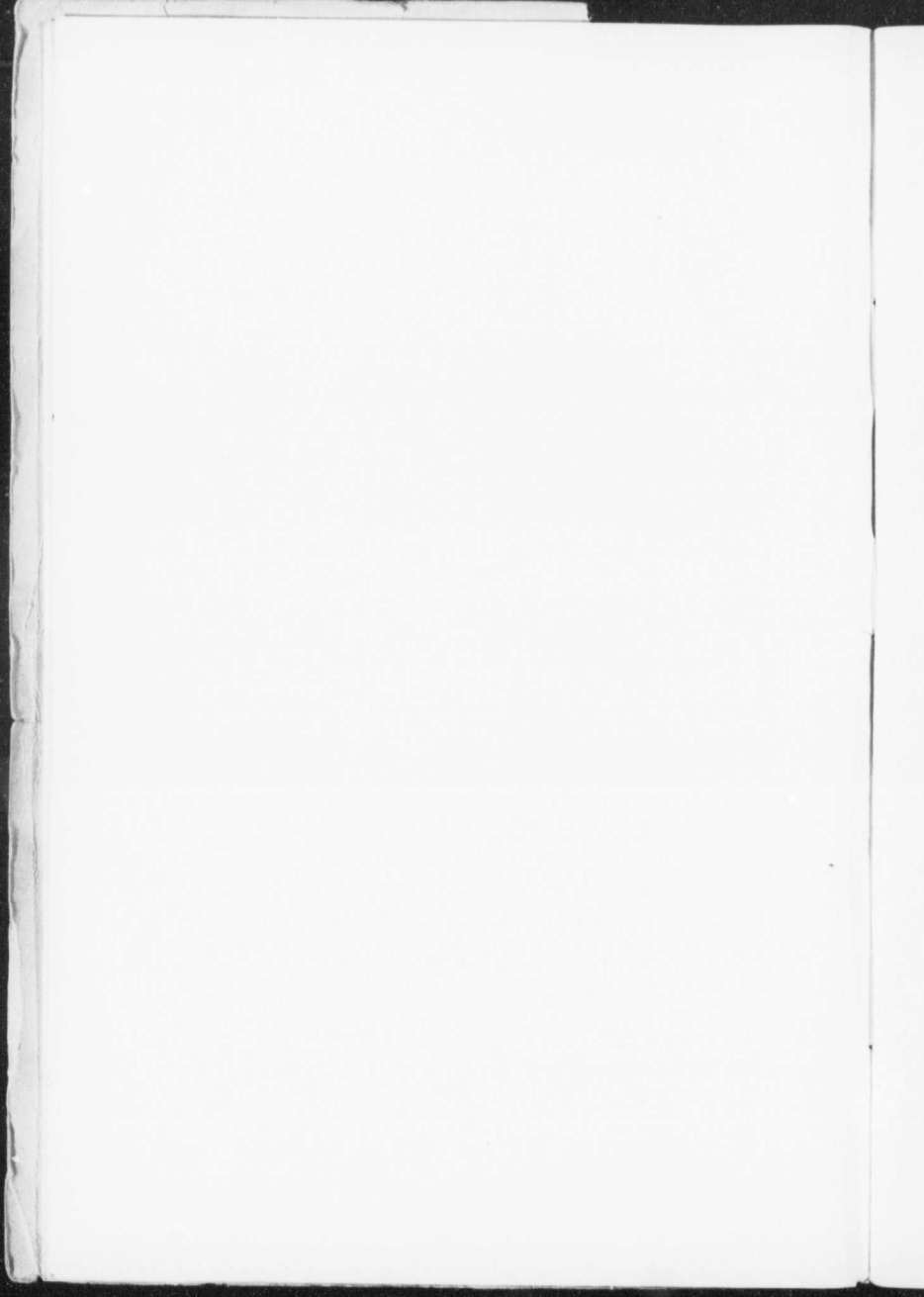


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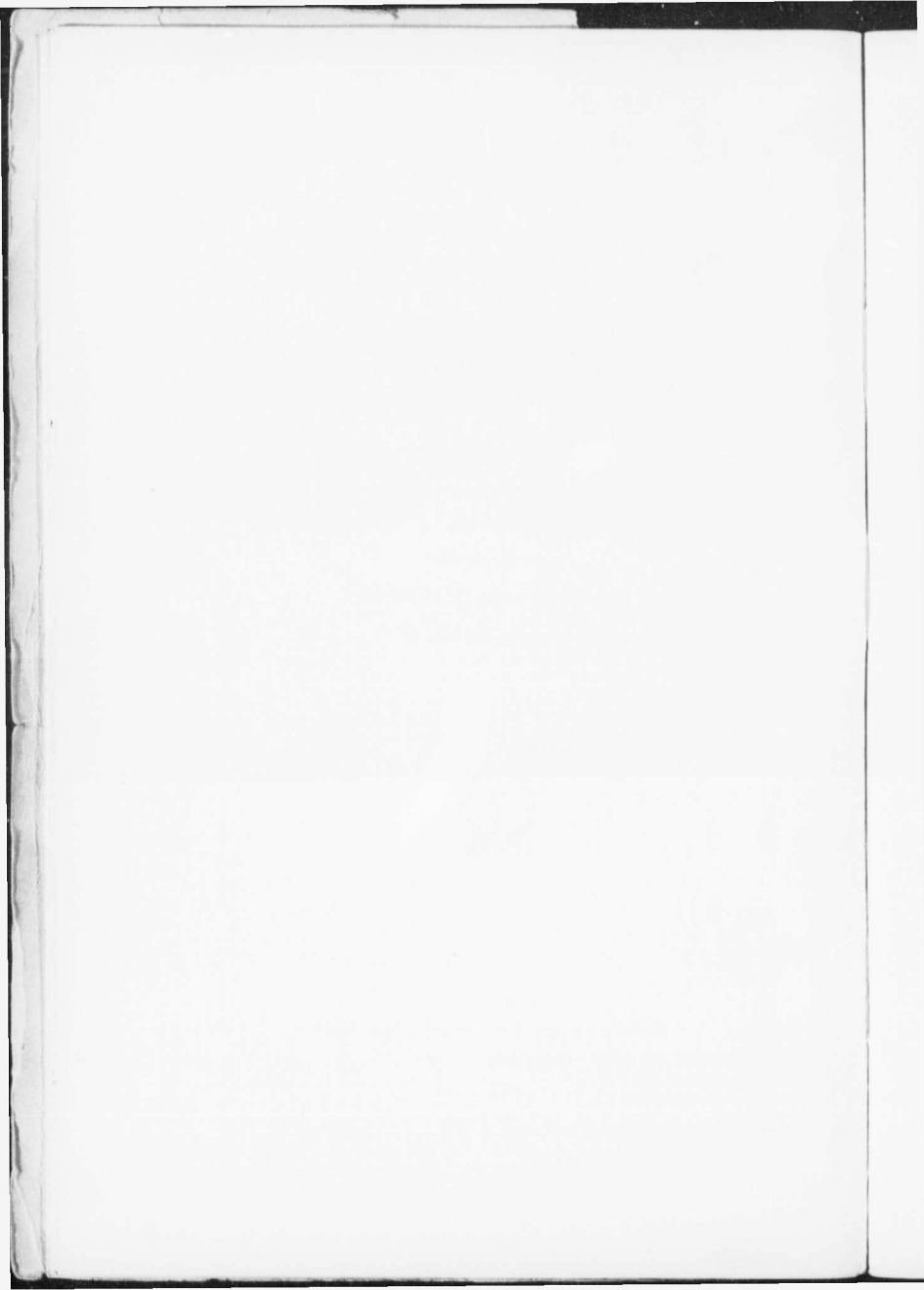


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It was in the early part of May 1862 with \$29.25 in my pocket that I started by the Stage that used to run from Cowansville, Que., to St. Albans. I remember the exact amount more distinctly than many large sums of money that I have handled since that date. I had earned it teaching school at Freeport, \$12.00 per month and boarding around. If all teachers have as pleasant a winter as I had that winter, they have nothing to complain of, except scarceness of cash.

Well, as I say, I started with Bill Clark on the St. Albans stage in May 1862, and in looking back I was about as green a specimen as ever left the foot hills of the Green Mountains to seek his fortune in this wide world.

I only knew one man in the United States and he lived in Philadelphia, named Charles Powell, and as all parts of the United States were the same to me, I took a ticket to Philadelphia. My friend in Philadelphia was very kind to me. He took me to his house, etc., but after a week or ten days I found my cash to be less than \$10.00 and I could find nothing to do. At that time — remember I say *at that time* for I have forgotten all about it since — I was pat on Cæsar, Virgil, Algebra, Euclid, etc., but there was no demand for my knowledge. It was war, war, war, and bloody fighting all the time, train loads of wounded men coming in daily and train loads of fighting men going to the front every day.

One day I saw an advertisement in the Philadelphia Ledger that read, "Wanted 500 laborers to go to Virginia, \$25.00 per month and rations; I applied, was accepted, and started next day for White House Landing in Virginia, at that time McLellan's base of supplies in his Peninsular campaign. It took two or three days to get there. I do not wish to start any theological dis-

cussion but some people say there is no Hell; just let them try two or three days trip in the hold of a steamer with 5 or 600 of the lowest of Baltimore and Philadelphia population as I did, obscenity, drunkenness, sea sickness and such profanity as I had never dreamed of. I am quite satisfied that they wont be so certain of their no Hell theory. We went via. Baltimore and Fortress Monroe.

On the way down I assisted the man in charge to write the names of all the laborers down and divide them into gangs of 25 men each, and in return was made assistant foreman at \$35.00 per month, a little more to the good. So I arrived at White House Landing as assistant foreman. Immediately on our reaching White House Landing my gang, was selected to go to Savages station to unload cars. Savages Station was 7 miles from Richmond on the York R.R. I think it was called a low flat country, the station consisting of a platform, one tent and farmers house near at hand. In the 7 miles between Savages Station and Richmond, McLellan and Lee had about 200,000 men, well intrenched and watching to get the advantage of each other.

The day we arrived at Savages Station was the day after the second days battle of Seven Pines or Fair Oaks.

Lee had attempted to rush the Northern lines and had done so the first day but was driven back the second day. Unless we think about it, we hardly realize that nearly as many men were engaged in this battle as at Waterloo and few people remember even its name.

I wandered over the field before the wounded were all collected and it was a gruesome sight indeed, not pleasant to bring to mind. If I remember aright some 6 or 7000 men were thrown out of ranks in this battle. It was in this battle that a Brigadier General rushed up to General Phil Kearney and asked him where he should put his brigade in, and Kearney told him any where he pleased as there was lovely fighting all along the line.

At Savages Station was a large field hospital, wounded men being constantly brought to it, sometimes hun-

dreds of them. I am sorry to say that the most tender-hearted soon get callous to their neighbor's sufferings.

I was at Savages Station about a month, bossing the gang. During this time I became acquainted with a Company of Cavalry, 100 men called the Oneida Cavalry, recruited to be General Stoneman's orderlies. I issued the forage to these men and allowed them oats for their horses instead of corn, which they much preferred. I will refer to this Cavalry shortly.

In about a month there were rumors that a big move was being made on Richmond, a flank movement; nobody seemed to know and I guess nobody did know. Large bodies of men were moving night and day. At last it was reported that White House Landing, our base of supplies, was abandoned, and then it dawned upon us that McLellan had not made a flank movement on Lee but Lee had made a flank movement on McLellan. It appears that Lee as he supposed had cut off every line of retreat that McLellan had and I suppose, scientifically speaking, that he had done so. McLellan made a cut across the country to Harrison's Landing on the James River and got under his gun boats, this saving his army.

But I do not intend to write a history of the Peninsular Campaign only in so far as it is connected with the aforesaid young man from Cowansville in search of his fortune and as I was saying there was a general move in the army that could be plainly seen. Pretty soon as the troops were marching by, they took the guards off the quartermaster's stores and allowed the soldiers to help themselves. Then they piled the provisions up and set fire to them. There were three or four engines and many cars at Savages Station. The engines were fired up, cars attached, full head of steam being put on and allowed to run into the Chickahominy River, where the Railway bridge had been destroyed, a general scene of destruction.

A few days before this, a friend of mine had sprained his ankle very badly and was in his tent and could not walk. He said he was going to quietly wait and be captured by the Rebs. I made up my mind to get him

a horse if I could, but every one seemed to be in particular want of his own particular horse, at this particular time, and what bothered me more, was keeping a sharp look out for him. In my search I saw an officer alight from his horse in front of an "A" tent and before entering he gave his halter a couple of hitches around a post, in front of the tent and went in holding one end of the halter in his hand. The tent flap closed after him; I at once cut the halter between the horse and the post, I did not delay on the manner of my going, but went with the horse. I looked back but saw no movement of the tent door, I have often wondered at the look of that officer when he came out and found he had only control of a halter's tail. I had not curiosity to go back and see however. The officer had evidently gone in to take a drink and he could attribute his trouble as so many have done before and since to "Rum" again. I let my friend have the horse. He rode him through the retreat and turned him loose. The horse was branded U. S. and I think the officer had no business riding him.

As the retreat became more pronounced there, a battle took place about a mile up the R.R., towards Richmond. The Northern troops attempted to hold the Rebs back. So they did, but a great many of the Rebs shots being elevated too high, landed right at Savages Station. Some of them landed in the large Hospital there. It was a pitiable sight to see the sick and wounded crowding out of the hospital to hunt cover. I do not think the Rebs intentionally shelled the hospital, but as the whole country around Savages Station was alive with Northern troops they thought they would take a few chance shots on the same principal that a man will shoot at a flock of black birds; does not aim at one particular bird but shoots at the bunch and trusts to luck.

I had no further use for Savages Station or vicinity and if retreat was the order of the day I intended to do it with as much vim and energy as I could; so I started and took the route that most of the troops and baggage

waggons were taking and in hopes that I might run across my friends the Oneida Cavalry. I found that it was safer to keep with baggage wagons than follow a column of troops. The troops seemed to be all the time poking their nose into a fight and that was what I particularly wished to avoid. My curiosity in that respect had been satisfied to the full.

The same afternoon that I started, I was as I thought, walking along with a column of retreating troops. Their officers seemed to be hurrying them forward as much as possible. As my only thought was to get as far from Savages Station as soon as possible I was satisfied with the rapid marching. About 4 p. m., we came to an opening in the woods where the troops deployed out at the edge of the timber and laid down. We were about 150 yards from the Chickahominy River and along the bank of the river I saw another line of Northern troops lying down. The soldiers I was with, had evidently been rushed forward to support the troops lining the bank. I could see that trouble was expected. This river is a slow sluggish stream and at places, is little more than a marsh, I should fancy about half a mile wide. I laid down with the supporting column and being very tired went to sleep, as many of the soldiers also did.

About 5 p. m. I was awakened by rifle shots and before I was able to take a good look it was a roar of Infantry firing. I had a good view as it was slightly elevated ground where I was, and I saw a large number of the Rebs. making a dash across the river, evidently to cut off our line of retreat. The fight may have lasted half an hour and then the enemy fell back. As far as I could see they were in the water from their knees to their armpits, and every one that was hit sunk in the water and mud without much assistance from their comrades who were too busy firing at us and attempting to make a landing to help their less fortunate comrades. I do not think that the supporting column fired at all. I started after the fight to stay with the baggage wagons, and did stay with them that night.

I can hardly form any idea of how many miles of baggage wagons there were. Next day I found the Oneida Cavalry and as they had several led horses, having lost several men in the fight, they let me have one to ride, and I rode with them through the entire retreat.

Once, during the retreat, an officer dashed down the line yelling "baggage wagons to the right, artillery to the rear" being very shortly followed by, I think it was, twelve pieces of artillery as hard as they could drive. Needless to say the baggage waggons went to the right as ordered. If the road happened to be narrow they went into the ditch and perhaps tipped over, but the artillery passed, and in about fifteen minutes you could hear the guns roar. The enemy were evidently turned back. The day before we reached Harrison's Landing at one place we passed through a great many cannon in position and some rifle pits crowded with soldiers, and about half a mile to the rear stopped to feed our horses. I saw 40 or 50 cannon and I think there were many more. It was the opening of the battle of Malvern Hills, a most bloody fight and the last attempt of the Rebs. to cut our line of retreat. I could distinctly see McGruders' men come out of the woods about a mile distant and storm these guns that I have spoken about. I could see the full effects of the artillery fire upon the bodies of men as they came towards us; the artillery fire did not seem to stop their advance at all; only thinned their ranks. I have heard that a straight line from Savages Station to Harrison's Landing our objective point of retreat was only 17 miles.

I was five days and nights on the retreat after I struck my friends. We were on the move all the time, except when we were feeding our horses. I cannot imagine where we went. I suppose that we made some highly strategical military movements. I dont know, but one thing I do know is that when I struck Harrison's Landing on the 4th of July, I was never so tired in my life, my flesh was fairly numb. We arrived at 5 a. m., and picketed our horses. I spread my blankets in the mud, and laid down with my head in a saddle

utterly exhausted, I went to sleep at once and did not wake up for 12 hours at 5 p. m. It had been pouring rain all day but I felt refreshed. These little experiences may have something to do with the twinges of rheumatism that I feel occasionally at present.

During the 7 days retreat I have heard that there were seven named battles; I don't know about that, but I do know that there was fighting going on every day, and sometimes it would break out at night. Individually I was only under musketry fire twice during the retreat. Once at the Chickahominy River, I have mentioned, and once for about five minutes when they attempted to cut off our line of retreat. It was an intensely interesting 5 minutes to me. The man riding next to me was killed instantly. His comrades simply rolled his body to the side of the road into a ditch and left it, nothing else could be done.

When it was thought that the baggage had been captured I saw a long line of dirty blue coming with a rush; I thought it was the prettiest color I ever saw. They passed us with a rush and yell, heavy firing for 3 or 4 minutes, then we resumed our places besides the waggons and marched on minus 4 or 5 men and a few horses out of our Company. I remember asking about the regiment that came to our rescue. It was the 49th Pennsylvania commonly known as the Pennsylvania Bucktails, because each wore a deer tail in his cap. Their commanding officer was killed that day or the next day. Whether this fight was part of one of the battles or only a scrap, I never knew, but it was a big enough fight to suit me for all time to come. The whole seven days fighting as far as I could see was but a repetition of this encounter only on a larger scale with cannons thrown in, more death and more suffering.

Next day after my arrival at Harrison's Landing I reported to my chief, Capt. Winslow and was given charge of Dock No. 2, and with orders to set all Contrabands at work that should be sent to me. Contrabands were negroes who had come to the Union lines escaping from their masters.

The Dock was 12 or 14 Canal boats, side by side, from the bank out into the stream until a sufficient depth was obtained for boats to come up and unload. In about a week 750 Contrabands had been sent to me, I worked 500 of them in the day and 250 at night, and made each of my old gang at Savages Station foreman except two who I think were killed on the retreat.

The U. S. troops only had possession of the eastern side of the river. There was more or less fighting going on but I only heard about it from report. It was just settling down to hard work and long hours as I had to help keep the time-books for some of my men who could not read or write. My pay had been increased to \$90.00 per month; at that time greenbacks were as good as gold. It was quite an advance on \$12.00 per month and boarding around. The Contrabands slept on the canal boats. I had been in charge of Dock No. 2, for about two weeks and all seemed quiet when one very dark night a most infernal racket broke loose, shells bursting on the Dock right and left. We were being shelled by the enemy from the opposite side of the river. I jumped out of bed, grabbed a blanket, and rushed for a ditch about 50 yard distant and at right angles with the line of fire, and stretched myself along the bottom of it, and as close to the bottom of it as I could get. In less than half an hour about 60 of our guns got to work and silenced the enemy. I went back to bed but the Contrabands were much scared. They must have thought that freedom had its drawbacks. We found out afterwards that some of the enemy had got into our lines and placed three lighted lanterns on the side of the outside canal boat making an excellent target, and had sneaked down to the bank on the opposite side of the river and opened on us. Strange to say less than 10 men were killed. This episode hardly created a comment in the Northern papers, it was not thought of sufficient importance, but as I said it was intensely interesting to me for about an hour.

The North had at that time about 500,000 men under arms, divided into different armies; there was the

army of Tennessee, army of Mississippi, army of the Cumberland, army of the West, and army of the Potomac, which was in Virginia, where I was. There may have been some more armies scattered around. I have forgotten or did not know.

The constant exposure for two months and especially drinkin^g the stagnant water brought the Chickahominy fever on me, a low kind of malarial fever, and I was sick and weak. In a good many places the men had to build little platforms to put their blankets on to sleep. By simply digging your heel into the ground and making a hole it would be filled with water, and every night a mist would arise ten or fifteen feet high and so thick you could only see a short distance in it; they may talk to me of their sunny south, Magnolias, Mocking-birds, balmy breezes and flowers, but I want none of it in mine. I much prefer a real old Canadian storm, a regular rip-snorter where you have to tear down fences and take to the fields, no balmy south for me.

Well to return to my experience, it was part of my duty to report the amount of forage issued to Capt. Winslow every two days, Heitzelamn's and Franklins corps got their forage at my dock. I used to get a horse from the Oneida Cavalry to ride up and report, it was about two miles. One day they brought me a new horse, a good looking one that they had lately captured. I rode him to head-quarters and hitched him among other horses. After reporting I mounted and attempted to get him started; he evidently did not want to leave the other horses, and reared so as almost to unseat me. I got off, put my arm over the saddle bore my weight upon him he again reared higher then before. I gave the reins a pull and over he came striking his head on the ground so hard that his nose bled. The Capt. came out and he thought I had thrown myself out of the saddle in time to escape a fall and was a good horseman. I did not explain to him that I was not in the saddle at the time of the fall. He was in want of waggon masters and offered me the position of \$125.00; four mule teams. I would not have accepted any way. I was

sick, more sick than I knew and just able to crawl round and so determined to come North and get some of the balmy South Malaria out of my system; so was paid off and came back to Cowansville with about \$125.00 in my pocket, and the Chickahominy fever thoroughly in my system and lots of experience for my three months absence. The money disappeared out of my pocket much quicker than the fever did out of my system. To recover my health, I went to Quebec for 2 or three months and received my board in return for distributing a druggists advertisements to the ship captains as they came into port, many ships arriving in Quebec at that time. It was perhaps all I was worth, but many a time during my stay in Quebec my heart yearned for a good old Yankee pay day at \$90.00 per month, forgetting all about fevers, bad water, hard marches, shells and bullets, that \$90.00 per month pay day loomed up with a halo around it that nothing could fade. So as soon as my health had somewhat recovered I started back to Virginia, I think in November or December 1862.

In the three or four months that I had been absent the scene had changed, Harrison's Landing had been abandoned and the Army of the Potomac was trying another route to Richmond with apparently the same obstacles in the way. The present route was via Acquia Creek and Fredericksburg. Acquia Creek was about 60 miles below Washington on the Potomac River. The scene had not changed as to hard fighting, hard marches and bad water. At that time they were in want of Carpenters as bridge builders, \$2.00 per day and rations, full time and over time if worked, averaging about \$60.00 per month. It was not up to the old \$90.00 per month but it was a long way ahead of nothing a month and my board distributing ads round the wharves of Quebec. I asked for work as a carpenter, was accepted and was set to work cutting, etc., and stayed with them about a year. There were some good carpenters among them. It is needless to say that when any carpenter work had to be done I was not called upon to do it. This body of men was called the construction corps principal-

ly used in putting up temporary bridges that the enemy had destroyed. R.R. were supposed to be guarded; small bridges like the Cowansville bridge by 25 or 30 men. The rebs would make a dash with 100 or more cavalry drive the guard off and destroy the bridge by fire if possible blowing it up. The guard would get to the nearest telegraph station and the construction corps would be ordered off at once, night or day. About 300 of the construction slept on the cars with a train load of framed timber and engines always fired up. These trains would start at once, perhaps at midnight and as soon as the enemy had been driven off if it was not yet daylight would make large fires and all hands about 300 men, go to work. I have several times arrived when the bridge was still burning and the wounded from the skirmish had not been taken to the hospital. If the bridge had been thoroughly destroyed, say such a bridge as the Cowansville bridge, it would not take over 3 or 4 hours to have trains running over it, building trestle work from both ends at once. The traffic of the R.R. was very little interfered with. In fact so little interference did the destruction of small bridges cause to the traffic that the enemy almost ceased to destroy them. My lack of mechanical ability and lack of carpenter knowledge prevented me ever being promoted so I just remained an ordinary hand and to be honest about it a very ordinary hand indeed.

During the year that I was in the construction corps, I was only under shell fire once, and that not at all sharp work. It was as follows: General Burnside commanded the Army of the Potomac, then and made a move to take Fredericksburg. He moved his army across the Rappahannock River and stormed the height about a mile on the other side of the town. The R. R. bridge at this point had been destroyed and that branch of the construction corps, about 200 strong was set to work in plain sight of the Rebels to rebuild the bridge. I always thought it was a simple blind to give the impression that Burnside intended to hold the Town when in fact he did not intend to do so. At any rate we were

set to work and continued to do so for two or three hours. The Rebels in the ordinary sense did not shell us but about every ten or fifteen minutes a shell would come our way, a few right among us, just enough to make it extremely lively. Some gunner from the other side just having a little fun poking us up. I was very thankful when orders came to cease work; a few, not many were killed and some wounded. The bank of the river where we were was quite high, about twice as high as at Cowansville. I climbed the bank and got up in a tree and watched the battle in full blast on the other side of the river, I could distinctly see the long lines of battle charging up the hills to the breastwork. Our men never got over them. Some of our troops reached the breastworks and laid down there, there thus being a line of battle on each side of the breastworks. Our men retreated as soon as night came on and recrossed the river. This is called Burnside's slaughter pen he having lost over 14,000 men in his two days fight. During the day I saw a particularly fine looking 6 gun battery pass by my tree, go down the hill, cross the Potomac bridge and swing into the flat near Fredericksburg. I was told that it was the 1st Rhode Island Battery, Colonel Sprague commanding, supposed to be one of the best drilled batteries in the United States. They opened fire at once. After a trial shot at the Rebel breastworks, they struck them exactly. I could see the dirt fly. I thought it was magnificent shooting.

In thinking over some of the battles that I have actually seen in whole or in part, I have compared the large number of men killed with the comparatively few men killed in the late Boer war. Perhaps I do not make sufficient allowance for the new rapid firing arms, of precision and more scientific strategy, but I must say in the American war, where they did have a battle you seemed to get your money's worth in killed and wounded. I am perhaps like the Englishman who reading of a great British victory and 5000 of the enemy killed also read that the income tax was raised 2d. in the pound and he was perfectly satisfied saying it was well worth it. I

used to think that a fighting man ought to have a big neck and jaw, but physical courage belongs to no race exclusively. When we think of the long drawn out day after day battles in the war of the Rebellion and the awful slaughter, we cannot but say of our long limbed, lank, thin-featured American cousins whether from the North or South,

"Braver men never to battle trod."

But to resume my experiences, the road to Richmond via Acquia Creek and Fredericksburg seemed to have impediments in the way so a change of route was ordered and we made preparations to leave Acquia Creek. We would take 2 canal boats, place them side by side and fasten them in this position with heavy timbers on which was placed Railroad iron the width of a Railroad track and box cars ran on and fastened, if I remember aright about five cars on each canal boat. I think 200 or 300 cars were taken off in this manner, and the particular flottilla in which I started for Washington, a little before dark, was headed by a little tug puffing and blowing and five or three twin canal boats in tow. It was all right in smooth water but a rather heavy blow and rain came up and the boats rocked very much. We dare not get in the box cars for if the triggging gave way over we would go. I tried it in the hold, but bah, it was somewhat of a repetition of my former experience going to the White House Landing. I had got accustomed to profanity but not to seasickness so I went to the prow of the Canal boat and took my medicine until morning. It poured until day light; I can assure you I needed no bath for cleanliness sake that morning. One car did break loose and rolled into the river; I never heard whether anyone was in it or not. Next day we arrived in Washington and after putting on dry clothes I made up my mind to have a square meal. Some one told me about an hotel kept on the European plan; you paid for just what you got. I went and had a very good dinner and I certainly did pay for just what I got, it cost me \$2.00. Since then I have always looked askant at the European plan of getting meals. I always like to

go for a full bill of fare and know what I have to pay before I start.

The construction corps kept at work; we went up to Pennsylvania at the battle of Gettysburg. My party was nearly captured about 20 miles from Gettysburg by a raiding party of the Rebels, nobody hurt but it was touch and go.

In the fall of 1863 about 800 of us were ordered to the Army of the Cumberland in Tennessee and we went via Columbus, Ohio; Louisville, Kentucky and Nashville, Tennessee, to Chattanooga. The same old round of work, good hard bony labor most of the time, plenty to eat and plenty of society such as it was. I will explain how I finally left the construction corps.

We were at London, East Tennessee and the sub foreman came among the men's tents one morning very early and swearing at them to get out; he must have been all night drinking or started drinking pretty early in the morning. He was in a most diabolical frame of mind. As I came out of my tent I asked him what all the trouble was about. He started abusing me saying among other things that he had a good mind to put a head upon me. At that time I was 20 years old and considered myself quite a fellow, and I told him if he thought it was safe he had better try it. He evidently thought it was safe for he tried it and the first thing I knew I was flat on my back in the mud from a heavy blow in the face. I came to the scratch and received instalment No. 2 just as bad, and No. 3 encounter was but a repetition of No. 1 and No. 2. In a fight with him I had no more chance of success than a child had. As we came together for the 4th round I suddenly remembered that I could kick and I kicked him with all my might in the stomach. He doubled up like a broken backed jack knife. He went to the hospital for two weeks and I did not, but he had certainly put an awful head upon me. He was a very short heavy built, long armed man and had been mate on a river steamer for a long time. I have often thought of our sins of omission and commission; if it was a sin of omission not to kick

him when he was down I am sorry I did not kick him, and if it was a sin of commission to kick him in the stomach I am not sorry for it and never was and am not to this day. Needless to say my services were no longer required and I started for Nashville by Railroad about 200 miles distant. And thus I retired from the construction corps covered with mud and blood and to use a Western expression "a head upon me like a poisoned pup," and the only satisfaction, if satisfaction it was, was that the other fellow was used up worse than I was. I had found out that a man could have wounds and sorrow without resort to the wine cup.

On my arrival at Nashville I asked employment of a Division engineer who disliked the aforesaid foreman even worse than I did. I told him my story and he gave me employment on the N. & N. W. R. R. as messenger, I had to run out about 50 miles and back each day and deliver letters, \$90.00 per month and rations; a very good job indeed and when that job failed I received another one just as good pay and even less work. Of course in running over the R.R. there was a certain amount of risk from guerillas trying to capture the train and torpedoes under the track besides the R.R. was very rough. I fancy all the engine drivers drank, some seemed drunk all the time. I heard that between Nashville and Chattanooga over 150 engines had been tipped over by torpedoes and you must remember that each tipped-over engine meant the wreck of a train as they were tipped over when the engine was in motion.

I remained on the N. & N. W. R. R. for about a year, I can hardly say working because there was hardly any work about it but I know I was certainly on hand every pay day. Uncle Sam is certainly a glorious old pay master when you happen to strike the right grove.

It was during this year that I was under the hottest shell fire that it was my experience to be under during the war. Johnsonville on the Tennessee River and the terminus of the N. & N. W. R. R. was the main base of supplies of Sherman. It was defended by about 2,000 troops when the celebrated General N. B. Forest

attacked it with 4 or 5,000 troops but fortunately for us from the opposite side of the River. The fighting lasted for 2 or 3 days and he destroyed 4 river gun boats commonly called tin clads. Johnsonville was a small place about the size of Cowansville, built of boards. As I said, the fighting lasted 2 or 3 days and ceased. General Forest was supposed to have gone somewhere else doing some devilment; nothing was heard from him for a couple of days and the citizens had all returned to town, thinking that the fight was over. One morning about 9 A. M., I had just had my breakfast and was smoking a good cigar and reading the Nashville papers, thoroughly enjoying life when a most unearthly noise broke loose. Forest had crept back during the night and at about 1500 yards opened upon us with 20 pieces of artillery. I sprang to the door and saw two dead men all mangled in the street. It was no time to stand on ceremony. I was hunting cover. I had been under shell fire before but I never heard such an awful racket before, the extra noise being caused by the shot striking against the board houses. Each shot besides making its own disagreeable sound also made a sound like a drum when it struck the boards. I had about a quarter of a mile to travel to get under cover of a Railroad embankment and I made the distance as fast as possible. When I arrived at the top of the embankment I simply dived down the other side striking on my chest. Time was short, eternity seemed dreadfully close. As this was the first time that I had been under fire for two years I considered myself pretty fortunate. About 70 men were killed in 20 minutes.

I continued in the employ till near the close of the war and found myself with about \$1,500 on hand. It seemed quite a pile but it was really not so much as it was only worth about 50 cents on the Dollar.

Nothing struck me so forcibly in civil life as the awful regularity and rapidity with which the weekly board bill became due, and nothing takes the conceit out of a young fellow like having to pay his board bill every Saturday night and earning the money to do it.

The Americans are a grand people but they have their faults and they were terribly punished for hugging that awful system of slavery to their bosoms so long. "With what measure ye mete to others, it shall be measured to you again," and every tear that a slave ever shed was wiped out in the blood of the best of the land. The Americans also have wonderful ambition and energy, one can hardly tell what they will achieve or where it will lead them to. I hope in their wonderful ambition and energy that they won't attempt to swallow Canada because if they do they will gag sure.

In looking back at the days of my youth, the memory of hard work, sickness, danger and other troubles disappear and I can sav with the poet:

"Oh talk not to me of the names great in story
"The days of my youth were the days of my glory
"The myrtle and ivy of sweet two and twenty
"Are worth all the laurels be they ever so plenty.



Early Days in Nevada

By CHAS. S. COTTON

I have been asked to give some experiences that fell under my own notice in the Early days in Nevada. I mean since its first settlement by the whites. Except to a stray hunter Nevada was unknown to the whites before that historic year to the Western slope 1849 when gold—the greatest of magnets was discovered in California—but about pre-historic (i. e. before 1849) times I have nothing to do.

It may be interesting to my readers to explain the way of getting to Nevada in the early days which are generally considered from 1860 to 1870. At that time the Railroad did not cross the Missouri River and from the Missouri River to Nevada was a stretch of from 13 to 1500 miles. The only dot of civilization on the entire route was Salt Lake City. There was a well travelled road, Ben Holiday's stage route, a few government forts and stage stations, no civilization. The Sioux, Ute, Snake, O'gallalla, Wallawalla and other Indians were in all their glory. The Sioux Indians alone being able to turn out 30,000 fighting men.

All freight for Utah, Nevada and Montana was carried in wagons from the end of the Railroad to its destination. The wagon train in which I crossed the plains consisted of 32 wagons, each wagon carrying four tons, 128 tons, and was loaded entirely with sugar and coffee consigned to one firm.

Now, in the early days a man at the end of the Railroad had three ways of getting there, 1st by Ben Holiday's stage, 25c a mile, meals \$1.00 each at Home stations about 50 miles apart; that meant about \$400 from Atchison to Salt Lake City. That door was closed to the ordinary youth. Another way was to purchase a covered wagon, horses or oxen, 6 months provisions and start, this mode costing about the same amount of

money with the exception that if you got through you had an old wagon, a broken down team and lots of experience for your assets. This way was also out of the question. The other of the 3 ways and the one almost universally followed was to hire out to one of the large freight trains as teamster and drive oxen or mules, wages generally from \$20 to \$25.00 per month and food—food was good — plenty of coffee, sugar, beans, dried peaches, rice, bacon and fresh game until you were tired of it; buffalo covering the country for miles were to be seen in places. Hunters brought hind quarters to the wagon train for 2c per lb., that amount just paying wages for labor.

The trip from the Missouri River by ox train usually taking about 4 months, the train I crossed in took 4 months and 16 days, but we were delayed a couple of weeks by being caught in a blizzard, the cattle were scattered and we lost 64 head, mostly frozen. Each teamster slept in or under his wagon at night, with his loaded rifle slung at the side of his wagon by day and his bosom friend by night. The wagons were doubly covered with canvas stretched over wooden bows, perfectly water tight and very comfortable. Each teamster took his turn to guard at night. The rude head board met almost daily sometimes only marked in pencil "Sacred to the memory of So & So killed and scalped by Indians," perhaps the date a week previous to our arrival made men very watchful. In almost every wagon train the men had their hair cut as close to their heads as possible, so that he was unscalpable and no Indian could hang his scalp lock on his lodge pole for his squaws and papooses to look at, and to admire what a hero the head of the house or tent was. Though I dont know but it was rather mean to deny the poor Indian the satisfaction of scalping his enemy when he had risked his life to do so and the original owner was not much interested in the transaction. But from what I have heard the killing was not all on one side, the only difference being that if the Indians killed the whites it was a massacre and if the whites killed the Indians it was a victory.

But we will say that our bold teamster has arrived at Salt Lake City in the Fall and been discharged. Salt Lake City is a poor place to winter in for a young man short of funds and I never knew a teamster unless he had had an unusually good run of luck at poker. Driving the team is not a money making business, there being no work and the teamster desirous of getting rich, of course, turns his attention to getting to the nearest mining camp in Nevada; he just puts his blankets on his back, gets a frying pan, coffee pot, a little flour, bacon, coffee, salt and tobacco, of course, even if he has to drop some of the other luxuries, and starts. I use the word coffee pot from force of habit for generally speaking the aforesaid coffee-pot is an old oyster can with an impromptu wire handle. A man who carries his blankets on his back from 25 to 30 miles a day does not require any patent strainer for his coffee at night, at least, I did not: no dyspepsia in that work. This 300 miles trip was one of the greatest freedom, you could camp just where you pleased. If your clothes got wet you could walk around until they were dry.

It was safer in the early days to keep away from the Mormons. The Saints, as they called themselves, had a peculiar objection to the Gentiles, at least, their Priests and Bishops had. The name they gave their church was "The Church of Jesus Christ or Latter Day Saints." I went several times to hear their bishop and once one of their Apostles, preach. They were good preachers and praised up their own road to Salvation very much, but claimed that no one else had much of a chance unless he joined the Mormon church. One of their bishops whom I heard and who had just returned from Georgia from a proselyting tour, gave a long account of his trip and the persecutions he received from the godless gentiles. He wound up by giving an account of having been tarred and feathered. I thought lynch law was to be condoned at times.

Prospectors were the "bête noire" of the Mormon priesthood. The reason being that they did not want any mines found in Utah. Well knowing that as soon

as a good mine was found a rush of gentiles would take place and it would play hob with their priest craft. My experience has been that the ordinary Mormon was a pretty decent sort of fellow, unless urged on to meanness and murder by his bishops, as was proved when they murdered 156 men, women and children at Mountain Meadows in Utah. Queer doings in the name of religion. These people had dared to express their opinions very freely about the Mormon priesthood; there is nothing more terrorising to sacerdotal tyranny than freedom of thought and speech. Their apostles and bishops report that they have revelations from God direct. I have seen Brigham Young and several of their prominent bishops, but their personal appearance did not agree at all with my preconceived idea of prophets. All is not dark in the history of the Mormon priesthood. They were first class business men. They recognized one fact in political economy, i. e., in order to raise taxes they had to have a population to raise them from, so to secure the required population they sent out missionaries, mostly to Europe to get converts. As soon as they had a sufficient number collected they contracted with the S.S. & R.R. Co's to take them to Utah at reduced rates. All these expenses were charged against the emigrant. The Mormon church then gave on credit to each head of a family, a pair of mules, wagons, tools, 2 or 3 cows and a piece of land. In fact put them in a position to levy taxes from. As the emigrants were from the lowest of the European population I dont think any change in their religion would do them much harm and as soon as they reached Utah, even if they were badly in debt and had to pay a tenth still they had plenty to eat, fairly good clothes to wear and a team to drive, a state of prosperity which they could never dream of attaining in Europe.

Outside of Salt Lake City there were no Doctors. Brigham Young preached the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. I dont know much about the efficacy of the treatment but it saved doctors bills. I heard that he procured the best medical advice that could be

obtained for his own household, and I have heard he had a household of 13 wives. No tea or coffee could be procured south of Salt Lake City; Brigham Young considered these articles luxuries (and I think they are myself) so he ordered the Saints not to use them and they did not. Salt Lake was one of the cleanest, most orderly and one of the most beautiful cities I ever was in.

Thirty days ball and chain cleaning the public streets was the fine for ordinary drunks.

Well, we will imagine that our bold teamster has at last landed in a Nevada mining camp. He has heard that wages were \$4.00 and sometimes \$6.00 per day, so they were, but every teamster is not a miner and it takes years of experience to become an expert miner so that you can go under ground do a miners work and protect yourself from danger. Many young fellows get discouraged and push on to California and there they fill the thousands of situations in a young and growing state.

Nevada is a desert state with few streams. All streams sink into the sand, even some good size streams such as the Levere and Humbolt. The sink of the Humbolt is quite a large tract of country, marshy.

Nevada has produced immense quantities of silver, in fact as a silver producing state, Nevada is principally celebrated. Such immense quantities of silver have been produced there that it has demonatized silver.

Some few men made fortunes but the great majority made only a living and a poor hard one at that. One mining camp that I spent three years in, was Silver Canon, Lincoln Co. A New York company worked for six years and spent \$750,000 and took out only about \$200,000. That camp was 1,600 miles beyond the end of the Railroad, and freight alone was 20c a pound, including packages. There was no water at the mine, every gallon had to be hauled several miles and miners paid 10c per gallon for all water they used. If those mines where here I think they would pay. In that day we paid \$12 per week for board which did not include a bed. Every man was obliged to furnish his own blankets and a place to put them. The result was that there were one or two

large boarding houses and a large number of small cabins scattered over the hills. As they were built by the miners themselves, some of them were very primitive affairs indeed. The Indians that inhabited Lincoln Co., were the Pah Ranagats, a branch of the Digger Indians of California, a very low, poverty stricken set, no cattle, no horses, no grain; living on pine nuts, rabbits, snakes, and lizards. Their ancestors had evidently been driven back into the deserts from better hunting grounds and more fertile lands and generations of a hard fight for life had deteriorated the whole race. They were in a constant state of warfare with all around them.

In 1864, that tribe numbered 105, in 1874 they numbered 40. No war, that is, any more than their ordinary desultory fighting; no pestilence. I have heard the Indians say that the breath of the white man poisoned the air for the Indians. Whiskey and Tobacco may have something to do with it, but not much. I don't know what it is, but they died.

I will cite a case that came under my own notice. One day, at noon we noticed a commotion in the middle of the mining camp, and on rushing up we found ten or twelve Indians stoning one Indian, trying to kill him and would have done so if we had not interfered. The Indian being stoned was nick-named by the whites, "Silver Top" on account of having a few grey hairs. The only gray-headed Indian I ever saw. We stopped the killing and asked the Indians what they meant by such proceedings. They said that "Silver Top" was old, his eye sight was failing, he could not run fast enough to help catch rabbits. In fact the old man's usefulness was about gone, and they were just killing him in their usual manner. We then told them if they had any Indians to kill they must do it outside the camp or we must take a hand in the game. This spared the old man's life and as long as I was around there he was a protegee of the whites. I saw him for several years and a more worthless specimen of humanity it would be hard to find. Many a quarter the old fellow had cost me for beef shanks. He always claimed he was

afraid to go among the Indians, and the whites had to keep him. I almost came to the conclusion that the Indian style of dealing with their aged had its advantages, that is as far as Indians were concerned.

These Indians have a queer way of hunting rabbits. The native rabbits are Jack rabbits, larger than the English hare and wonderful runners. The Indians to the number of 30 or 40 form a skirmish line about 30 feet apart and travel up a valley; not a rabbit escapes. The rabbit runs up and down the line and exhausts himself or is shot trying to pass the line. The Indians principal weapon of defence is the bow and arrow, and at short range I had rather fight a man with a revolver than one of those Indians with a bow and quiver full of arrows. They can shoot the arrows faster than the ordinary white man can shoot a revolver and much straighter. The head of the arrow is made out of hoop iron and fastened to the shaft by the tendons from rabbits legs wrapped around wet and allowed to dry. As soon as the arrow enters a man the warm blood softens the tendons and on pulling the shaft out the head of the arrow invariably remains in the wound. A great chance for missionary work among those Indians, and come to think about it, I do not think a missionary would have hurt the whites much. During my three years stay in Silver Canon I never saw a minister of any denomination and only one man who was reported to have been a preacher, but he did not make his occupation known; he was speculating in Mines.

The hours of work for miners were from 7 a. m. to 6 p. m., with an hour for dinner, and from 6 p. m. to 4 a. m., with half an hour at midnight to eat; called day shift and night shift, changing every two weeks.

The only place of resort in a small mining camp, was the saloon, such things as Scott and Duncan acts were unknown.

Many of the miners were from the Southern States, where the sugar cane grows and they would ask me many questions about Canada, and the one thing that seemed particularly to strike their fancy, was the idea of making

sugar in winter, of shoveling snow paths around to the trees with snow perhaps three feet deep. It seemed to them ridiculous, they only making sugar in the hottest part of the year.

The Indians always nickname a man themselves, a man's real name having nothing to do with it. They nicknamed me Pah-nah-pooah which means four eyes. I think I was the first man many of these Indians ever saw who wore spectacles. I have several times been in their camps and the beautiful dusky belles crowded around me to have a good look at my spectacles. I call them beautiful because every persons idea of beauty is somewhat different and some person (though I have never run across one) may consider them beautiful. You can imagine a very dark, almost black, woman, very coarse features, dressed in the cast off clothing of civilization, whether male or female attire seemed to be a matter of accident. In that day they did not know what combs were and the only combing their hair ever received was with their fingers. As for water, they thought it good enough to drink, but had no further use for it. The only time water ever touched their skin was when they were caught out in a shower. Their food before the advent of the whites consisted of rabbits, lizards, snakes, pine-nuts and an occasional feast of Mountain sheep, which latter is very poor eating. Taking all these things into consideration, their hard fare, nomadic life, ignorance of the use of water, their appearance to say the least was not captivating to one like myself who had been brought up accustomed to the society of our bright-eyed, handsome winsome Canadian girls. But with all that they had their womanly instinct of curiosity which I have heard say belongs to their fairer sisters as well. So I have a good many times taken my spectacles off and they were passed from hand to hand with many an "oh" and an "ah" as they made remarks about them in their guttural dialect. These Indians only had words to express numbers to five. Beyond that numbers were expressed by holding up their fingers. They had very little idea how old they were.

Life in Nevada at that time was hard and rough. It was a typical case of man never is but always to be blessed. Every man had one or more claims in the hills and was always looking forward to the time when he would strike it rich and go back to the States. A small percentage did strike it rich—I don't think one of these stayed in Nevada but started at once to the States to see the old folks—and many a poor fellow never struck it at all but is wandering over the deserts of Nevada and Arizona to-day, perhaps turning a longing eye to Klondike.

The great excitement of a miners life in that day and I suppose still is, was a rush or stampede to new diggings. Every man had his pack and saddle animal out on the range, ready for just such a rush. For instance, I think that it was in the winter of 1868 or 1869 that word was brought to Silver Canon, that they had struck it rich at White Pine, about 200 miles distant, and they had struck it rich. Native silver by the wheelbarrow load. One mine and the principal one taking \$1,000,000.00 worth of silver from a place not larger than this building. There were between 60 and 70 miners working in Silver Canon at \$6.00 per day. Next morning, only 6 men reported for duty, the rest had gone on the stampede to White Pine, not even waiting for the pay due them. Some two or three made from \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00, the rest went to work by the day and waited for a new stampede. White Pine was built at the highest altitude of any town in America, 10,000 ft. above the sea level and in three months from the first location, there were 9,000 population, almost to a man, young fellows in the prime of life, hardly a grey head to be seen. Water boils at a less degree of heat at a high altitude. I have heard say that you could not boil beans up there, and I know personally that it took a long time to boil potatoes when you were hungry and waiting for your dinner.

The nearest settlement was Austin, about 200 miles distant and owing to such a large number of men being gathered together in a desert country, with no roads,

everything eatable was at famine prices. Two articles I remember the price of particularly. Hay was 20c per lb., \$400 per ton, and eggs at restaurants were 50 cents each cooked, and scarce at that; of course White Pine was among the mountains.

There is one person that is ever present whether among the most civilized, semi-civilized and I imagine among the savages, i. e. the tax gatherer. Governments may come and Government may go but the tax-gatherer always finds his man. But I want to show how I felt relieved (in mind at least) after a visit from one of the aforesaid gentry. One of my speculations was that I had swapped a pack-saddle and rig for a half interest in the "Georgia" claim. Now the Georgia was a simple location, no work had been done on it. So the man who owned the other half and went by the name of "Mormon Jack" though he was no Mormon, and I went to work to develop. We worked about a week and the Georgia did not develop worth a cent. There were some silver strains, not worth ten cents a ton, and I fancy the Georgia is in the same situation yet. One day I was resting at noon and wondering when luck was going to change with me; I was low spirited, a decided touch of homesickness though it may have been billiousness as our only meat diet had been bacon for a month or two and no vegetables, except a little canned stuff. Whatever the cause was, I was feeling very poor and miserable. Then Mormon Jack said "here is that blooming assessor coming up the Canon." Our Georgia claim was about a mile up a dark ravine or Canon and no one but ourselves there, so of course his visit was for us. One thing comforted my mind and that was that he could not get much out of me. The assessor swore both of us and took out his papers for me to make a statement of assets over liabilities. He had a list of every conceivable thing a miner ought to have; first on the list was immoveable property:

My Cabin was put down at . . .	\$300.00	about its value
Rifle	40.00	about its value
Horse	100.00	had paid \$110.

Revolver	10.00	had paid	\$20.
½ interest in pack-animal.	25.00	about its value	
Saddle pack, saddle and blankets	75.00	about its value	
Watch	50.00	had paid	\$55.
Cash on hand	100.00		

Making a total of \$700.00 and as the rate was 5 p.c. he held out his hand and I paid him \$35.00 and \$4.00 poll tax which every one has to pay. As the assessor went away I really felt better for his visit and did not begrudge the \$39.00 a particle. I had no idea I was so well off, that is the only authentic case that has come under my notice when a visit from the tax-gatherer left a pleasant sensation.

One little incident comes to my mind and that is the death of California Joe. I knew him for a couple of years but never knew any other name for him. He was a cook in a boarding house and a splendid cook he was too, a little dark man, always clean and could talk English, French, Spanish and Portugese fluently. One of Joe's peculiarities was that as soon as breakfast, which was always at 6 a.m. sharp, was over, Joe would get gloriously drunk every day. He did not get dinner as the miners took their dinner with them to the mines, but he always sobered up in time for supper. His two principal pleasures in life seemed to be cooking and getting drunk and as his getting drunk did not interfere with his getting his regular meals it was looked upon as a peculiarity of his own and no one elses business. One day, about ten o'clock in the morning, when Joe was about as drunk as he well could be he was wandering near the boarding house and spied a rattle snake. Joe took out his pocket knife and attempted to cut off its head but the snake struck him in the knuckles. Everything was done for him that could be done. The principal remedy suggested by his numerous advisers (the nearest Doctor being at Belmont 120 miles distant) was whisky, and consequently he was given all he could possibly drink; it did not seem to effect him at all. He died that night.

I did not see it myself but they reported that his body was spotted from the effects of the poison. No man in the camp would have been missed more, poets, painters, musicians fill a want in civilization but the man who can provide three good appetizing meals a day is a benefactor to his race.

In my day, most miners would work for wages for several months, get a grub stake and prospect. One little incident may be interesting. It was about 100 miles above Del Norte, on the Rio Grande River. My partner and self had 5 or 6 Mexican donkeys or burros, pack animals, following the trail over the Rocky Mountains to the San Juan mining country. The trail was very rough, in many places just wide enough for the pack animals to pass. At one of these narrow places with a perpendicular rock at the right and the Rio Grande flowing on the left, about 4 feet below the trail, the leading pack animal stopped and the next one losing his footing slipped into the river, which at that place was running like a mill race. The water was about four feet deep and 150 feet wide. We saw our burro, Tommy Atkins by name, rolling down the stream first the legs up and then the pack. It would have been a much more amusing sight if Tommy Atkins and his load had belonged to some one else. We at once camped and went back to see if Tommy had been washed ashore anywhere. We found him dead about half a mile below, stranded on a bar but unfortunately on the other side of the river. Among other things in his load, was some steel to be used for blasting purposes, which could not be replaced in that country. It was too much property to be lost with only 150 feet of separation. We needed that property and we needed it badly. The water was very rapid and occasional cakes of ice floating down the stream. Throwing off my clothes I started in but had not go 15 feet from shore and the cold water coming up to my shoulders, I suddenly lost all desire to regain that property and came back. My partner laughed at me and said he would show me how to get it, I told him I was perfectly willing to be showed how. So in he went, I must say

that he went a few feet further than I did, but he too came back. So we held a consultation and came to the conclusion that we could get along very well without that property, in fact we did not want it at all. As we were taking supper that night a man came along and begged supper, the poor fellow had no food and not a cent. As we were taking supper and telling about our accident he asked what we would give to get the stuff over, we said \$5.00; he agreed to do it and did it next day. I don't know whether he was any braver than we were but he was certainly much harder up.

On the same prospecting trip and a few days subsequently we came to the Divide. At this point was the actual back-bone of the American continent or I may say part of the back-bone, one of the vertebrae in fact, for the back-bone runs 4 or 5000 miles. On the eastern slope, the water runs into the Gulf of Mexico and on the western slope, the water runs into the Gulf of California. We climbed nearly to the timber line and found quite a large party, about 100 men, camped there. It was impossible to go any further, on account of the snow which for 8 or 10 miles was from 5 to 10 feet deep on the trail. The days were warm and the snow melting rapidly, nights were cold and when cold enough freezing a crust on the snow that made a good road for man and beast. The first night we camped there some of the party got up about 2 a. m. to see if the crust was hard enough to travel upon, but did not report favorably, but on the following morning it was reported practicable and the whole party started and travelled about eight miles on the snow crust, about 100 men and 200 pack animals, this was on the 28th of May. As I stood on the Divide on the snow crust, I could look down the western slope into the Los Animas valley and see cattle grazing on the green plains, being simply the difference in altitude. The descent on the western slope was very abrupt in places, impossible to go straight ahead, we had to zig-zag down. As we were on the Divide, mountains towering on both sides of us, one of the party pointed out to me farther up on the mountain side one

of the dwellings of that prehistoric race called the "Cliff dwellers." He said he could reach it after a pretty stiff climb and offered to up with me. As it was only a square hole in the rock anyway, and no one knew who the cliff dwellers were and I had all the climbing on hand I could attend to, I did not accept the offer.

The recreations of a mining camp are not altogether confined to the saloon. Finding the time hanging heavily on our hands, one winter, the miners of Silver Canon decided to start the Great League for American Miners. The ostensible object of the league was improvement and protection of the horny handed sons of toil against the bloated aristocratic monopolists and bond holders, but the real object was fun. All the best talent of the camp was pressed into service to get up the initiation ceremony. The candidate was blindfolded and before he became a full fledged member of the great League of Nevada Miners went through a ceremony most unique in its way. He was tossed in a blanket, travelled over the Rocky road to Jordan, had a cold water bath and interrogated on all sorts of ridiculous matters. The only two questions that I remember which were asked of the candidate to show his proficiency in the noble art of metallurgy were the following: "What is the difference between porphyry of the silurian period and decomposed carboniferous lime rock quarts?" and "What is the difference between argentiferous galena and anoygdaloid highly metaliferous in its character.

The great trouble with our league was that by the time we had initiation ceremony properly prepared to our satisfaction every one in camp knew all about it and there were no candidates to initiate. This was a state of affairs we had not looked for. Finally a Mormon charcoal burner named Woolsey, offered himself as a candidate for initiation, provided we trusted him for the future payment of the initiation fee. Needless to say we gave him unlimited credit and we duly initiated him. He took it very pleasantly and after the ceremony was over, as he stood wet and dripping, our hearts relented

and as he was poor we chipped in \$20.00 and gave him a sack of flour; flour was 20c per lb. As he was leaving the room to dry his clothes he said "Boys I will stand another initiation for another sack of flour." The old fellow was not so simple as we took him to be. The only other candidate that we secured was a tenderfoot, whom we again trusted for the initiation fee. After the ceremony he borrowed a pair of trousers from me till his own were dry. It must have taken them a long time to dry for he has not returned them yet. On the whole we received a lot of fun out of it, but I think the candidates received the most benefit.

I have travelled a good many days over the Nevada deserts with only my riding horse and pack animals for companions. It is lonesome work. I have also worked a good many nights shifts, far away from the mining camp all alone, my partner being sick or perhaps not quite recovered from last pay-day. I have heard some men say that they liked that lonesome life; well they may like it but all the same I think their mental make up is a little out of plumb. Of all the lonesome places that I have any experience of a deserted mining camp, especially a mining camp that you are thoroughly acquainted with, bears the palm. I passed through such an experience in Silver Canon. I had worked there (except for-stray prospecting trips) for three years. I knew every man and dog in camp, and every mine and prospect hole in the District. One day, when all hands were at work and not a suspicion of any thing wrong, orders came to the Superintendent to send every man to the office to be paid off. It was a bolt from the clear sky. The Hyko Silver Mining Company had simply become tired of paying out four dollars to get one back. As every man had his own horse on the range it was not much trouble to go to the office at Heko, ten miles away. All hands were paid off and discharged, The Company's clerk engaged me next day to go to Silver Canon and take an inventory of the Company's effects tools, etc., and make a report. I rode into the camp next day as I had ridden a hundred times before but there was an un-

terable loneliness about the place that my pen fails to describe; not a head put out of a cabin door to ask me the news, not a friendly; no, not even a dog, (I won't say to bark at me, for I was on as nearly speaking terms, with every dog in camp as man and dog can be) to show pleasure upon my arrival. It seemed like visiting the corpse of a friend. The form was there but the soul, the life had gone. I took an inventory of the Company's tools, etc., slept in my cabin that night and in the morning after breakfast put on my pack animal all I could, covered the fire and swept out the cabin, shut and locked the door, hung the key in plain sight and started. I had spent three pleasant years of my life there and felt lonesome as I rode away from Silver Canon. And Silver Canon was deserted. My cabin partner Jack Castle remained. He had a claim called the "Green Monster" in which he had great faith. So he moved to a spring about 2½ miles from Silver Canon and settled down. Jack was rich at that time in imagination at least from the undeveloped wealth of the Green Monster. I hear he has been working it occasionally ever since, getting a few tons of ore out, having it crushed and more than paying expenses, and my experience has been that any mine that more than pays expenses is a rara avis.

The chief of the small band of Indians around Silver Canon was named Powitchy. He must have had some system of levying revenue from his band, for I never knew the old beggar to work. The old nursery rhyme about covers his character.

"Old Powitchy the Indian chief

"Who you well know is a big thief.

"He handles his hatchet a little too handy.

"And never drinks water when he can get brandy.

Jack had been working all alone at the Green Monster for about a year when one fine day Powitchy came to the door of Jack's cabin with seven of his bucks behind him, all armed, Powitchy with a rifle and the rest with bows and arrows. Jack was sitting at the door

of his cabin smoothing a hammer handle, it was one of those hammer handles that were for use with two hands about 2½ feet long and the best of hickory. This was a formidable weapon in the hands of an athletic powerful man which Jack certainly was. He had sailed two years with Farragut and was a thorough swordsman besides, having a strong dash of Irish blood in his veins, which report says takes naturally to a shillalah. Powitchy advanced to within four or five feet of Jack backed by his warriors and said "How" meaning How do you do. Jack said nothing still scraping his hammer handle. Powitchy then said that he owned the mountains, then claimed that the wood and the grass were his. Jack was still silent. Powitchy then claimed that the flour, blankets and house were his and made a movement to crowd Jack out of the door and get inside. This was Jack's chance; with a quick motion and a swinging upward blow he laid the old chief's head open and sprang into the cabin for his rifle. As Jack came to the door he saw Powitchy on his back with his hands in the air begging for mercy, and in the most earnest tones saying that the mountains, water, grass and everything else were Jack's and in the distance could be seen the rabbit skin blankets of Powitchy's braves fluttering in the breeze as they tried to break the record for fast time from the scene of action. Jack whom I knew from three years intercourse to be a thoroughly brave man without a particle of cruelty in his composition then turned his attention to old Powitchy, got the old fellow on his feet, washed and stitched up his wound and let him go. I saw Powitchy several months afterwards and he gave me a graphic description of the fight and wound up by saying "Jack no talk, heap fight."

About this time each day brought us good news from a neighboring mining camp called Pioche, in the same County and about 70 miles distant. As some of the men I knew had been quite successful two of my friends and myself concluded to go over and try our luck, so we packed three or four days provisions on our donkey or burro with our blankets and started. This particular

burro had had the run of the camp for three or four years, a one-eyed twisted neck little fellow, very thin and tame as a dog. His name was Don Caesar de Bezan and the men said the responsibility of carrying around such a dignified name made him thin. However he was a very serviceable little fellow and we started with him for Pioche. On the 70 mile trip there were only two watering places, one is about 25 miles, the next 35 miles further on and then 10 miles to Pioche. Men perish every year on the deserts from thirst and from my experience on this trip I can readily understand the reason. We made the 25 mile water all right and after filling our canteens started out on the 35 mile desert in the evening, made 10 or 12 miles and slept on the desert, next morning started very early and by ten o'clock had travelled about 15 miles and camped at Pt. of Rocks. It was intensely hot. We left Pt. of Rock about 3 p. m. with a couple of good drinks in our canteens, on our seven or eight mile trip to water. Don Caesar had also had water before starting. By the time 3 miles had passed we had used up the last of our water and only four miles to travel. Almost immediately I commenced to get thirsty, one of the party being a very rapid walker pushed on ahead of us and did not suffer much. After travelling thus for a couple of miles I could feel my throat parched and my tongue appeared to be swelling. When within a mile of water I had doubts whether I could make the other mile or not and I commenced to hear buzzing in my ears. At this point I noticed an Indian in the sage bush near the road. It was an Indian from Silver Harrow, whom I knew well, named "Konk". As soon as he saw who it was he came towards me and I asked him for water. He called out and his squaw who hid in the sage brush came to us, she had a jar of water. These Indians make a sort of coarse pottery from the clay of the country but cannot put glaze upon it, the result is that water kept in these vessels tastes strongly of clay and if carried any distance gets pretty thick with clay. The jar was handed to me and I drank heartily, the clay thickened brackish water tasted simply glor-

iously. My partner Jack Castle also drank and he afterwards told me that water never tasted so good. We poured some of the water into our canteens and each of us handed "Konk" a dollar and though it cheap enough, though I doubt whether a couple of drinks of dirty warm water was often paid for as highly. My tongue and mouth did not get to their normal state for a week or ten days. About 20 miles from Pioche on the road to Hiko, there is a rude pile of stone called Rodgers monument, which has always borne a melancholy charm to me. I imagine few people now living in Lincoln Co. know the history of that solitary cairn. Its history is as follows: In 1865 George Rodgers, a fine young fellow from Kentucky, I think, was one of Lincoln County's early settlers. He was a natural born sport and his inseparable companion was a throughbred Kentucky running horse. The animal was always kept in perfect condition and Rogers was at any time ready to give or take a challenge for a race. Rodgers had wintered in Meadow Valley and made arrangements to go to Heko (60 miles distant, a perfect desert and uninhabited) run his horse against Ike Brown's "Curly." Ike Brown was a Canadian and kept a hotel. The race was looked forward to with a good deal of interest. I cant say that much money was being put upon the race for by my personal experience I know that money was a very scarce article indeed in Hiko at that time. The then communication between Meadow Valley and Hiko was limited, it was only semi-occasional. Rogers was to have arrived on a certain day but as he did not do so for a week afterwards anxiety was felt and upon enquiry the Meadow Valley Mormons reported that he had started for Hiko on the day appointed. After that all track of him was lost. The miners then residing in Hiko had their head filled with the doings of the Mormons at the Mountain Meadow massacre and other places and had very little doubts but that they had killed Rogers. A party of 18 was organized, well armed and equipped and started for Meadow Valley to solve the mystery and if Rodgers had been killed to avenge his death. This was 33 years ago.

I wonder how many of that old party are now able to swing a leg over a saddle and take that sixty mile ride without rest. They proceeded at once to Meadow Valley and demanded of the Mormons the whereabouts of Rogers. The Mormons denied all knowledge of Rogers which statement the miners did not believe. It is uncertain how the matter would have turned out but at this junction it was discovered that a certain Indian whom Rodgers had kept through the winter and who had started with him from Hiko had on the way treacherously shot him in the back and after robbing the body had put a large pile of stones upon it. The Indian had also killed Rogers horse and with the assistance of brother savages had eaten it. A general Indian hunt was inaugurated and in two days eighteen Indians were killed. The assassin of Rodgers was taken to the place where he had done the deed and there slain. The Hiko party after erecting this monument on the scene of the murder returned home. The extreme lonesomeness of poor Rodgers burial place used to bring to my mind the following lines from "The graves of a house-hold:"

"One midst the forest of the west
"By a dark stream is laid
"The Indian knows his place of rest
"Far in the cedars shade."

One of the characters of the early days of Pioche was a half breed Cherokee, named Jones, a fine looking man physically, but his moral training had been sadly neglected, in fact, I dont think he had any moral training at all. He would steal, gamble, on the square if he was obliged to, get drunk, fight, etc. In fact he had all the vices you could well crowd into one man. His redeeming qualities were pluck and sticking to his promise. If he gave you his word you would bet on it every time and he would work very well occasionally. Jones managed for a time to escape the clutches of the law, but he was finally arrested for horse stealing, was convicted and sentenced to the Penitentiary at Carson, 300

miles distant. As the expense was great to convey prisoners to Carson they waited sometimes six months until 2 or 3 had to be taken there together. There being no regular gaol at that time an old house was used for that purpose, a gaoler being constantly in attendance and the prisoners hand-cuffed and manacled at night. A friend of mine named Bob Wright was then the gaoler and one day he asked me if I could give a man work on the night shift. I told him I was full handed but if it was any particular favor, I could do so. He informed me that he wanted a job for Jones. I told him Jones would certainly skip if given the opportunity. Wright said he would take all chances, and so Jones went to work at night and worked several months. Going to the work at night alone after dark and returning before day light and was paid his regular wages as a miner and did good work. Wright was a much better judge of human nature than I was. This continued until the day before Jones was to go to the Penitentiary, Jones knew all about it but returned a few hours before they started with him and others for Carson. In about a year Jones returned to Pioche and remained there a year or two under Bob Wright's watchful eye, kept pretty straight. Jones would occasionally get drunk and then was quarrelsome. When in that state they hunted up Bob Wright who would put his hand on Jones shoulder and tell him it was time to go to bed, and Jones' answer became a bye word in camp, "Just as you say Bob" and Bob would take him off to bed and get him to sleep and all would be quiet. It was a complete state of hypnotism or I think kindness would be a better word. I doubt whether in poor Jones' wayward career he had previously ever met a man who had completely trusted him and Bob Wright was kind to him simply because it was in his nature to be kind to everybody. In a year or two, I heard of Jones' tragic death which was as follows: In one of the small mining camps, south of Death Valley Jones and his partner had a fight with seven men in connection with a mine. A regular battle ensued; one of the seven men was killed and several

wounded. Jones's partner was killed and Jones badly wounded retreated to the hills back of the camp, where his enemies dare not follow him. In a couple of days, some carrion birds were noticed hovering over a point about a mile from camp and upon inspection it was found to be Jones's corpse. He had retreated that distance and died. When he felt death approaching he had destroyed his revolvers and Henry rifle by pounding them against the rocks, so that his enemies could reap no benefit from his death. Just imagine the nerve of the man who all alone in the desert desperately wounded as he felt that great enemy of the human race, death, creeping upon him to have the courage to destroy his weapons. With other chances and other training, Jones might have been an ornament to society. He was born for better things than to die like a wolf at bay.

Another fighting man of the early days and perhaps the most prominent, went by the appellation of Morgan Courtney, though his friends said his real name was Mick Moriarty. He came from Australia, or perhaps a better expression would be that he escaped from Australia; a fine handsome man of pleasing address and good education, but from his actions I should judge that the Devil was busy with him most of the time. He first came into prominence in Pioche, in connection with the "Banner-Creole" fight. The Banner men, numbering 8, had jumped some of the Creole ground. The Creole owners not being fighting men and not wishing to wait for the laws delays, gave a contract to Morgan Courtney, Jimmy Harrington and Barney Flood for \$1,500 spot cash to dispossess the Banner crowd *vi et armis*. These three gentleman fulfilled the contract to the satisfaction of every body interested, except the "Banner" crowd. About forty shots were exchanged in the skirmish; one of the Banner men named George Snell, was killed on the spot and another named Al. Dolliff was shot in the jaw. Courtney himself was shot in the thigh. I particularly remember this fight for I was working for the "Creole Co." at that time, and not more than 75 feet from the ground that the Banner crowd had jumped. I

was not in the slightest degree interested in the ownership of the mine, and the locality at that time being to my mind unhealthy, I did not interfere. I was not even a spectator of the fight as I sat down beside a large pile of stones, and if any of my readers are more particularly anxious about my exact situation, I am willing to certify under oath that to the best of my knowledge and belief the thickest part of the pile of stones above referred to was between the fight and myself.

The population of Pioche, in that day, represented about every state in the union and nearly every nation on the face of the earth. Thirty saloons were in full blast and nearly as many licensed gambling games. I have forgotten the amount paid for liquor license, but it was \$30.00 per quarter for a faro license. Faro was the favorite game of chance and the chances were and are very much against the regular player making any money at it. The only sure way of getting the best of a gambling game is to leave it entirely alone. If the young fools who think they can gamble would simply quit it, the regular gamblers would eventually have to go to work, an operation of which they have the most abject horror.

There was no mock modesty about people being seen drinking at the bar in that day, no green blinds and folding doors were required in the front of the saloon. You could see from the street all that was going on inside. You could just walk up to the bar, name your favorite beverage and the particular kind of sour that you wanted in it and you got it. You paid your bill (two bits or 25c) gave way to the next party and retired yourself to recover from the effects of the dose. The names of some of the drinks had to my ears a peculiarly western flavor: Jersey Lightning, Valley Tan, Terantula Juice, Sheepherder's delight, etc. I fancy the effect of these various concoctions is about the same. An old miner once told me that any of them would bring on a "drunk" and that was what he was after.

In walking down the streets of Pioche one day a scene was presented to me that I doubt could be dupli-

cated anywhere in the world except perhaps a western mining camp and even rarely there. I saw an Indian, negro, white man and a Chinaman sitting at one table playing a game of cards together in a saloon kept by a Mexican named Antonio Cardinas. It has always been an unsolved problem in my mind which of the five was the representative of civilization.

There is a good deal of human nature in the Nevada Indian which means to come down to ordinary talk to get all he can and keep all he gets. Pioche was built in a desert Ravine and previous to its occupation by the whites was considered of little value by the Indians, but as soon as the white occupation arrived, the place became a source of revenue to the Indians in the shape of cast off clothing and refuse from butcher shop and restaurants. The swill tub into which all the scraps are thrown is fine pickings for an Indian, whose diet has previously consisted of pine-nuts, lizards, snakes, rabbits, etc., and not an over supply of that. Of course there were two claimants to this valuable franchise i. e., my old friends the Pahrnagat Indians and the Meadow Valley Indians. I always thought the Meadow Valley Indians ought to have had the ground as their head-quarters were only ten miles from Pioche and the Pahrnagat Indians were about 50 miles away. But the rights and wrongs of a question have very little to do in the settlement of public questions by nations or Indian tribes, especially if there is anything to be gained by taking either one side or the other. Old Silver Top explained to me the pros and cons of the case, but as he was a Pahrnagat Indian, his idea was that the Meadow Valley Indians were altogether wrong. A good many palavers took place between the two tribes but as each tribe whether right or wrong, was bound to have Pioche for its stamping ground these palavers did not amount to anything. The difficulty at last got into an acute state, and finally war was declared. The Meadow Valley Indians were in possession of the town, i. e., in possession of the rights to pick up the refuse, and all seemed lovely when three or four Pahrnagat

Indians appeared on the edge of the Town. The Meadow Valley Indians rallied and made a move to drive them off. The three or four Pahranagats retreated with about 20 of their enemies in full chase and within $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile led them into an ambush of superior numbers. The Meadow Valley Indians were thoroughly defeated, leaving two of their dead on the field and had several wounded. The Pahranagats had one squaw killed, though she was not in the fight. Old Silver Top explained to me that she was simply looking on. I imagine this settled the question of the ownership as old Silver Top was a constant visitor and the old fellow would not have dared to show his nose if the Meadow Valley Indians had been in possession. This happened within a mile of Pioche Court House. As the fight started I happened to be standing on the Court House steps with John Kane, the Sheriff, and he said that the more fights the Indians got into the better it was for the whites. The whites were quarreling and occasionally killing each other over the mines in and around Pioche and the Indians were fighting and killing each other over the refuse pickings of the town. The savage and the so-called civilized at the same game. Verily we mortals are a cantankerous, disagreeable set to get along with.

In one of my prospecting trips on the borders of Arizona, I landed at a little Government outpost with a bad attack of fever and ague upon me. At this little outpost there was a sergeant and squad of men on duty. Each of these little out-posts is supplied with a medicine chest. I tried to buy or beg some quinine but the Sergeant would not let me have any. I returned to camp and told my partner, Frank Blair about my non-success. He started off and said he would try his hand at it, also throwing out the hint that my temperance ideas would be a bar to my success in life. He secured a bottle of whiskey, treated the Sergeant, had a little chat, treated the sergeant again and by that time they were quite friendly. Then he and the sergeant came over and gave me a dose of quinine and of course had another drink and as my partner thought that if a little quinine

was good, more was better, between noon and night they had given me six doses, my partner and the sergeant got gloriously drunk and I was about as wild. It broke up the fever and ague but I think I had rather have the fever and ague than go through the same experience again. My partner perished on the deserts three years afterwards about 20 miles from the place for the want of water.

From my experience of Nevada then, the population were a reckless, brave, energetic set of men, true to their friends and their word, and as honest as men would average or the times would allow. Many of them had a peculiar way of their own of settling legal technicalities and shortening the laws delays and I am not quite sure but that they were about right. And the men who then and there played their part as you might literally say in the battle of life have almost to a man, to use a western expression, gone over the Great Divide. I think unless their natures are entirely changed by the journey many of them would like to go on a stampede to new diggings.

