

Of devices for the elimination of space there is no end. There can be none, until the people stop progressing. Occasionally a project is proposed of more than usual daring. The particular prize for which the commercial world is now striving is the trade of South America, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer. North America and Europe each want the bulk of it. The natural advantage which this continent possesses has so far been more than balanced by European aggressiveness. And now Europe proposes to cut in two the time distance that separates her from the object of her commercial longing. It is figured that five days are long enough to transport European goods to South American consumers. To establish such a schedule involves engineering and financial difficulties which may, of course, finally prove its impossibility. By reliable parties the "Dero-Afro-American railway is proposed, first, to cross Spain to Gibraltar, where ferry boats will transport trains to the African coast; thence run to Bathurst, the nearest point to South America. From Bathurst to Pernambuco, Brazil, is but a three-day run for fast steamers. The cost of carrying out this project, daring as it seems, would be but a mere fraction of what the United States alone is paying for the Panama canal. And a half dozen European nations would be benefited by it. It seems by no means impossible.

An unusually peculiar damage suit has just been decided in New York by which the widow of a fire chief has been awarded \$25,000 for the loss of his life in a furniture establishment fire. The chief fell through an open well hole in the building into a cellar half filled with water and was drowned before he could be rescued. The open well hole was in violation of a city ordinance. This suit, with its large damages, will help to emphasize the highly important fact that such ordinances are intended to prevent just such accidents, and that disregard of them leads to criminal and civic liability when a life is lost. There are many ordinances of the kind held lightly in regard until a fatal accident shocks the authorities into enforcement.

Since it has been decided to establish municipal baths for the million at Coney Island, other and ever more ambitious plans for its improvement have been formulated. These include a continuous walk and drive along the entire five miles of its water front, and a new bulkhead line, which has been authorized by government engineers. A contract has been let for a rip-rap wall, forty feet thick at its base and twenty feet at the top, surmounted by a concrete walk. This will protect the island from three periodic invasions by the Atlantic which have frequently been quite destructive. All of which is expected to attract a higher average of patronage than the resort has hitherto enjoyed.

The barbers of Annapolis have appealed to the secretary of the navy to compel the musicians in the Academy band who have opened barber shops "on the side" to abandon competition with local tonorial artists. From the consumer's point of view there may be poor expectation of getting a velvet shave from the hand that hammers the bass drum, although this is offset by the prospect of an expert massage from the nimble-fingered artist. Possibly the barbers, per se, may force the issue by carrying the war to Africa, form a band of their own and serenade the commandant at ungodly hours.

Alfred Giraudet, professor of operatic expression at the Paris Conservatoire, says that he knows there must be good voices somewhere in the United States, but that three-quarters of the Americans who apply for instruction in singing are terribly handicapped by never having studied piano-playing. If the gifted Frenchman's statement increases the number of young Americans who take lessons on the piano, he will incur the resentment of folks who live next door.

A certain minister of the Gospel hailing from New Zealand advocates a plan to tattoo the chins of married women to distinguish them from their unmarried sisters. If a mark were tattooed for every marriage, some of our society queens would resemble picture galleries.

A 25-cent piece was recently taken from the foot of an elephant in the New York Zoo, where it had been securely hidden till the creature's discomfort over its ill-gotten wealth became apparent. The animals must be catching graft from the humans.

Books on poultry raising are said to be among those most frequently called for in the New York Public Library. The people who expect to get rich on chicken farms are not all located in this vicinity.

The department of agriculture has invented a cheap horse food consisting of coconuts and peanut meals. It would be more in keeping with the times to invent a cheap substitute for gasoline.

THE GRAND REUNION

By ROY NORTON

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WITH seventy years of life, well and cleanly spent, behind them, Abner and Ezra were "lookin' for a job." Not whiningly, or with a hard-luck story, but with cheerfulness and a childlike trust that, inasmuch as their whole lives had been honest and true, the way would not be found closed in their hour of need.

And it was this trust that led them across ten miles of timbered divide to a very long way from home for them—the Mariposa Creek, of which Hugh McCarthy, their old friend, was almost sole owner, and in his way a king. Somewhat out of breath, they slowly climbed the trail to the river bank whereon McCarthy stood.

McCarthy, a stocky giant with iron-gray hair, was contentedly watching the work below. The years had gone well with him. Time, knowing his kindly heart, had dealt nothing but caresses. The Alpalino, whereon for many years he had neighbored with the two old partners, had yielded well, and now for five years this new find had added wealth and promise.

Twenty men worked in the cut below, directing great streams of water that in the sunlight showed as streaks of molten silver, smiting with terrific force the red banks, uprooting stumps, tossing boulders, and sending muddy torrents through sluices which caught and held the heavy gold.

A voice, ringing with the thin sweetness of an aged bell, high pitched, broke in upon McCarthy's reverie: "Howdy, Hugh! We're lookin' for a job."

Before its echo had begun, another voice, in equal pitch of plaintiveness, reiterated: "Yes, we're lookin' for a job."

McCarthy, startled, pivoted on the heel of his rubber boot, and in astonishment looked at the two old men who, bearded, dressed, and statured alike, had addressed him. His dark eyes twinkled from beneath his gray tetch of eyebrows, and his hands came from his pockets to grasp theirs, which they simultaneously proffered.

"Abner and Ezra, as I'm livin'," he said, "and lookin' for a job! Well, you've got it."

That was about all that was said. The partners, like automatons pulled by the same string, took off their coats, carefully folded and laid them on the bank. Then they rolled their shirtsleeves to the elbow, took prodigious chews of tobacco, started their jaws and white beards to work, and in five minutes were "hard at it."

The work was very old to them, because in their thirty-five years of partnership this had most always been their lot. True, it was one of the first times in all their lives wherein they had worked for wages and drawn pay for the toil of their hands. Most men would have felt, in commencing life all over again at seventy years, that fate had dealt harshly, but not so with them. To them the hills and forests were home, the good God in heaven a very close friend, and to work was natural.

In this same simple way they had always worked, or passed their days on desert and plain, in the mountain's depths or the forest's shelter; had fought side by side when in brave hearts lay their only hope; had loved the same woman when love came to them; had together buried and sorrowed over her when death interposed, and now that fortune had turned her face were glad to be altogether in toll, where they could share each other's weariness.

It isn't for any one to know how bitterly they must have suffered in leaving the quiet little cabin on the Alpalino, with its truck patch, its flowers, and the little cross on the hill beneath which rested their dead. Even the worked-out ground, which for more than twenty years had held them to the only home they had ever known, must have been very dear, and the outer world very cold.

Hugh, who better than any one knew their joys and sorrows, was now wealthy, and would have gladly given them dust enough to pave with ease all the remaining days of their lives; but he understood them too well for that. Knew that such an offer would be sturdily declined.

Now, as he stood on the bank above and watched them steadily handling their sluice-forks and dumping smaller rubbish from the sluices, he was perplexed. He knew that the lightest work he had to give was all too heavy. At seventy the heart may be young and the toll worn hands willing, but youth's store of strength is gone.

That day witnessed McCarthy's first falsehood, and he loved the truth. After he had made an excuse that they might quit work earlier, knowing how tired they must be, he told them there wasn't room for them to sleep in the mess-house, so had cots placed for them in his own cabin. It was pretty bold, because there were ten empty bunks. It only proved, though, that Hugh was planning other arrangements, and when he planned, as his foreman once said: "Something always happened."

After supper they all sat out in front of the cabin, where, when the

day's work with the big hydraulics was done, everything seemed strangely quiet. None of these three was of the garrulous kind, so there wasn't much said. They watched the stars come out, heard the men in the mess-house in roaring chorus sing the same old songs of the border that they themselves had sung fifty years before, and smoked.

"It's gittin' real late, Hugh," said Abner, knocking a golden shower from the end of the bench.

"Yes," piped Ezra's voice in the same high treble, "it's gittin' real late."

McCarthy wanted them to stay longer. Said he wanted company, but, as no one had said anything for an hour, his ideas of companionship must have been of the quiet sort.

"No, Hugh," same Abner's voice in answer. "It's most nine o'clock, and we're just workin' men now."

"Yes, just workin' men now," came the echo.

They all arose and turned toward the cabin door. It was quite dark, and they couldn't see each other very plainly, so it was less embarrassing to say things from the heart. That is probably the reason why Abner, in his fine old way, said tremulously, as if offering thanks was very hard work:

"Hugh, me and Ezra is gittin' a trifle old, p'haps, to do as much work as some men. We're mighty thankful to the Lord and you, and feel we must do our share. We decided today you'd better call us an hour earlier than the others, because them that can't work as fast as some must work longer."

"Yes, must work longer," repeated Ezra.

"And we want to tell you, Hugh, that we think you're mighty good to us to try to make us feel at home, because it's hard to get used to the new things when you think so much of the old."

That was the time when Ezra didn't answer, but Hugh heard a big gulp in the darkness, and knew that these two old chaps were wiping their eyes when they went inside, all because they were homesick as two boys, and bubbling over with gratitude for what, after all, was only a little kindness and understanding. Maybe Hugh had kind of a clutch in his own throat, so couldn't say anything, but just kept quiet.

So they went to work earlier than the other men. This caused a fellow—one of those big, hulking chaps—to poke fun at them. There aren't many ever saw McCarthy angry, because he knows how to keep his temper, but this fellow had a chance. Hugh had come along unobserved. There were little forks of fire in his eyes when he seized the joker by the throat and shook him as if he were six inches instead of six feet high.

"They'll hold their jobs longer than you," he said, as he dropped the man in a heap. "You're fired! Now hike!"

There were no more jokes at the partners' expense, and the man wasn't fired, after all, because Abner and Ezra talked Hugh out of it. And pretty soon no one wanted to hurt the partners' feelings, because to know them was to love them.

Now, the real secret of their working at all was that Hugh was finding a way to help them out without making them feel bad. He owned a claim above, and without any one knowing what it was for, built on it the finest cabin that ever went up on the Mariposa. It's there yet.

It had four rooms, and fine floors, and a window in each room. Greatest of all, it had real, beautiful store furniture, brought in with a heap of trouble from the nearest railway station. But Hugh didn't mind. He never did things by halves. He even went so far as to have flowers—the old-style kind—planted around the doorway, and was as happy as a boy while watching the work.

One afternoon he took Ezra and Abner up there. They stood around awkwardly, and admired all this magnificence, and kept repeating: "It's a mighty fine place, a mighty fine place, and must of cost a pile of dust."

"Boys," Hugh said—they were always "boys" together—"Boys, here's a deed for this claim and cabin. It's all yours. Now we're neighbors again, just as we used to be on the Alpalino; so we'll call this claim The Grand Reunion."

Abner and Ezra didn't want to take it, but Hugh explained that probably the claim wouldn't pay more than day wages, and therefore the house was really the only present he was giving them. Then they all had supper together, and that ended the partners' "job."

As they watched Hugh go down the trail that night he was so happy he tried to sing, but he couldn't sing much. Hugh was an awful bad singer!

Then they took their boots off outside, for fear of spilling the carpet, and gingerly went in.

Well, the partners went to work on their new ground, cut their trenches, and turned the water through the new pipes and giant which Hugh had "loaned" them. And they lived in their new house with all its store furniture, but they really weren't as

happy as they apparently should have been.

They took care of the flowers, and did all those little chores they had been in the habit of doing, but the fact was that when dusk dropped down and they sat together on the little bench they had made outside the door, they didn't have much to say. Each one was homesick for the old log cabin away over across the divide, the home they had known for nearly thirty years, and for the little wooden cross on the hillside.

But they were so considerate of each other that neither would mention the matter; first because he didn't want to wound his partner, and second because he didn't want to appear childish or ungrateful. True, the Mariposa murmured its way in a canyon, with the same kind of trees on the edges, and big, high, solemn hills back of it all; but the brook didn't sing the same songs, and the canyon didn't have the same skyline, and the trees were different shaped, and the hills unfamiliar. All nature seemed to look at them and say: "What are you two old fellows doing over here, when you really belong in Alpalino gulch?" And for the life of them they couldn't answer.

Again, a big cabin and store furniture, and a carpet were all very nice—much nicer than a one-roomed old shack, with a hewn floor and home-made furniture and a double bunk; but with them always was the sense of strangeness. They felt ill at ease with all this, and constantly

nees, should be equally beautiful, says Orison Sweet Marden in Success Magazine.

Beauty of character, charm of manner, attractiveness and graciousness of expression, a god-like bearing, are our brightlights. Yet how ugly, stiff, coarse and harsh in appearance and bearing many of us are! No one can afford to disregard his good looks or personal appearance.

But if we do beautify the outer, we must first beautify the inner; for every thought and every motion shapes the delicate tracings of our

face for ugliness or beauty. Inharmonious and destructive attitudes of mind will warp and mar the most beautiful features.

To Aid the Laundry Girl. Women workers in laundries are to be looked after by several clubs which have decided to co-operate in an effort to improve the conditions under which these girls and women have to work, says the New York Herald.

Mrs. Julian Heath of the League for Household Economics, who has for two or three years been investigating

individual cases among the laundry women, has made a statement that public laundresses were slaves, that they worked under conditions beyond description, in many instances, and that it was time for women's clubs to take up the matter of bettering their conditions.

Tough Old World is This. Mrs. Crawford—You can have all the bread and butter you want, but no more cake.

Willie—Say, ma, how is it I can never have a second helping of any of

the things I like?—Lippincott's Magazine.

Take the Game Seriously. Girls play a strenuous game of hockey in Australia. In a recent game between the Waratah and Thistle clubs the casualties were one finger broken and another severely crushed, an eye blackened and a face irretrievably damaged, a knee bruised and skin cut so badly that the blood saturated a boot, several mouths cut and a number of shins sliced through shin pads.



"THEY'LL HOLD THEIR JOBS LONGER THAN YOU," HE SAID.

afraid of breaking "some of the firm's."

Hugh used to come up to see them quite often. It would be just about dusk when they would see something lumbering up the trail for all the world like a big black bear, only this one smoked a pipe. He would sit down by them on a chair, which they always politely brought, and then the three of them would watch the stars come out.

Sometimes they would sit a whole hour in one of these visits without saying a word. All you would hear beside the croon of the Mariposa below and the sighing of the big trees above, would be the "puff-puff" of the pipes or the scratching of a match. Then Hugh would say: "Good night, boys," and the two old voices, so sweetly tuned by fine old age, would say in unison: "Good night, Hugh. Lord bless and keep you." He sure they never forgot that!

Try as he would, McCarthy couldn't quite make out what was the matter with the two old partners. He knew there was something that kept them from being quite as happy as they once were. So he decided The Grand Reunion wasn't paying much, after all. He asked them one night, and found it was only doing fairly well. Just a little better than day wages.

Selling a claim is about the meanest thing a man can do in a mining country. It's a sneak's work. But Hugh, much as he hated it, decided there was but one way, and that was to turn "salter."

One night when it rained, and the skies were black, and the big trees dripping water, a big, burly man in rubber boots and rubber coat worked over the sluice-boxes on The Grand

wasn't customary in small pay-digging to lift the riffles every night. Civilization hadn't arrived to make daily clean-ups and locks on windows and doors necessary.

On the following evening McCarthy was tired, and went to his own cabin early. He was just filling his pipe when he heard a noise at the door. He turned round, and there stood Abner and Ezra, looking happier than he had ever seen them. They were all smiles, and had changed their clothing to come down, showing it to be a gala occasion. Had on clean overalls and clean shirts, all made of blue denim and faded to whiteness by washing in the creek. No stray spots of clay in their white beards or on their smooth-shaven cheeks.

"Hugh," said Ezra, "we got great news for you."

"Yes—got great news," said Abner. "Lookie here," they said together excitedly, as though one voice were speaking, and laid on McCarthy's table a heavy buckskin bag of still damp dust.

Hugh tried to look astonished, and kept saying: "Well, I'm mighty glad of it—mighty glad!" Then, still trying to show great surprise, tested its weight in his hands, and asked: "How much?"

"A hundred and sixty ounces—worth on to three thousand dollars' worth," the partners yelled jubilantly, in high quavers.

"Where you got The Grand Reunion to us, you thought it was just a day-wage claim, and we was mighty glad to get it. You see, you didn't know it was so rich, and we didn't, either. Now it's turned out to be with so much more'n you or we thought, we've come to give it back, together with its only big clean-up."

This was the last blow. McCarthy didn't usually swear, but this time he did a fair job—that is, for a really religious man. After that he argued. Told them he didn't think the claim was much good, and that all that had happened was that they had struck a little pocket.

They almost parted bad friends. McCarthy angry because they wouldn't keep the clean-up and the claim, and they because he wouldn't take it back. And really the truth of it was, you see, that neither understood what the other wanted most.

Then Hugh got to thinking maybe he had talked too sharply when he called them a pair of "cantankerous old fools," and decided he would go up through the darkness, the trail being fairly well worn, and apologize. As he was coming round the corner of the cabin he heard them talking, and stopped.

"We jest can't explain," Abner was saying very gently. "But he don't know how bad I feel, and how bad I know you feel, Ezra. This is a wonderful claim, and it's a mighty rich claim; but it ain't right for us to keep it, and, besides—besides, it ain't home, somehow."

At last McCarthy understood. "I've falsified, uttered a claim, and now I'm gettin' to be an eavesdropper," he muttered, as he slipped quietly away in the darkness. "If these

down because we think it's too much, Hugh, and ought to belong to you."

"Yes, belongs to you," said Ezra, with many shakes of his white beard.

McCarthy refused strenuously, without giving them time to reply. Roughly told them to "sit down and wait for grub," and ended by seizing his old white hat and bolting on the excuse that he had to watch his men clean up.

"Beats the devil," he muttered, as he went over the trail to the cut. "Can't do anything for 'em! Here I've come and turned 'em out for the first time in my life to help 'em, and I'll be hanged if they don't come luggin' back all the dust I took up there, and a few more ounces with it. Humph!"

After supper, when darkness came and they had smoked, Abner and Ezra cleared their throats.

"Hugh," said Ezra from the darkness, quietly but with great determination, "me and Abner have got somethin' more to say to you. It's kind of hard work, because we ain't the unappreciative sort." He hesitated, as if seeking words, then hurried on: "We both knows you've done your damnest, and that ain't been a night since we came that we ain't looked into each other's eyes, and then got down by them nice new beds, and said: 'Dear Lord! do watch over that young feller; because, Lord, excuse us for remindin' you of it, but he's been mighty good to us.'"

McCarthy twisted in his seat while Abner reiterated the last sentence. Then Ezra continued:

two old cuses don't get off my mind, the Lord knows what other sneakin' sort of a crime I'll be committin' next."

There were three sleepless ones on Mariposa Creek that night, and all because they wanted to find a way to make it easier for each other.

McCarthy found the way. Bright and early next morning he was at their door. They were washing the dishes, Ezra doing the drying with an old salt sack, while Abner, with a piece of rubber blanket tied round him for an apron, was loudly splashing the soap and water, and both were smoking industriously.

"Well, boys," said McCarthy, carefully letting his bulk settle down on a spindly-legged, yellow-plush covered chair which he dragged into the kitchen with him, "I guess you're right. This is a mighty rich claim, and no mistake."

He wadded some freshly cut tobacco in the palm of his hand, while both the partners said: "Yes, Hugh, it's mighty rich."

"Now, we all got to be fair and honest with each other, ain't we? Well, I thought it was no good till you proved it up. If you went away I'd leave the cabin, and I've come to buy you out. I'll give you three thousand for The Grand Reunion bag, and you keep the last clean-up."

That was "a powerful sight" of money, and Hugh had to fairly bully them into taking it. They didn't want it because they didn't think it fair, although it was enough to make them independent, with what little they could take from the Alpaline and what they had saved, for the rest of their lives.

And so the Mariposa knew them no more, but the partners don't know to this day that The Grand Reunion has never been considered worth working, and that the cabin built with such care is sealed with cobwebs.

The partners made two little packs of the things brought with them when they came, shook hands with and made a courteous goodbye to every man on Hugh's claim, and laboriously climbed the other side of the gulch to the crest of the divide, where twenty men below spied them, and gave a cheer that sounded out its farwells above the roar of the waters. They waved their hands and disappeared.

It was night when they came to that other little cabin, which from its loneliness and desertion greeted them in unchanged homeliness. Save for the dust and the creaking voice of its stiffened hinges, it was all the same. The time-worn stools with their shiny faces, the bunks with their mats of fir boughs, and the wheezy little stove with its long-dead ashes. They groped for the kindling stick, which was where they had left it those many months ago; found the candles on the shelf as of old, and prepared their evening meal.

Then, when the moon came up through the same gap in the hillside, where for so many years they had watched it come before, and stared at them with a smile of welcome, they climbed the hill. Climbed up to where the flowers were now running in unkept wildness, and with trembling hands patted the weather-beaten cross above the grave of the only woman they had ever claimed as their own.

They looked out across the great gulch, with its splendid sentinel trees silhouetted against the glory of the night, over the singing stream which threw silver sparks at the moon, and then at the lonely little cabin, with its shaft of light streaming through a long-unused window.

With a great sigh of untold thankfulness and content they murmured to each other, and to the night: "It all looks jest like it uster. Yes, jest like it uster."

They were back with their hills, their cabin, their flowers, and their cross, where the God they know seemed a little closer than anywhere else in all the wide, wide world.

Queen Alexandra's Slippers. The prettiest bedroom slippers in the world are those designed for England's queen dowager—at her express command—for dearly does she love comfort in her own apartment. These slippers are really "mules," as they have no heels, but rest flat upon the sole, these soles being very soft and flexible and lined with quilted silk. The front of the mule does not entirely cover the toe, but two pointed flaps of satin come from the sides of the sole and meet under a jeweled button, thus leaving the toes quite free as one walks about after one's bath. Dainty mules like this would make a charming gift for a friend about to be married, and they could be very easily fashioned out of bits of brocade or satin, a pair of the tufted soles, which come for knitted slippers, and a little silk. The edge might be finished with a narrow silk cord.

Sheep Fattened on Peas. Sheep fattened on field peas in Colorado were marketed at the stock yards last week by B. F. Larrick of Monte Vista, Col. Many will come in February.

In the San Luis Valley field peas grow rapidly and mature early. Many thousand acres of them are planted annually. Their use for fattening sheep began in 1900, when 5,000 were fed. This year about 150,000 are so fed. The pea crop is a good one.—Kansas City Star.

Municipal Contrasts. "The weather man must be fond of contrasts."

"Why so?"

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