

# THE ALCHEMY OF JANE ELLEN

**EUREKA!** Eureka! shouted the conductor on the narrow-gauge train, as it wheezed and groaned up the final stretch of rails that terminates in Eureka, once a populous and thriving mining camp, whose reputation ranks second only to the famed Comstock in the production of gold and silver dollars, but is now only a blotch of buildings crowded among low hills of sagebrush. Half a dozen people began the preparatory rustlings of weary passengers nearing their destination.

When the train came to a halt at the depot, Ira Brooks and his wife climbed down from the coach in the wake of their fellow-passengers. The mission which brought them from New Hampshire State to this Nevada camp was not an extraordinary one; Jacob O. Marley, brother of Jane Ellen Brooks, had struck out for the West in the early 'sixties, and after a desultory correspondence for ten years with the home folks, had ceased writing. In his last letter to Sister Jane he mentioned the fact that he had discovered a big silver mine in Nevada—not stating the exact location; and from that stirring epistle Jane Brooks formed a glowing picture of Jacob as a bonanza king of the wonderful West. His failure to write since then worried good Jane; she imagined her brother ruled by a jealous wife; perhaps living in extravagant luxury, or maybe the slave of his millions with not a moment in which to pen a letter to his fond sister—"Jacob never did fancy writing materials." Mrs. Brooks would not allow herself to think of this absent brother as a poor prospector, or the possibility of his departure to realms above. When an old aunt died, bequeathing to Jane a few hundred dollars, she immediately planned a Western trip with no other thought than to unearth the errant millionaire Jacob. Of course Ira Brooks, her husband, should accompany her, and since Jane's wishes were akin to law in her own household, Ira and she soon began their quest for Jacob O. Marley.

The twain had been whisked, and jolted, and dragged to nearly every settlement in Nevada. Stout old Ira had seen such a surfeit of alkali plains, sagebrush hills, and uncouth mining camps that even his dreams were of distorted New England scenes, alive with Nevada eccentricities. After many weeks filled with wild adventures, the couple picked up an old agent of Jacob, and followed it to Eureka, at which place the narrow gauge has already set them down.

Mrs. Brooks piloted Ira to the Brown Hotel, and scarce waiting until the stains and fatigue of travel were removed, the anxious sister made known her errand by plying the citizens of Eureka with questions.

"Jacob O. Marley, ma'am? Why, sure I knowed Jake," responded one "Tip" Wortle; "but last I seen of him he—say, ain't you heard about it?"

"Heard about what? Sir, I am Jacob O. Marley's sister, and I am looking for my dear brother. I say I am looking for my dear brother."

"Then you'd better prospect in that that bone-yard, ma'am, for Jake he got killed in a gun-fight nigh outer thirteen years back." Tip Wortle blurted out this information with the unfeeling candor of a mining-camp habitue, enlivened by a familiarity with such minor details as impromptu duels and the like.

"Jacob killed! Jacob dead!" shrieked Jane Ellen Brooks. "And who killed him? I say, who killed my dear brother?"

"A chap called Steve Atwood, ma'am. But you needn't feel so cut up; why, before Jake keeled over he laid out Steve purtier'n anything I ever seen."

Jane shrieked louder than before. "I don't believe one word of it! Jacob wasn't the fighting kind. Dear Jacob kill a man? Never, I say."

"Wal, supposin' you just mosey through that grave-yard, ma'am, and learn whint 'Tip Wortle's tellin' you what ain't so." Saying which, Tip indicated by a jerk of this thumb the cemetery referred to, and turned on his heel, leaving Jane and Ira Brooks to digest the startling bit of news that Jacob O. Marley had not only been killed, but had killed his murderer.

"Ira, I will not believe that horrid man. He has confused dear Jacob with some one else, I say."

"No telling, Jane, what might happen in these uncivilized parts; but suppose we do as this Wortle suggests, and look through the cemetery," said Ira, in a putting attempt to console the shocked sister.

Jane acquiesced in a most woe-begone manner, and the two trudged up the unevenly street in the direction of Ruby Hill burying-grounds.

When Nevada's great mining camps were young, and roystering, devil-may-care men frequented them, many things were done that scandalize the tamer generation of this day, when these tokens of an earlier epoch come under its observation. Perhaps not every live camp had its calamity grave-yard; but Eureka was not the only early Nevada town with a section of ground reserved for those men who met with an untimely end, or to put it more plainly—died with their boots on. At any rate, Eureka had a turbulent, pistol-popping history, and the well-populated calamity plot is the most vivid reminder of the days that are no more. One would imagine that early Eureka took a certain pride in the growth and appearance of this particular plot,

for nearly every grave is, or was, marked by a head-board. And each bore some little, significant inscription, appropos of the when, how, and why of the killing.

But Eureka underwent the hard-luck stage; her mines dwindled to barracks, and the faith of her staunchest citizens was shaken. Consequently, interest in the camp abated, and among other things neglected was the calamity grave-yard—neglected in this wise—that of fresh arrivals there were none, and more noticeable than this was the decrease in the number of head-boards. Where they disappeared to was a mystery at first; but the facts soon leaked out that prospectors, who could ill-afford to pay the exorbitant price set on lumber, were appropriating these "In Memory" slabs for the purpose of staking out claims. No uncommon thing to run across a location monument, bearing the locator's notice on one side, and an inscription or epitaph to some departed man's memory on the opposite one.

When the wave of renewed interest in Nevada mines reached Eureka, Albert Heebe and Alfred Deremer relocated an old claim of theirs, and awaited a buyer. This property lay conveniently near the grave-yard, and, as former location notices were nearly obliterated, fresh ones were installed. The new discovery monument was a head-board, and at each of the four corners of the claim a melancholy, grewsome grave-slab was imbedded in the mount of earth thrown up as required by the mining statutes of Nevada. Heebe, being of a grimly humorous turn of mind, christened the new location "Sacrilige Claim."

Up the gritty and parched slope of Ruby Hill climbed the portly Ira Brooks and Jane, his wife. A warm, dry breeze puffed across the broken desert-country; it dried the tear-drops trickling down Jane's cheeks, and burned the florid face of Ira. Here, there, everywhere within the confines of the cemetery, searched the relatives of Jacob O. Marley. They carefully scanned each and every name on tombstones, rounded wooden slabs, and nondescript sticks. No trace of the lost brother—no inscription engraven in memory of him rewarded their gloomy explorations. As a last resort, husband and wife separated, each taking a different course. The sun drooped low in the shimmering blue sky, the wind turned a shade cooler, and a brilliant after-glow emblazed the weird, wild stretches of this Nevada landscape.

"Ira! Ira Brooks! I have found him!" Jane Ellen's wall cut sharply through the dry, twilight air; Ira straightened up from a lowly position he had assumed in reading a decidedly queer epitaph, and, with his usual efforts hastened to join Mrs. Brooks by the side of her brother's grave. "Oh, Ira, it is true; Jacob is dead, dear Jacob is dead and buried in this wild, terrible spot. Poor, poor brother!"

Ira paused before the head-board that was placed at the end of a long mound of earth, and in black letters upon the weather-stained slab, he read:

In Memory

JACOB O. MARLEY.

Died March 18, 1873.

Aged about 35 years.

Cool-headed and nery to the last.

"Yes, this is poor Jacob's grave, there is no doubt about it. Poor fellow," wheezed the breathless Ira.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear! And why did they bury him way out here Ira?" Why, I say, didn't they bury him in the grave-yard?" sobbed Jane Ellen, mournfully.

"Who can tell what these savages will do out here. But, see, his friends must have respected him: 'Cool-headed and nery to the last,' is written on this slab."

"The idea! Why, dear Jacob was devout and peaceable; not a fighting thing, as that must mean! Poor brother! Dear brother! He shall not remain in that grave, Ira. To-morrow, I shall have his body exhumed, and we will take him home and give him a Christian burial in the beloved town of his childhood days."

Jane, having spoken these words, shed copious tears on the grave of her brother, and then, placing her hand upon Ira's arm, the couple walked back to their hotel in the barbarous village of Eureka.

Next morning the Brookses ascended Ruby Hill; with them were two blue-shirted individuals, one of whom trundled a push-cart before him, in which were picks, shovels, and a long, coffin-shaped box. True to her word, Jane Ellen Brooks had made all preparations to remove Jacob O. Marley's body from the unholy neighborhood of the calamity cemetery. Arriving at the barren spot, she pointed out the grave to the workmen, and directed them to begin digging.

The men looked rather amazed when they examined the mound, the imbedded head-board, and noted the staring black "3 N. E. Cor. Sacrilige Claim" on the reverse side. But recalling empty pockets, and the generous wages promised, they began their job with a vim. Deeper and deeper grew the four-by-seven excavation; higher and higher they piled the clayey dirt and rocks. Jane Ellen sat on the edge of the go-cart, watching the opening of her long-lost brother's grave; Ira breathed heavily beneath a big cotton umbrella on the opposite side of the hold, and

above them the bright Nevada sun glared down from a high, steel-blue sky.

The solemn silence was broken by Jane's voice: "Ira, who are those men coming this way?"

Ira's near-sighted eyes photographed a blurred mass of rapidly moving objects upon his retina, and he became alarmed. "It's the town authorities, Jane, and they are going to stop us from exhaling dear Jacob!" he exclaimed.

"The idea, Ira! Why, I got permission to remove Jacob's body long before you were up this morning. Those are not the town authorities, I say."

The men came on the run. There were two of them, and their appearance was not in the least reassuring. Guns bristled about them, and rough clothes and scowling faces added to their war-like attitude. The tall man in the red shirt marched boldly up to where Ira stood. A huge, hairy fist shut off Ira's view to everything but the same menacing fist, and two glowering eyes. "You, you varmint! You old red tub! Think you're playing a high hand jumping my claim in the light o' day? Say, old wad, just perambulate yourself and that female, and the rest of the kit off'n Sacrilige Claim, 'fore we sacrifice two silly old Yankees. Mosey, now!"

Alfred Deremer rolled forth the words in a fierce tone; his personage fairly radiated wrath, and Ira Brooks, judging from the unsteadiness of his knees, firmly believed an earthquake was rocking the whole of Ruby Hill. Thoughts of his own danger vanished, however, as a shrill voice drowned out the bass growls of Deremer and Heebe.

"Jumping on your claim! Jumping on Sacrilige Claim! Impudent, boorish savage! How dare you accuse me of jumping? If I did jump on your claim, how could I hurt it? Ira, Ira Brooks, this creature has insulted me. He tells me that I jump! That I jump, Ira Brooks!"

"Aw, you ain't so cute, madam. Tell me what that there hole in the ground means? Ain't you smart Easterners trying to get in on a good thing here?" queried Albert Heebe.

"Get in on a good thing? Oh, oh, and right here at my feet lies dear brother Jacob! Insult me over my own brother's grave? Rude, unthinking wretch!"

"Brother Jacob's grave?" interjected Deremer, who had been listening to Jane Ellen's tirade. Heebe caught his partner's eye, and the two suddenly lost their bellicose air.

"My brother, Jacob O. Marley, lies buried here, and Mr. Brooks and I are taking his body out of this unconsecrated desert. Now, sirs, is that any of your business? I say —"

"But, madam —"

"Why—er—er—" began the two prospectors in the same breath, but confusion got the better of them, and they looked strangely docile as compared with the authoritative desperadoes of a moment previous.

"Of course, you are ashamed, sirs. The idea of accusing a lady of jumping. In what way you mean, I can not imagine. Oh, my dear Jacob! Poor, forsaken brother—that I should find him lying here!"

"You tell her, Bert," whispered Deremer, loudly.

"Can't—you break the news," answered Heebe.

Muttering a tragic "Well, here goes," Deremer explained just how it happened that Jacob O. Marley's memorial slab did not mark the site of his own grave, but the north-east corner of their Sacrilige Claim.

Jane Ellen Brooks stared at the men in mute horror. To steal a head-stone from a grave was quite beyond her immediate comprehension; to realize that it was her own brother's grave that had been robbed was a frightful shock to Jane.

"Then, pray tell us, gentlemen, where we may find Jacob O. Marley's body?" The words came in a sarcastic wheeze from the portly Ira.

Neither one of the partners had the faintest idea when grave in calamity plot was occupied by Marley.

"You shall be arrested! Imprisoned for life, vandals, ghouls! Oh, my beloved Jacob, lost forever, forever! And in such an ungodly spot! Oh, dear, oh, dear!" moaned Mrs. Brooks.

While this scene was being enacted on the surface, the two men digging for the remains of Jacob O. Marley had been unusually quiet. Now one of them pitched up a shovelful of quarts, saying: "Lady, they ain't no corpse here, far as I can see; but say, you Deremer, what d'you call that fer rich stuff?"

Deremer and Heebe, always on the alert for specimens, picked up some of the rock, and what did they see but flecks of yellow gold, freely speckling the quartz. Jane Brooks, her husband, and her hopelessly buried brother were forgotten. The partners danced a rattling breakdown, hugged one another rapturously, and took on like foolish school-boys.

"W—What ails them, Ira? Have they been drinking? I say, have those creatures been drinking, Ira Brooks?"

Albert Heebe answered Jane's indignant question: "No, you bet I ain't drunk, madam. Hurrah for you! Look here, did you ever see gold quartz in all Nevada?"

So carried away was Heebe that he actually embraced the trembling, horrified Jane, hugged her, and then, in his bubbling delight, fairly shouted: "Madam, you gets half interest in this yere bonanza. Half interest, no expenses! We're all richer'n Croesus, boys and girls. Hurrah for Mrs. Brooks!"

Well, so it turned out in the end, and although it required a good bit of ex-

plaining, of reasoning, and cajoling, Jane at last accepted papers that entitled her to a one-half interest in Sacrilige Claim, which proved to be as wonderfully rich as the partners prophesied. And, although Jane Ellen never found poor, dear Jacob's last resting-place, she did find herself a rich woman, whose heart warmed toward the impetuous mining-camp people to such an extent that Eureka still harbors not only one indefinitely located Jacob O. Marley, but Mr. and Mrs. Ira Brooks. —Argonaut.

## VALUE OF WIDE STREETS.

### Tendency Toward Squalid Conditions in Narrow Thoroughfares.

A narrow residential street may be a very attractive one if the houses stand well back from the street line, with pleasant grounds about them. In a growing town, however, the danger from such conditions comes with the inability to convert the street to business purposes or to erect more compactly disposed dwellings. If business comes in, the transition is commonly marked by jagged lines. Commercial structures, often of a cheap and undesirable aspect, are built out to the street, while the dwellings stand recessed back at irregular intervals. And when at last the street is fully occupied for business purposes, it is altogether too narrow; the roadway and the sidewalks are cramped, and often a widening has to take place at the public expense. If built up closely to the line with dwellings, the street is likely to lack air and sunshine, and the tendency is toward squalid conditions.

An excellent remedy for these evils is offered in the Massachusetts law that empowers municipalities to establish building lines at any desired distance back from the street line. When such a line is established no buildings can be erected on the intervening space. The municipality acquires an easement in this strip of land, which can still be used by the owner for anything but building purposes, and on the establishment of such a line owners may claim damages, as in case of takings for a street widening. It is, however, commonly more of a benefit than a damage to have property thus restricted, for it assures a more permanently desirable character to the street; and in case a street widening should ever be called for no obstacles will stand in the way. By taking the restricted steps there will be ample room for the wider roadway and sidewalks.

Ideals for attractive street planning are to be found in many parts of the United States. There is nothing more charming as a rural street than that of a New England village at its best—lofty aisles of leafage, the trees with feet in a carpet of turf at the sidewalk border; the houses, quiet and unobtrusive, standing well back, and marked with the true home character, whether they are humble cottages or abodes of the rich. The noblest development of such rural streets is to be found in the old towns of the Connecticut Valley and in Western Massachusetts. There the main highways have an extraordinary generous width, often giving room for quadruple rows of old elms and broad spaces of turf, the roadway requiring only a narrow space in the total width of the thoroughfare.—Century.

## TWO FACETIOUS MEN.

### How a Persistent Author Finally Sold His Story.

This is the true story of two facetious men. One is an author and the other is the editor of a magazine. The author is mentioned first, not because he is of more importance, but because he figures first in the narrative. An author is never of more importance than an editor until he gets a reputation, and not always then. This author didn't have the reputation, but he had enough persistence and nerve to answer all purposes. He was trying to sell a story to the editor, but the editor didn't seem inclined to buy. Thereupon the author threw down the gage of battle and began sending the editor many messages with his manuscripts, says the Brooklyn Eagle.

"I am taking the magazines in tux and it is your turn to buy," he wrote on one occasion.

"Two editors capitulated last week and now I have plenty of leisure to devote to you," was another message.

"You'll save yourself a lot of trouble if you take this story," was one of his later threats, and he followed it with this cold-blooded announcement: "Every editor that I have 'gone out after' has had to surrender, and I'll get you yet."

He informed the editor that he was strong and healthy and could not be tired out; that he had eighteen stories yet to submit and was constantly adding to the supply; that he never did like a man who balked when it was his turn, etc. Then the editor thought he would try his hand at a joke, and he sent this crushing message:

"We enjoy your letters very much—more than we do your stories."

This ought to have settled the author but it didn't. He came up smiling and scribbled this beneath the editor's note: "All right. I'll sell you the letters." He inclosed this with another story and the editor took the story. His answer was laconic, but satisfactory.

"We surrender," it said. "Inclosed please find check for your last story."

## Poultry for South Africa.

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No wonder a man kicks when he comes to footing the butcher's bill.

What a pity it is that a law preventing the birth of fools is impracticable.

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