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MY FIRST SUNDAY IN THE MINES.

SONORA, in 1855, was an exciting, wild, wicked, fascinating place. Gold dust and gamblers were plentiful. A rich mining camp is a bonanza to the sporting fraternity. The peculiar excitement of mining is near akin to gambling, and seems to prepare the gold hunter for the faro bank and monte table. The life was free and spiced with tragedy. The men were reckless, the women few and not wholly select. The conventionalities of older communities were ignored. People dressed and talked as they pleased, and were a law unto themselves. Even a parson could gallop at full speed through a mining camp without exciting remark. To me it was all new, and at first a little bewildering, but there was a charm about it that lingers pleasantly in the memory after the lapse of all these long years from 1855 to date.

Sonora was a picture unique in its beauty as I first looked down upon it from the crest of the highest hill above the town that bright May morning. The air was exhilarating, electric. The sky was deep blue, without a speck of cloud. The town lay stretched between two ranges of hills, the cozy cottages and rude cabins straggling along their sides, while the full tide of life flowed through Washington Street in the center, where thousands of miners jostled one another as they moved to and fro. High hills encircled the place on all sides protectingly, and Bald Mountain, dark and

bare, lifted above all the rest, seemed to watch the queen city of the mines like a dusky duenna. The far-off Sierras, white and cold, lay propped against the sky like shrouded giants under their winding sheets of snow. Near me stood a lone pine which had escaped the ruthless ax because there was a grave under it marked by a rude cross.

Descending to the main street again, I found it crowded with flannel-shirted men. They seemed to be excited, judging from their loud tones and fierce gesticulations.

"They have caught Felipe at French Camp, and they will have him here by ten o'clock," said one of a group near me.

"Yes, and the boys are getting ready to swing the cursed greaser when he gets here," said another, savagely.

On inquiry, I learned that the gentleman for whose arrival such preparation was being made was a Mexican who had stabbed to the heart a policeman named Sheldon two nights before. The assassin fled the town, but the sheriff and his posse had gotten on his track, and, pursuing rapidly, had overtaken him at French Camp, and were now returning with their prisoner in charge. Sheldon was a good-natured, generous fellow, popular with the "boys." He was brave to a fault, perhaps a little too ready at times to use his pistol. Two Mexicans had been shot by him since his call to police duty, and, though the Americans justified him in so doing, the Mexicans cherished a bitter feeling toward him. Sheldon knew that he was hated by those swarthy fellows whose strong point is not forgiveness of enemies, and not long before the tragedy was heard to say, in a half-serious tone: "I expect to die in my boots." Poor fellow! it came sooner than he thought.

"The first man that touches that jail door dies."

By ten o'clock Washington Street was densely thronged by red and blue shirted men, whose remarks showed that they were ripe for mischief.

"Hang him, I say! If we allow the officers who watch for our protection when we are asleep to be murdered in this way, nobody is safe. I say hang him!" shouted a thick-chested miner, gritting his teeth.

"That's the talk! swing him!" "Hang him!" "Put cold lead through him!" and such like expressions were heard on all sides.

Suddenly there was a rush of the crowd toward the point where Washington Street intersected with the Jamestown road. Then the tide flowed backward, and came surging by the place where I was standing.

"There he comes! at him, boys!" "A rope! a rope!" "Go for him!" shouted a hundred voices.

The object of the popular execration, guarded by the sheriff and a posse of about twenty men, was hurried along in the middle of the street, his hat gone, his bosom bare, a red sash around his waist. He was a bad-looking fellow, and in the rapid glances he cast at the angry crowd around him there was more of hate than fear. The flashes of his dark eyes made one think of the gleam of the deadly Spanish dirk. The twenty picked men guarding him had each a revolver in his hand, with Maj. Solomon, the sheriff, at their head. The mob knew Solomon. He had distinguished himself for cool courage in the Mexican war, and they were well aware that those pistols were paraded for use if occasion demanded.

The prisoner was taken into the Placer Hotel, where the coroner's jury was held, the mob surrounding the building and roaring like a sea.

"There they come! go for him, boys!" was

shouted as the doors were flung open, and Felipe appeared, attended by his guard.

A rush was made, but there was Solomon with his twenty men pistol in hand, and no man dared to lay a hand on the murderer. With steady step they marched to the jail, the crowd parting as the sheriff and his posse advanced, and the prisoner was hurried inside and the doors locked.

Baffled thus, for a few moments the mob was silent, and then it exploded with imprecations and yells: "Break open the door!" "Tear down the jail!" "Bring him out!" "Who has a rope?" "Out with him!"

Cool and collected, Solomon stood on the door-step, his twenty men standing holding their revolvers ready. The County Judge Quint attempted to address the excited mass, but his voice was drowned by their yells. The silver-tongued Henry P. Barber, an orator born, and whose sad career would make a romance of thrilling interest, essayed to speak, but even his magic voice was lost in the tornado of popular fury.

I had climbed a high fence above the jail yard, where the whole scene was before me. When Barber gave up the attempt to get a hearing from the mob, there was a momentary silence. Solomon saw the opportunity, and, lifting his hand, he said: "Will you hear me a moment? I am not fool enough to think that with these twenty men I can whip this crowd. You can overcome us by your numbers and kill us if you choose. Perhaps you will do it—I am ready for that. I don't say I can prevent you, but I do say"—and here his eye kindled and his voice had a steel-like ring—"*the first man that touches that jail door dies!*"

There was a perceptible thrill throughout that dense mass of human beings. No man volunteered

to lead an assault on the jail door. Solomon followed up this stroke: "Boys, when you take time to reflect, you will see that this is all wrong. I was elected by your votes, and you are acting in bad faith when you put me in a position where I must violate my sworn duty or fight you. This is the holy Sabbath day. Back in our old homes we have been used to different scenes from this. The prisoner will be kept, and tried, and duly punished by the law. Let us give three cheers for the clergy of California, two of whom I see present [pointing to where my Presbyterian neighbor, the Rev. S. S. Harmon, and I were perched conspicuously], and then go home like good citizens."

Courage and tact prevailed. The mob was conquered. The cheers were given with a will, the crowd melted away, and in a few minutes the jail yard was clear.

I lingered alone, and was struck with the sudden transition. The sun was sinking in the west, already the town below was wrapped in shade, the tops of the encircling hills caught the lingering beams, the loftier crest of Bald Mountain blazing as if it were a mass of burnished gold. It was the calm and glory of nature in sharp contrast with the turbulence and brutality of men.

Wending my way back to the hotel, I seated myself on the piazza of the second story, and watched the motley crowd going in and out of the "Long Tom" drinking and gambling saloon across the street, musing upon the scenes of my first Sunday in the mines.

CISSAHA.

I FIRST noticed him one night at prayer meeting at Sonora, in the Southern Mines, in 1855. He came in timidly, and took a seat near the door. His manner was reverent, and he watched the exercises with curious interest, his eyes following every gesture of the preacher, and his ears losing not a word that was said or sung. I was struck with his peculiar physiognomy as he sat there with his thin, swarthy face, his soft, sad black eyes, and long black hair. I could not make him out; he might be Mexican, Spanish, Portuguese, "Kanaka," or what not. He waited until I passed out at the close of the meeting, and, bowing very humbly, placed half a dollar in my hand, and walked away. This happened several weeks in succession, and I noticed him at church on Sunday evenings. He would come in after the crowd had entered, and take his place near the door. He never failed to hand me the half dollar at the close of every service, his dark, wistful-looking eyes lighting up with pleasure as I took the coin from his hand. He never waited to talk, but hurried off at once. My curiosity was excited, and I began to feel a special interest in this strange-looking foreigner.

I was sitting one morning in the little room on the hillside, which was at once dining room, parlor, bedchamber, and study, when, lifting my eyes a moment from the book I was reading, there stood my strange foreigner in the door.

"Come in," I said kindly.

Making profound salaams, he rushed impulsively toward me, exclaiming in broken English: "My good brahmin!" "My good brahmin!" with a torrent of words I could not understand.

I invited him to take a seat, but he declined. He looked flushed and excited, his dark eyes flashing. I soon found that he could understand English much better than he could speak it himself.

"What is your name!" I asked.

"Cissaha," he answered, accenting strongly the last syllable.

"Of what nation are you?" was my next question.

"Me Hindoo—me good caste," he added rather proudly.

After gratifying my curiosity by answering my many questions, he told his business with me. It was with great difficulty that I could make out what he said; his pronunciation was sadly imperfect at best, and when he talked himself into an excited state his speech was a curious jargon of confused and strange sounds. The substance of his story was, that, though belonging to a caste which was above such work, necessity had forced him to take the place of a cook in a miners' boarding house at a notorious camp called aptly Whisky Hill, which was about three miles from Sonora. After six months' service, the proprietor of the establishment had dismissed him with no other pay than a bogus title to a mining claim. When the poor fellow went to take possession, the rightful owners drove him away with many blows and much of that peculiarly emphatic profanity for which California was rather noted in those early days. On going back to his employer with the story of his failure to get possession of the mining claim, he was driven away with cursings and threats, without a dollar for months of hard work.

This was Cissaha's story. He had come to me for redress. I felt no little sympathy for him as he stood before me, so helpless in a strange land. He had been shamefully wronged, and I felt indignant at the recital. But I told him that while I was sorry for him, I could do nothing; he had better put the case in the hands of a lawyer. I suggested the name of one.

"No, no!" he said passionately; "you my good brahmin; you go Whisky Hill, you make Flank Powell pay my money!"

He seemed to think that as a teacher of religion I must be invested also with some sort of authority in civil matters. I could not make him understand that this was not so.

"You ride horse, me walk; Flank Powell see my good brahmin come, he pay money," urged Cissaha.

Yielding to a sudden impulse, I told him I would go with him. He bowed almost to the floor, and the tears, which had flowed freely as he told his tale of wrongs, were wiped away.

Mounting Dr. Jack Franklin's sorrel horse—my pen pauses as I write the name of that noble Tennesseean, that true and generous friend—I started to Whisky Hill, my client keeping alongside on foot.

As we proceeded, I could not help feeling that I was on a sort of fool's errand. It was certainly a new rôle for me. But my sympathy had been excited, and I fortified myself by repeating mentally all those scriptures of the Old and New Testaments which enjoin kindness to strangers.

I found that Cissaha was well known in the camp, and that he was generally liked. Everybody seemed to know how he had been treated, and the popular feeling was on his side. Several

parties confirmed his statement of the case in every particular. Walking along among the mining claims, with a proud and confident air he would point to me, saying: "There my good brahmin—*he* make Flank Powell pay my money now."

"Powell is a rough customer," said a tall young fellow from New York, who stood near the trail with a pick in his hand; "he will give you trouble before you get through with him."

Cissaha only shook his head in a knowing way and hastened on, keeping my sorrel in a brisk trot.

A stout and ill-dressed woman was standing in the porch of Mr. Powell's establishment as I rode up.

"Is Mr Powell at home?" I asked.

"Yes; he is in the house," she said dryly, scowling alternately at Cissaha and me.

"Please tell him that I would like to see him."

She went into the house after giving us a parting angry glance, and in a few minutes Mr. Powell made his appearance. He looked the ruffian that he was all over. A huge fellow, with enormous breadth between the shoulders, and the chest of a bull, with a fiery red face, blear blue eyes red at the corners, coarse sandy hair, and a villainous *tout ensemble* every way, he was as bad a specimen of my kind as I had ever met.

"What do you want with me?" he growled out, after taking a look at us.

"I understand," I answered in my blandest tones, "that there has been some difficulty in making a settlement between you and this Hindoo man, and at his request I have come over to see if I can help to adjust it."

"Damn you!" said the ruffian, "if you come here meddling with my affairs, I'll knock you off that horse."

He *was* a rough customer to look at just then.

Cissaha looked a little alarmed, and drew nearer to me.

I looked the man in the eye and answered: "I am not afraid of any violence at your hands. You dare not attempt it. You have cruelly wronged this poor foreigner, and you know it. Every man in the camp condemns you for it, and is ashamed of your conduct. Now, I intend to see this thing through. I will devote a year to it and spend every dollar I can raise if necessary to make you pay this debt!"

By this time quite a crowd of miners had gathered around us, and there were unmistakable expressions of approval of my speech.

"That's the right sort of talk!" exclaimed a grizzly-bearded man in a red shirt.

"Stand up to him, parson!" said another.

There was a pause. Powell, as I learned afterward, was detested in the camp. He had the reputation of a bully and a cheat. I think he was likewise a coward. At any rate, as I warmed with virtuous indignation, he cooled. Perhaps he did not like the expressions on the faces of the rough, athletic men standing around. "What do you want me to do?" he asked in a sullen tone.

"I want you to pay this man what you owe him," I answered.

The negotiations begun thus unpromisingly ended very happily. After making some deduction on some pretext or other, the money was paid, much to my relief and the joy of my client. Mr. Powell indulged in no parting courtesies, nor did he tender me the hospitalities of his house. I have never seen him from that day to this. I have never wished to renew his acquaintance.

Cissaha marched back to Sonora in triumph.

A few days after the Whisky Hill adventure, as I was sitting on the rear side of the little parsonage to get the benefit of the shade, I had another visit from Cissaha. He had on his shoulder a miner's pick and shovel, which he laid down at my feet.

"What is that for?" I asked.

"My good brahmin look at pick and shobel, then no break, and find heap gold," said he, his face full of trust and hopefulness.

I cast a kindly glance at the implements, and did not think it worth while to combat his innocent superstition. If good wishes could have brought him good luck, the poor fellow would have prospered in his search after gold.

From that time on he was scarcely ever absent from church services, never omitting to pay his weekly half dollar. More than once I observed the tears running down his cheeks as he sat near the door, eye and ear all attent to the service.

A day or two before my departure for Conference, at the end of my two years in Sonora, Cissaha made me a visit. He looked sad and anxious. "You go way?" he inquired.

"Yes; I must go," I answered.

"You no come back Sonora?" he asked.

"No; I cannot come back," I said.

He stood a moment, his chest heaving with emotion, and then said: "Me go with you, me live where you live, me die where you die," almost the very words of the fair young Moabite.

Cissaha went with us. How could I refuse to take him? At San José he lived with us, doing our cooking, nursing our little Paul, and making himself generally useful. He taught us to love curry and to eat cucumbers Hindoo fashion—that is, stewed with veal or chicken. He was the gen-

tlest and most docile of servants, never out of temper, and always anxious to please. Little Paul was very fond of him, and often he would take him off in his baby wagon, and they would be gone for hours together.

He never tired of asking questions about the Christian religion, and manifested a peculiar delight in the words and life of Jesus. One day he came into my study and said: "Me want you to make me Christian."

"I can't make you a Christian; Jesus can do it," I answered.

He looked greatly puzzled and troubled at this reply, but when I had explained the whole matter to him he brightened up and intimated that he wanted to join the Church. I enrolled his name as a probationer, and his delight was unbounded.

One day Cissaha came to me all smiling, and said: "Me want to give all the preachers one big dinner."

"Very well," I answered; "I will let you do so. How many do you want?"

"Me want heap preachers, table all full," he said.

He gave me to understand that the feast must be altogether his own—his money must buy everything, even to the salt and pepper for seasoning the dishes. He would use nothing that was in the house, but bought flour, fowls, beef, vegetables, confectionery, coffee, tea, everything for the great occasion. He made a grand dinner, not forgetting the curry, and with a table full of preachers to enjoy it he was a picture of happiness. His dark face beamed with delight as he handed around the viands to the smiling and appreciative guests. He had some Hindoo notion that there was great merit in feasting so many be-

longing to the brahmin caste. To him the dinner was a sort of sacrifice most acceptable to Heaven.

My Oriental domestic seemed very happy for some months, and became a general favorite on account of his gentle manners, docile temper, and obliging disposition. His name was shortened to "Tom" by the popular usage, and under the instructions of the mistress of the parsonage he began the study of English. Poor fellow! he never could make the sound of f or z, the former always turning to *p*, and the latter to *g*, upon his tongue. I believe there are no p's or g's in the Hindoostanee.

A change came over Cissaha. He became all at once moody and silent. Several times I found him in tears. Something was the matter with him. That was clear.

One afternoon the secret came out. He came into my room. There were traces of tears on his cheeks. "I go 'way—can stay with my pather [father] no more," he said with a quiver in his voice.

"Why, what is the matter?" I asked.

"Debbil in here," he answered, touching his forehead. "Debbil tell me drink whisky; me no drink where my pather stay, so must go."

"Why, I did not know you ever drank whisky; where did you learn that?" I asked.

"Me drink with the boys at Plank Powell's—drink beer and whisky. No drink for long time, but debbil in here [touching his forehead] say *must* drink."

He was a picture of shame and grief as he stood there before me. How hard he must have fought against the appetite for strong drink since he had been with me! And how full of shame and sorrow he was to confess his weakness to me! He

told me all about it: how he had been treated to beer and whisky by the good-natured miners, and how the taste for liquor had grown on him, and how he had resisted for a time, and how he had at last yielded to the feeling that the devil was too strong for him. That the devil was in it, he seemed to have no doubt. And truly it was so—the cruelest, deadliest of devils, the devil of drink! As a Hindoo, in his own country no strong drink had ever passed his lips. The fiery potations of Whisky Hill were too much for him.

"You should pray, Cissaha."

"Me pray all night, but debbil too strong—me *must* drink whisky!" he said vehemently.

He left us. The parting was very sad to him and us. He had a special cry over little Paul.

"You my pather [to me]; you my mother [to my wife]; I go, but me pack you both always in my belly!"

We could but smile through our tears. The poor fellow meant to say he would still bear us in his grateful heart in his wanderings.

After a few months he came to see us. He looked seedy and sad. He had found employment, but did not stay long at a place. He had stopped awhile with a Presbyterian minister in the Sacramento Valley, and was solicited by him to join the Church.

"Me tell him no!" he said, his eye flashing; "me tell him my pather done make me Christian; me no want to be made Christian again."

The poor fellow was true to his first love, sad Christian as he was.

"Me drink no whisky for four, five week—me now try to stop. Give me prayer to say when debbil get in here," touching his head.

That was what he had come for chiefly. I gave

him the form of a short and simple prayer. He repeated it after me in his way until he had it by heart, and then he left.

Once or twice a year he came to see us, and always had a pathetic tale to tell of his struggles with strong drink, and the greed and violence of men who were tempted to oppress and maltreat a poor creature whose weakness invited injustice.

He told us of an adventure when acting as a sheep herder in Southern California, whither he had wandered. A large flock of sheep which he had in charge had been disturbed in the corral a couple of nights in succession. On the third night, hearing a commotion among them, he sprang up from his bunk and rushed out to see what was the matter. But let him tell the story: "Me run out to see what's matter; stars shine blight; me get into corral; sheep all bery much scared, and bery much run, and bery much jump. Big black bear jump over corral fence and come right for me. Me so flighten me know nothing, but raise my arms, run at bear, and say, *E-e-e-e-e!*" prolonging the shrill scream and becoming terribly excited as he went on.

"Well, how did it end?" I asked.

"Me scream so loud that bear get scared too, and he turn, run bery fast, jump over corral, and run away."

We did not doubt this story. The narration was too vivid to have been invented, and that scream was enough to upset the nerves of any grizzly.

We got to looking for him at regular intervals. He would bring candies and little presents for the children, and would give a tearful recital of his experiences and take a tearful leave of us. He was fighting his enemy and still claiming to be a

Christian. He said many things which showed that he had thought earnestly and deeply on religious subjects, and he would end by saying: "Jesus, help me! Jesus, help me!"

He came to see us after the death of our Paul, and he wept when we told him how our dear boy had left us. He had had a long sickness in the hospital. He had before expressed a desire to go back to his own country, and now this desire had grown into a passion. His wan face lighted up as he looked wistfully seaward from the bay window of our cottage on the hill above the Golden Gate. He left us with a slow and feeble step, often looking back as long as he was in sight.

That was the last of Cissaha. I know not whether he is in Hindostan or the world of spirits.

LOST ON TABLE MOUNTAIN.

TABLE MOUNTAIN is a geological curiosity. It has puzzled the scientists, excited the wonder of the vulgar, and aroused the cupidity of the gold hunter. It is a river without water, a river without banks, a river whose bed is hundreds of feet in the air. Rising in Calaveras County, it runs southward more than a hundred miles, winding gracefully in its course, and passing through what was one of the richest gold belts in the world. But now the bustling camps are still, the thousands who delved the earth for the shining ore are gone, the very houses have disappeared. The scarred bosom of Mother Earth alone tells of the intensely passionate life that once throbbed among these rocky hills. A deserted mining camp is in more senses than one like a battlefield. Both leave the same tragic impression upon the mind.

What is now Table Mountain was many ages ago a river flowing from the foot of the Sierras into the San Joaquin Valley. A volcano at its head discharged its lava into it, and it slowly rolled down its bed, and, cooling, left the hard volcanic matter to resist the action of the elements by which the surrounding country was worn away, until it was left high in the air, a phenomenon to exercise the wits of the learned, and a delight to the lover of the curious in nature.

I can modestly claim the honor of having