

few circuits of a plow around the outlying corral were enough to call out a jungle growth of giant grain that almost hid the low walls of the *hacienda*. In this glorious fecundity of the earth, in this joyous renewal of life and color, in this opulent youth and freshness of soil and sky, it alone remained, the dead and sterile Past, left in the midst of buoyant rejuvenescence and resurrection, like an empty churchyard skull upturned on the springing turf. Its bronzed adobe walls mocked the green vine that embraced them, the crumbling dust of its courtyard remained ungerminating and unfruitful; to the thousand stirring voices without, its dry lips alone remained mute, unresponsive, and unchanged.

During this time Don José had become a frequent visitor at Los Cuervos, bringing with him at first his niece and sister in a stately precision of politeness that was not lost on the proud Blue Grass stranger. She returned their visit at Los Gatos, and there made the formal acquaintance of Don José's grandmother, a lady who still regarded the decrepit Concha as a giddy *muchacha*, and who herself glittered as with the phosphorescence of refined decay. Through this circumstance she learned that Don José was not yet fifty, and that his gravity of manner and sedateness was more the result of fastidious isolation and temperament than years. She could not tell why the information gave her a feeling of annoyance, but it caused her to regret the absence of Poindexter, and to wonder, also somewhat nervously, why he had lately avoided her presence. The thought that he might be doing so from a recollection of the innuendoes of Mrs. Patterson caused a little tremor of indignation in her pulses. "As if"—but she did not finish the sentence even to herself, and her eyes filled with bitter tears.

Yet she had thought of the husband who had so cruelly wronged her less feverishly, less impatiently than before.

For she thought she loved him now the more deeply, because, although she was not reconciled to his absence, it seemed to keep alive the memory of what he had been before his one wild act separated them. She had never seen the reflection of another woman's eyes in his; the past contained no haunting recollection of waning or alienated affection; she could meet him again, and, clasping her arms around him, awaken as if from a troubled dream without reproach or explanation. Her strong belief in this made her patient; she no longer sought to know the particulars of his flight, and never dreamed that her passive submission to his absence was partly due to a fear that something in his actual presence at that moment would have destroyed that belief forever.

For this reason the delicate reticence of the people at Los Gatos, and their seclusion from the world which knew of her husband's fault, had made her encourage the visits of Don José, until from the instinct already alluded to she one day summoned Poindexter to Los Cuervos, on the day that Don José usually called. But to her surprise the two men met more or less awkwardly and coldly, and her tact as hostess was tried to the utmost to keep their evident antagonism from being too apparent. The effort to reconcile their mutual discontent, and some other feeling she did not quite understand, produced a nervous excitement which called the blood to her cheek and gave a dangerous brilliancy to her eyes, two circumstances not unnoticed nor unappreciated by her two guests. But instead of reuniting them, the prettier Mrs. Tucker became, the more distant and reserved grew the men, until Don José rose before his usual hour, and with more than usual ceremoniousness departed.

"Then my business does not seem to be with *him*?" said Poindexter, with quiet coolness, as Mrs. Tucker turned her somewhat mystified face towards him. "Or have you anything to say to me about him in private?"



"I am sure I don't know what you both mean," she returned with a slight tremor of voice. "I had no idea you were not on good terms. I thought you were! It's very awkward." Without coquetry and unconsciously she raised her blue eyes under her lids until the clear pupils coyly and softly hid themselves in the corners of the brown lashes, and added, "You have both been so kind to me."

"Perhaps that is the reason," said Poindexter, gravely. But Mrs. Tucker refused to accept the suggestion with equal gravity, and began to laugh. The laugh, which was at first frank, spontaneous, and almost child-like, was becoming hysterical and nervous as she went on, until it was suddenly checked by Poindexter.

"I have had no difficulties with Don José Santierra," he said, somewhat coldly ignoring her hilarity, "but perhaps he is not inclined to be as polite to the friend of the husband as he is to the wife."

"Mr. Poindexter!" said Mrs. Tucker quickly, her face becoming pale again.

"I beg your pardon!" said Poindexter, flushing; "but"—

"You want to say," she interrupted coolly, "that you are not friends, I see. Is that the reason why you have avoided this house?" she continued gently.

"I thought I could be of more service to you elsewhere," he replied evasively. "I have been lately following up a certain clue rather closely. I think I am on the track of a confidante of — of — that woman."

A quick shadow passed over Mrs. Tucker's face. "Indeed!" she said coldly. "Then I am to believe that you prefer to spend your leisure moments in looking after that creature to calling here?"

Poindexter was stupefied. Was this the woman who only four months ago was almost vindictively eager to

pursue her husband's paramour! There could be but one answer to it — Don José! Four months ago he would have smiled compassionately at it from his cynical pre-eminence. Now he managed with difficulty to stifle the bitterness of his reply.

"If you do not wish the inquiry carried on," he began, "of course" —

"I? What does it matter to me?" she said coolly. "Do as you please."

Nevertheless, half an hour later, as he was leaving, she said, with a certain hesitating timidity, "Do not leave me so much alone here, and let that woman go."

This was not the only unlooked-for sequel to her innocent desire to propitiate her best friends. Don José did not call again upon his usual day, but in his place came Doña Clara, his younger sister. When Mrs. Tucker had politely asked after the absent Don José, Doña Clara wound her swarthy arms around the fair American's waist and replied, "But why did you send for the *abogado* Poindexter when my brother called?"

"But Captain Poindexter calls as one of my friends," said the amazed Mrs. Tucker. "He is a gentleman, and has been a soldier and an officer," she added with some warmth.

"Ah, yes, a soldier of the law, what you call an *oficial de policía*, a chief of *gendarmes*, my sister, but not a gentleman — a *camarero* to protect a lady."

Mrs. Tucker would have uttered a hasty reply, but the perfect and good-natured simplicity of Doña Clara withheld her. Nevertheless, she treated Don José with a certain reserve at their next meeting, until it brought the simple-minded Castilian so dangerously near the point of demanding an explanation which implied too much that she was obliged to restore him temporarily to his old footing. Meantime she had a brilliant idea. She would



write to Calhoun Weaver, whom she had avoided since that memorable day. She would say she wished to consult him. He would come to Los Cuervos; he might suggest something to lighten this weary waiting; at least she would show them all that she had still old friends. Yet she did not dream of returning to her Blue Grass home; her parents had died since she left; she shrank from the thought of dragging her ruined life before the hopeful youth of her girlhood's companions.

Mr. Calhoun Weaver arrived promptly, ostentatiously, oracularly, and cordially, but a little coarsely. He had—did she remember?—expected this from the first. Spencer had lost his head through vanity, and had attempted too much. It required foresight and firmness, as he himself—who had lately made successful “combinations” which she might perhaps have heard of—well knew. But Spencer had got the “big head.” “As to that woman—a devilish handsome woman too!—well, everybody knew that Spencer always had a weakness that way, and he would say—but if she did n’t care to hear any more about her—well, perhaps she was right. That was the best way to take it.” Sitting before her, prosperous, weak, egotistical, incompetent, unavailable, and yet filled with a vague kindliness of intent, Mrs. Tucker loathed him. A sickening perception of her own weakness in sending for him, a new and aching sense of her utter isolation and helplessness, seemed to paralyze her.

“Nat’rally you feel bad,” he continued, with the large air of a profound student of human nature. “Nat’rally, nat’rally you’re kept in an uncomfortable state, not knowing jist how you stand. There ain’t but one thing to do. Jist rise up, quiet like, and get a divorce agin Spencer. Hold on! There ain’t a judge or jury in California that would n’t give it to you right off the nail, without asking

questions. Why, you’d get it by default if you wanted to; you’d just have to walk over the course! And then, Belle,” he drew his chair still nearer her, “when you’ve settled down again—well!—I don’t mind renewing that offer I once made ye, before Spencer ever came round ye—I don’t mind, Belle, I swear I don’t! Honest Injin! I’m in earnest, there’s my hand.”

Mrs. Tucker’s reply has not been recorded. Enough that half an hour later Mr. Weaver appeared in the courtyard with traces of tears on his foolish face, a broken falsetto voice, and other evidence of mental and moral disturbance. His cordiality and oracular predisposition remained sufficiently to enable him to suggest the magical words “Blue Grass” mysteriously to Concha, with an indication of his hand to the erect figure of her pale mistress in the doorway, who waved to him a silent but half compassionate farewell.

At about this time a slight change in her manner was noticed by the few who saw her more frequently. Her apparently invincible girlishness of spirit had given way to a certain matronly seriousness. She applied herself to her household cares and the improvement of the *hacienda* with a new sense of duty and a settled earnestness, until by degrees she wrought into it not only her instinctive delicacy and taste, but part of her own individuality. Even the rude *rancheros* and tradesmen who were permitted to enter the walls in the exercise of their calling began to speak mysteriously of the beauty of this garden of the *almarjal*. She went out but seldom, and then accompanied by one or the other of her female servants, in long drives on unfrequented roads. On Sundays she sometimes drove to the half ruined mission church of Santa Inez, and hid herself, during mass, in the dim monastic shadows of the choir. Gradually the poorer people whom she met in these journeys began to



show an almost devotional reverence for her, stopping in the roads with uncovered heads for her to pass, or making way for her in the *tienda* or *plaza* of the wretched town with dumb courtesy. She began to feel a strange sense of widowhood, that, while it at times brought tears to her eyes, was not without a certain tender solace. In the sympathy and simpleness of this impulse she went as far as to revive the mourning she had worn for her parents, but with such a fatal accenting of her beauty, and dangerous misinterpreting of her condition to eligible bachelors strange to the country, that she was obliged to put it off again. Her reserved and dignified manner caused others to mistake her nationality for that of the Santieras, and in "Doña Bella" the simple Mrs. Tucker was for a while forgotten. At times she even forgot it herself. Accustomed now almost entirely to the accents of another language and the features of another race, she would sit for hours in the corridor, whose massive bronzed enclosure even her tasteful care could only make an embowered mausoleum of the Past, or gaze abstractedly from the dark embrasures of her windows across the stretching *almarjal* to the shining lagoon beyond that terminated the estuary. She had a strange fondness for this tranquil mirror, which under sun or stars always retained the passive reflex of the sky above, and seemed to rest her weary eyes. She had objected to one of the plans projected by Poindexter to redeem the land and deepen the water at the *embarcadero*, as it would have drained the lagoon, and the lawyer had postponed the improvement to gratify her fancy. So she kept it through the long summer unchanged save by the shadows of passing wings or the lazy files of sleeping sea-fowl.

On one of these afternoons she noticed a slowly moving carriage leave the highroad and cross the *almarjal* skirting the edge of the lagoon. If it contained visitors for

Los Cuervos they had evidently taken a shorter cut without waiting to go on to the regular road which intersected the highway at right angles a mile farther on. It was with some sense of annoyance and irritation that she watched the trespass, and finally saw the vehicle approach the house. A few moments later the servant informed her that Mr. Patterson would like to see her alone. When she entered the corridor, which in the dry season served as a reception hall, she was surprised to see that Patterson was not alone. Near him stood a well-dressed handsome woman, gazing about her with good-humored admiration of Mrs. Tucker's taste and ingenuity.

"It don't look much like it did two years ago," said the stranger cheerfully. "You've improved it wonderfully."

Stiffening slightly, Mrs. Tucker turned inquiringly to Mr. Patterson. But that gentleman's usual profound melancholy appeared to be intensified by the hilarity of his companion. He only sighed deeply and rubbed his leg with the brim of his hat in gloomy abstraction.

"Well! go on, then," said the woman, laughing and nudging him. "Go on — introduce me — can't you? Don't stand there like a tombstone. You won't? Well, I'll introduce myself." She laughed again, and then, with an excellent imitation of Patterson's lugubrious accents, said, "Mr. Spencer Tucker's wife that *is*, allow me to introduce you to Mr. Spencer Tucker's sweetheart that *was*! Hold on! I said *that was*. For true as I stand here, ma'am — and I reckon I would n't stand here if it was n't true — I have n't set eyes on him since the day he left you."

"It's the gospel truth, every word," said Patterson, stirred into a sudden activity by Mrs. Tucker's white and rigid face. "It's the frozen truth, and I kin prove it. For I kin swear that when that there young woman was



sailin' outer the Golden Gate, Spencer Tucker was in my bar-room ; I kin swear that I fed him, lickered him, give him a hoss and set him in his road to Monterey that very night."

"Then, where is he now?" said Mrs. Tucker, suddenly facing them.

They looked at each other, and then looked at Mrs. Tucker. Then both together replied slowly and in perfect unison, "That's — what — we — want — to — know." They seemed so satisfied with this effect that they as deliberately repeated, "Yes — that's — what — we — want — to — know."

Between the shock of meeting the partner of her husband's guilt and the unexpected revelation to her inexperience, that in suggestion and appearance there was nothing beyond the recollection of that guilt that was really shocking in the woman — between the extravagant extremes of hope and fear suggested by their words, there was something so grotesquely absurd in the melodramatic chorus that she with difficulty suppressed an hysterical laugh.

"That's the way to take it," said the woman, putting her own good-humored interpretation upon Mrs. Tucker's expression. "Now, look here! I'll tell you all about it." She carefully selected the most comfortable chair, and sitting down, lightly crossed her hands in her lap. "Well, I left here on the 13th of last January on the ship *Argo*, calculating that your husband would join the ship just inside the Heads. That was our arrangement, but if anything happened to prevent him, he was to join me at Acapulco. Well! he did n't come aboard, and we sailed without him. But it appears now he did attempt to join the ship, but his boat was capsized. There now, don't be alarmed! he was n't drowned, as Patterson can swear to — no, catch *him*! not a hair of him was hurt. But I —

*I* was bundled off to the end of the earth in Mexico alone, without a cent to bless me. For true as you live, that hound of a captain, when he found, as he thought, that Spencer was nabbed, he just confiscated all his trunks and valuables and left me in the lurch. If I had not met a man down there that offered to marry me and brought me here, I might have died there, I reckon. But I did, and here I am. I went down there as your husband's sweetheart, I've come back as the wife of an honest man, and I reckon it's about square!"

There was something so startlingly frank, so hopelessly self-satisfied, so contagiously good-humored in the woman's perfect moral unconsciousness, that even if Mrs. Tucker had been less preoccupied her resentment would have abated. But her eyes were fixed on the gloomy face of Patterson, who was beginning to unlock the sepulchers of his memory and disinter his deeply buried thoughts.

"You kin bet your whole pile on what this Mrs. Captin Baxter — ez used to be French Inez of New Orleans — hez told ye. Ye kin take everything she's unloaded. And it's only doin' the square thing to her to say, she hain't done it out o' no cussedness, but just to satisfy herself, now she's a married woman and past such foolishness. But that ain't neither here nor there. The gist of the whole matter is that Spencer Tucker was at the *tienda* the day after she sailed and after his boat capsized." He then gave a detailed account of the interview, with the unnecessary but truthful minutiae of his class, adding to the particulars already known that the following week he visited the Summit House and was surprised to find that Spencer had never been there, nor had he ever sailed from Monterey.

"But why was this not told to me before?" said Mrs. Tucker, suddenly. "Why not at the time? Why," she



demanded almost fiercely, turning from the one to the other, "has this been kept from me?"

"I'll tell ye why," said Patterson, sinking with crushed submission into a chair. "When I found he was n't where he ought to be, I got to lookin' elsewhere. I knew the track of the hoss I lent him by a loose shoe. I examined, and found he had turned off the highroad somewhere beyond the lagoon, jist as if he was makin' a bee line here."

"Well," said Mrs. Tucker breathlessly.

"Well," said Patterson, with the resigned tone of an accustomed martyr, "mebbe I'm a God-forsaken idiot, but I reckon he *did* come yer. And mebbe I'm that much of a habitoal lunatic, but thinking so, I kalkilated you'd know it without tellin'."

With their eyes fixed upon her, Mrs. Tucker felt the quick blood rush to her cheeks, although she knew not why. But they were apparently satisfied with her ignorance, for Patterson resumed, yet more gloomily:

"Then if he was n't hidin' here beknownst to you, he must have changed his mind agin and got away by the *embarcadero*. The only thing wantin' to prove that idea is to know how he got a boat, and what he did with the hoss. And thar's one more idea, and ez that can't be proved," continued Patterson, sinking his voice still lower, "mebbe it's accordin' to God's laws."

Unsympathetic to her as the speaker had always been and still was, Mrs. Tucker felt a vague chill creep over her that seemed to be the result of his manner more than his words. "And that idea is —?" she suggested with pale lips.

"It's this! Fust, I don't say it means much to anybody but me. I've heard of these warnings afore now, ez comin' only to folks ez hear them for themselves alone, and I reckon I kin stand it, if it's the will o' God. The

idea is then — that — Spencer Tucker — *was drowned* in that boat; the idea is" — his voice was almost lost in a hoarse whisper — "that it was no living man that kem to me that night, but a spirit that kem out of the darkness and went back into it! No eye saw him but mine — no ears heard him but mine. I reckon it were n't intended it should." He paused, and passed the flap of his hat across his eyes. "The pie, you'll say, is agin it," he continued in the same tone of voice, — "the whiskey is agin it — a few cuss words that dropped from him, accidental like, may have been agin it. All the same they mout have been only the little signs and tokens that it was him."

But Mrs. Baxter's ready laugh somewhat rudely dispelled the infection of Patterson's gloom. "I reckon the only spirit was that which you and Spencer consumed," she said, cheerfully. "I don't wonder you're a little mixed. Like as not you've misunderstood his plans."

Patterson shook his head. "He'll turn up yet, alive and kicking! Like as not, then, Poindexter knows where he is all the time."

"Impossible! He would have told me," said Mrs. Tucker, quickly.

Mrs. Baxter looked at Patterson without speaking. Patterson replied by a long lugubrious whistle.

"I don't understand you," said Mrs. Tucker, drawing back with cold dignity.

"You don't?" returned Mrs. Baxter. "Bless your innocent heart! Why was he so keen to hunt me up at first, shadowing my friends and all that, and why has he dropped it now he knows I'm here, if he did n't know where Spencer was?"

"I can explain that," interrupted Mrs. Tucker, hastily, with a blush of confusion. "That is — I" —



"Then mebbe you kin explain too," broke in Patterson with gloomy significance, "why he has bought up most of Spencer's debts himself, and perhaps you're satisfied it *isn't* to hold the whip hand of him and keep him from coming back openly. Pr'aps you know why he's movin' heaven and earth to make Don José Santierra sell the ranch, and why the Don don't see it all."

"Don José sell Los Cuervos! Buy it, you mean?" said Mrs. Tucker. "I offered to sell it to him."

Patterson arose from the chair, looked despairingly around him, passed his hand sadly across his forehead, and said: "It's come! I knew it would. It's the warnin'! It's suthin betwixt jim-jams and doddering idjocy. Here I'd hev been willin' to swear that Mrs. Baxter here told me *she* had sold this yer ranch nearly two years ago to Don José, and now you" —

"Stop!" said Mrs. Tucker, in a voice that chilled them.

She was standing upright and rigid, as if stricken to stone. "I command you to tell me what this means!" she said, turning only her blazing eyes upon the woman.

Even the ready smile faded from Mrs. Baxter's lips as she replied hesitatingly and submissively: "I thought you knew already that Spencer had given this ranch to me. I sold it to Don José to get the money for us to go away with. It was Spencer's idea" —

"You lie!" said Mrs. Tucker.

There was a dead silence. The wrathful blood that had quickly mounted to Mrs. Baxter's cheek, to Patterson's additional bewilderment, faded as quickly. She did not lift her eyes again to Mrs. Tucker's, but, slowly raising herself from her seat, said, "I wish to God I did lie; but it's true. And it's true that I never touched a cent of the money, but gave it all to him!" She laid her hand on Patterson's arm, and said, "Come! let us go,"

and led him a few steps toward the gateway. But here Patterson paused, and again passed his hand over his melancholy brow. The necessity of coherently and logically closing the conversation impressed itself upon his darkening mind. "Then you don't happen to have heard anything of Spencer?" he said sadly, and vanished with Mrs. Baxter through the gate.

Left alone to herself, Mrs. Tucker raised her hands above her head with a little cry, interlocked her rigid fingers, and slowly brought her palms down upon her upturned face and eyes, pressing hard as if to crush out all light and sense of life before her. She stood thus for a moment motionless and silent, with the rising wind whispering without and flecking her white morning dress with gusty shadows from the arbor. Then, with closed eyes, dropping her hands to her breast, still pressing hard, she slowly passed them down the shapely contours of her figure to the waist, and with another cry cast them off as if she were stripping herself of some loathsome garment. Then she walked quickly to the gateway, looked out, returned to the corridor, unloosening and taking off her wedding-ring from her finger as she walked. Here she paused, then slowly and deliberately rearranged the chairs and adjusted the gay-colored rugs that draped them, and quietly reentered her chamber.

Two days afterwards the sweating steed of Captain Poindexter was turned loose in the corral, and a moment later the captain entered the corridor. Handing a letter to the decrepit Concha, who seemed to be utterly disorganized by its contents and the few curt words with which it was delivered, he gazed silently upon the vacant bower, still fresh and redolent with the delicacy and perfume of its graceful occupant, until his dark eyes filled with unaccustomed moisture. But his reverie was inter-



rupted by the sound of jingling spurs without, and the old humor struggled back into his eyes as Don José impetuously entered. The Spaniard started back, but instantly recovered himself.

"So, I find you here. Ah! it is well!" he said passionately, producing a letter from his bosom. "Look! Do you call this honor? Look how you keep your compact!"

Poindexter coolly took the letter. It contained a few words of gentle dignity from Mrs. Tucker, informing Don José that she had only that instant learned of his just claims upon Los Cuervos, tendering him her gratitude for his delicate intentions, but pointing out with respectful firmness that he must know that a moment's further acceptance of his courtesy was impossible.

"She has gained this knowledge from no word of mine," said Poindexter, calmly. "Right or wrong, I have kept my promise to you. I have as much reason to accuse you of betraying my secret in this," he added coldly, as he took another letter from his pocket and handed it to Don José.

It seemed briefer and colder, but was neither. It reminded Poindexter that as he had again deceived her she must take the government of her affairs in her own hands henceforth. She abandoned all the furniture and improvements she had put in Los Cuervos to him, to whom she now knew she was indebted for them. She could not thank him for what his habitual generosity impelled him to do for any woman, but she could forgive him for misunderstanding her like any other woman, perhaps she should say, like a child. When he received this she would be already on her way to her old home in Kentucky, where she still hoped to be able by her own efforts to amass enough to discharge her obligations to him.

"She does not speak of her husband, this woman,"

said Don José, scanning Poindexter's face. "It is possible she rejoins him, eh?"

"Perhaps in one way she has never left him, Don José," said Poindexter, with grave significance.

Don José's face flushed, but he returned carelessly, "And the *rancho*, naturally you will not buy it now?"

"On the contrary, I shall abide by my offer," said Poindexter, quietly.

Don José eyed him narrowly, and then said, "Ah, we shall consider of it."

He did consider it, and accepted the offer. With the full control of the land, Captain Poindexter's improvements, so indefinitely postponed, were actively pushed forward. The thick walls of the *hacienda* were the first to melt away before them; the low lines of corral were effaced, and the early breath of the summer trade winds swept uninterruptedly across the now leveled plain to the *embarcadero*, where a newer structure arose. A more vivid green alone marked the spot where the crumbling adobe walls of the *casa* had returned to the parent soil that gave it. The channel was deepened, the lagoon was drained, until one evening the magic mirror that had so long reflected the weary waiting of the Blue Grass Penelope lay dull, dead, lusterless, an opaque quagmire of noisome corruption and decay to be put away from the sight of man forever. On this spot the crows, the titular tenants of Los Cuervos, assembled in tumultuous congress, coming and going in mysterious clouds, or laboring in thick and writhing masses, as if they were continuing the work of improvement begun by human agency. So well had they done the work that by the end of a week only a few scattered white objects remained glittering on the surface of the quickly drying soil. But they were the bones of the missing outcast, Spencer Tucker!



The same spring a breath of war swept over a foul, decaying quagmire of the whole land, before which such passing deeds as these were blown as vapor. It called men of all rank and condition to battle for a nation's life, and among the first to respond were those into whose boyish hands had been placed the nation's honor. It returned the epaulets to Poindexter's shoulder with the addition of a double star, carried him triumphantly to the front, and left him, at the end of a summer's day and a hard-won fight, sorely wounded, at the door of a Blue Grass farmhouse. And the woman who sought him out and ministered to his wants said timidly, as she left her hand in his, "I told you I should live to repay you."

## Left Out on Lone Star Mountain.

### I.

THERE was little doubt that the Lone Star claim was "played out." Not dug out, worked out, washed out, but *played out*. For two years its five sanguine proprietors had gone through the various stages of mining enthusiasm; had prospected and planned, dug and doubted. They had borrowed money with hearty but unredeeming frankness, established a credit with unselfish abnegation of all responsibility, and had borne the disappointment of their creditors with a cheerful resignation which only the consciousness of some deep Compensating Future could give. Giving little else, however, a singular dissatisfaction obtained with the traders, and, being accompanied with a reluctance to make further advances, at last touched the gentle stoicism of the proprietors themselves. The youthful enthusiasm which had at first lifted the most ineffectual trial, the most useless essay, to the plane of actual achievement, died out, leaving them only the dull, prosaic record of half-finished ditches, purposeless shafts, untenable pits, abandoned engines, and meaningless disruptions of the soil upon the Lone Star claim, and empty flour sacks and pork barrels in the Lone Star cabin.

They had borne their poverty, if that term could be applied to a light renunciation of all superfluities in food, dress, or ornament, ameliorated by the gentle depredations already alluded to, with unassuming levity. More