

THE ALCHEMY OF JANE ELLEN.

A Modern Miracle of a Mining Camp.

"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 the 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 sisters—"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 the 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 disturbed New England scenes, alive with Nevada eccentricities. After many weeks filled with wild adventures, the "Keystone B" and 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."

"Then you'd better prospect in that Char' homeyard, ma'am, for Jake he got killed in a gun-fight nigh onter 23 years back." Tip Wortle blurted out this information with the unaffected candor of a mining-camp habitue, followed by a familiarity with such details as impromptu rhymes 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 puster'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."

"Well, appose'n you just mosey through that graveyard, ma'am, and learn whether Tip Wortle's tellin' you 'faint ain't so." Saying which, Tip indicated by a jerk of his 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 puffing attempt to console the shocked sister.

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

When Nevada's great mining camp were young, and roystering, devil-may-care men frequented them, many things were done that scandalize the younger generation of this day, when these tokens of an earlier epoch come under observation. Perhaps not every live camp had its calamity graveyard; 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—who died with their boots on.

But Eureka underwent the hard black stage; her mines dwindled to

barrenness, and the faith of her staunchest citizens was shaken. Consequently, interest in the camp abated, and among other things neglected was the calamity graveyard—neglected in this wise—that of fresh arrivals there were none, and more noticeable than this was the decrease in the number of headboards. 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 graveyard, 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 mound 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 tomb-stones, 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.

"Ira! Ira Brooks! I have found him!" Jane Ellen's wail 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 of
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 graveyard?" 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 "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 hill, 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 exhuming 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 assuring. 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, heavy set shut off Ira's view to everything but the same menacing fist, and two glowing eyes. "You, you varmint! You did red tub! Think you're playing a high hand jumping my claim in the light o' day? Say, old man, 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 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 un consecrated 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 cannot 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 northeast corner of their Sacrilige Claim.

Jane Ellen Brooks stared at the men in mute horror. To steal a headstone 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 which 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 quartz, 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.

"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 good quartz to beat the likes o' that? We're rich, and you—say, you didn't find no buried brother, but the richest gold mine 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 and 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 explaining, of reasoning, and cajoling, Jane Brooks 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.—San Francisco Argonaut.

The tailor's motto.
Washington—What's the matter with your clock? It's stopped.
Tailor—I never wind it up. I use it as a motto.
"What do you mean?"
"No tick here."—Tit-Bits.

A Good Foundation.
Foreign Visitor—Your American society has no old castles with haunted rooms.
American Girl—No, we haven't, I admit; but (brightening) we have plenty of scandals.—N. Y. Weekly.

Not Exactly the Same.
"And she isn't married yet? Gracious! She's well preserved! She is the same Birdie Hoppindye she was 15 years ago."
"No, she's not the same. She spells it Byrdye now."—Chicago Tribune.

Quite Another Matter.
"A man may be able to carry himself straight," remarked the observer of events and things; "but when he comes to carry a baby, that's another matter."—Yonkers Statesman.

At a Woman's Club.
Miss Homely—As for myself, I should prefer to be kissed to death.
An Unkind Member—But where could you get an executioner?—Smart Set.

The Worm Turns.
He—Your cooking never equals my mother's.
She—Quite likely. I have heard she used to roast your father pretty well.—N. Y. Sun.

Not Compulsory.
Student—Tell me, colonel, can a man be thoroughly honest and still succeed as a lawyer?
Veteran Attorney—I presume so; but—ah!—it isn't necessary!—Puck.

Mark Twain's Cousin.
G. C. Clemens, of Topeka, Kan., the noted constitutional lawyer, who bears so striking a resemblance to Mark Twain, (Samuel B. Clemens) that he is frequently taken for the original Mark, is a man of deep intellect and wide experience. He is considered one of the foremost lawyers in this country. In a recent letter to the Dr. Miles Medical Co., Mr. Clemens says:

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Excused.
Old Gentleman—Well, have you been a good girl and been to school?
Child (jubilantly)—Na-a-w; I've got the smallpox!—The Tatler.

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Considerable of a Descent.
"He believes in the Darwinian theory — thinks he is descended from a monkey, you know."
"Well, so far as he is individually concerned, I guess he is right."
"How is that?"
"I am always ready to concede that anyone who will make that claim not only has descended from a monkey, but has descended a good long ways. He certainly hasn't risen."—Chicago Post.

Wrote Himself Down.
"The prisoner knocked me down, calling me a scarecrow, a wall-eyed old fool, a reforming rooster, a dolt and an idiot."
This was the conclusion of the deposition. He affixed his signature, which was preceded by the formal entry: "All of which I swear to be true," and left the court.—N. Y. Herald.

A Love Versalet.
"Oh, may I kiss you, sweet?" he cried.
"What cheek!" exclaimed the belle.
"Both, please," the artful chap replied; "and on the lips as well."
—Ally Sloper.

SHRIVING TO PLEASE.
Miss Pomade—Where is the paint department, please?
Floorwalker—Face or house?—Chicago Daily News.

Trouble.
Cannot some one tell us, To ease our wondering minds, Who it is less all the fault That other people find?
—Baltimore World.

Easy to Find Out.
"How absurd it is to say that a man doesn't know on which side his bread is buttered when it's so easy to find out."
"How?"
"Drop it. Anyone ought to know that it will fall butter-side down."—Chicago Post.

Appreciation.
Clerk—Mr. Snipper was in while you were out; he said he'd call again to-morrow.
Proprietor—Very kind of him.
Clerk—But he wanted to collect a bill.
Proprietor—Very kind to say when he would call.—Boston Transcript.

Deep Respect.
"You must always have the greatest respect for your parents," said the benevolent stranger.
"I have," answered the boy with freckles. "Why, either one of them can whip me with one hand."—Washington Star.

Too Bad.
First Author—Stackson's is a case of where a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.
Second Author—In what way?
"Why, he knows just enough of history to unfit him for being a historical novelist."—Brooklyn Life.

Excused.
Old Gentleman—Well, have you been a good girl and been to school?
Child (jubilantly)—Na-a-w; I've got the smallpox!—The Tatler.

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Glee.
"I met Bliggins this morning," said the man with the muffer. "It's a good joke. He was so hoarse he couldn't talk."
"You don't mean to tell me you're glad your friend has a cold?"
"Well, I'm not exactly glad. But have one myself, and it was a great comfort to meet some one who couldn't talk loud enough to tell me what to do for it. All I had to do was to stand three feet away and he was powerless."—Washington Star.

Pictorially Maligned.
"Now if the Goddess of Liberty were only a real person," commented the briefless barrister thoughtfully, "might stir up some business."
"How?" asked the curious caller.
"Why, she would certainly have good claim for damages for some of the alleged pictures of her that appear in the cartoons, wouldn't she?" demanded the briefless barrister.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Somewhat Put Out.
"The service at this hotel," said the boarder who was generally behind his payments, "is abominable, and I'm not going to put up with it much longer."
"You're right," said the landlord, overhearing him. "If you don't put up something pretty soon you'll put up somewhere else."—Chicago Tribune.

How Blinks Was Hooked.
"Mrs. Weeds," said Mr. Blinks, "I asked your daughter to marry me, and she referred me to you."
"I'm sure that's very kind of Susie, but then she always was a dutiful girl. Really, Mr. Blinks, I hadn't thought of marrying again at my time of life, but since you insist suppose we make the wedding day the twentieth of this month."—Tit-Bits.

He Knew Them.
Kind Lady—Do you know your letters, little boy?
Boston Prodigy (aged seven)—If you mean to ask, madam, whether or not I am able to recognize at sight the 26 fundamental characters upon which the English language is based, I should reply to you that I learned those when I was a mere child.—Columbus (O.) State Journal.

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