

# SALLY JONES AND I.

## HOW WE WERE BILKED OUT OF A CHRISTMAS DINNER.

A Mournful Story of Pioneer Life in the Gold Mines of Central California.

It was on Christmas eve in the year 1851 - that I sat alone in my log cabin, built upon a little eminence overlooking Snake Hollow Flat, in Drytown, Amador county, California.

For two years I had subsisted principally upon Chile beans, flapjacks and coffee, with only an occasional bit of fresh Spanish beef thrown in as a relish.

I was strong and healthy then, full of romance and enthusiasm, and blessed with that voracious appetite which comes only to vigorous youth, in the heyday of life's beautiful morning, and at the period in question yearned for one of those gastronomic miracles, a New England Christmas dinner.

But how should I get it, or where, in fact, anything better than my regular rations of the coming morning? And thus musing, half asleep and half dream, memory took me back, in fond remembrance, to the dear, sweet home I had left but two years and eight months before.

Suddenly I awoke from my delightful reverie, to find standing before me Lou and Jake Walker, accompanied by their partner, Jerry Whitehead.

"Bloom, what were you dreaming about? Wake up! To-morrow will be Christmas Day, and we came over to ask you a deal. We want a dinner, a good one, a splendid one, a real sociological, whisky straight to start on, then oysters, soup, roast turkey, mince pie, plum pudding, mince pies and all the delicacies of the season to boot, thrown in as condiments. To come right down to business, you must get it up, and we propose to pay for it for the job, and he besides, the cook is always counted, so your dinner will cost you nothing, and a mighty good one it ought to be, as we propose to pay you an outside price."

Here was my chance, and I resolved to take it, promising to be ready the next day at 3 p. m., with a layout the very goods would envy. I went to bed at night, at 2 o'clock, planning my bill of fare, and early next morning struck out for Burt's store, where I laid in a supply of canned oysters, turkeys, chickens, mince pies, dried apples, beef, and canned beef, and then, going over to Jack Worley's, borrowed all his wife's spare dishes, spoons and knives and forks, ran around to Uncle Daniel Baxter's and got a gallon of No. 1 Kentucky whisky, and at last started home in high glee at the prospect of a splendid dinner, after having spent just as we used to say in those days, three ounces. I calculated I had a sufficiency of raw material (including the whisky) for five persons, and so concluded to invite Sally and her folks, and my daughter, of old Sam Jones, who hailed from Buchanan township, Clay county, Missouri, to come over and partake of the festivities of the day.

I don't exactly know how I came to invite Sally, but the day before, as I was going down the creek to wash my shirt, I passed her mother's place, and saw her milking cow, and wishing to say something besides "Good afternoon, Mrs. Jones," remarked that this was the way a man had to go in California, and she picked up her milk pail, and was about to start for the house. "How could I find a wife in this country?" she said, "there are ten thousand men to one woman here, and one moment thinking of Sally. 'Oh, you flax rodder, my son, and you won't have to go far, you hear your Aunt Nancy Jones Buchanan, Clay county, Missouri, you do.'"

Then I remembered how punctually Sally had come over to my cabin every day at noon to take her milk, and how often we had sung duets together, and how often I had desired to have her stop to dinner, yet had not the heart to ask her to sit down to Chile beans, flapjacks and coffee, straight, and so when Lou, Jake Walker and Jerry Whitehead came in that night and proposed to pay me three ounces to get them up a Christmas dinner, I saw my chance, and I was all right, and I was, and going to sleep at 2 o'clock, was soon dreaming of turkeys, chickens, mince and pumpkin pies, and that paragon of beauty, Sally Jones, and all the while I was thinking of the bell of Drytown, Amador county, and pride of every miner within a radius of fifty miles!

On my way back I called at the old people's cabin, and finding Mrs. Jones within, asked if Sally could go over and have dinner with me, telling her what I was going to prepare, and she picked up her coffee pot, and Jerry Whitehead was going to foot the bill, and that all I wanted to do was to get Sally to go along and share the profits.

"Why, to be sure, she can go, and I'll do you know that critter never ate a Christmas dinner in all her life, and come to think it over, why not take her right to sort of help you out? She is a right smart chance of a cook, and she can make a right little wife. Here, Sally, my child, put on your sun-bonnet and help Helen pack over those dinner goods, and when you get there, pick the raisins, chop the meat, set some salt rising, and make him a pone of bread that you can bake in his little oven. Sweep the kitchen, wash up his bed, and set things to rights generally, and don't touch that accordeon till dinner is over, and now get up and kit, both of you, for the party, and my whole plan, with me, is to be sure and make the place look cheerful."

In less than no time we were on our way, but as bad luck would have it, we passed Whitehead's cabin, and he saw us, and passing through a chink hole, and in plain parlance "smelt a rat," and hastily going over to Jake and Lou's told them my whole plan, with me, and understood as well as though I had told him.

To make a long story short, Sally and I got up a splendid dinner, and at precisely 3 p. m. I unlocked my door, and there was a table standing, it upon two empty whisky barrels, while she ran over home and took off one of the flour-sack sheets of her bed, from which to improvise a table cloth.

The door was short and narrow, and when we got it set, and the guests had arrived, there was only room for three to sit down, and so my wife, and I, and my daughter, while I dished up, and did the carving.

First, the whisky went the way of all the folk (for men could drink in those days). Then followed the oyster soup, sardines and chicken. The three cans of turkey stood the test just five minutes by the little detached lever watch that Sally had brought all the way across the plains, and in five more but a quarter of mince pie and six remained.

The pone of salt rising bread stood up gallantly, but finally had to give way, when not a crumb remained, the three hungry devils declared they had bargained for a square meal, and simultaneously bringing their chairs to the table, and the table clean, and ruined Sally's flour-sack sheet, declared they had revenge, and sneeringly telling me I ought to have been in better luck, departed for their homes.

I looked sorrowfully at Sally, and Sally looked sorrowfully at me; neither could speak a word, the tears running down the poor girl's cheeks, and a hungry look, or more disconsolate countenance never got bilked out of a Christmas dinner.

Leaving her to take care of the house, and heartily wishing to kiss her tears away, I went down town once more, but this time was too late, for Burt had shut up shop for the day, gone off with the key in

his pocket, and nothing eatable could be obtained either for love or money, and finally the blank despair returned, poured into Sally's ears my tale of woe, and then taking the camp-kettle from under the cup-board, we heated up the Chile beans, made some flapjacks, and down with coffee straight, and when all was over, and the three day moon was slowly setting behind Old Chill Hill, Sally and I, walking single file along the trail, she behind me, before we went back to her father and mother, and, after settling all my bills, I was just four ounces, or in other words, just four cents, out of an anticipated development proved that those three heartless men had put up a job on Sally Jones, and me directly after Jerry Whitehead had gone to the bank, and returned, and he had stepped into a chink hole and seen us pass his cabin, and in order to beat me at my own game, and at the same time to justly punish my dinner, had gone not only without that supper the night before, but breakfast that day, besides drinking a bottle of whisky each in the interval.

Thirty-five years have come and gone since that eventful day. Old Jones and his wife have long since crossed the river, the old moosey cow was killed and sold for beef in 1853, and that dinner (which she never forgot) took all the love the poor girl ever had for me, out of her tender, unphilosophical heart.

Jake and Lou still live, but Jerry Whitehead, who was a doctor, and had a fine medical education, died of cholera, and his subsequent developments proved that those three heartless men had put up a job on Sally Jones, and me directly after Jerry Whitehead had gone to the bank, and returned, and he had stepped into a chink hole and seen us pass his cabin, and in order to beat me at my own game, and at the same time to justly punish my dinner, had gone not only without that supper the night before, but breakfast that day, besides drinking a bottle of whisky each in the interval.

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# GRAVEL MINING.

## THE DEPOSITS IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE SIERRAS.

Where they are Located - How they are Worked - Yield of Gold - Extent - Etc.

The gravel-mining region proper of California is on the western slope and foothills of the Sierras, beginning with Mariposa county on the south, and extending north into Plumas. The importance of the gravel deposits increases as we go from Mariposa to Calaveras, and thence to Amador. El Dorado, Placer, Nevada and Sierra are the great mining counties, and there is a gradual falling off in Butte and Plumas, where the mines are nearing exhaustion. This region of auriferous gravel is also traversed by numerous quartz veins. These seem to be an intimate connection between the metal gold and the mineral quartz. A large portion of the gold obtained throughout the world comes from the debris of such veins and rocks, formed by the operation of these eroding and disintegrating agencies which are and have been at work for centuries, and will continue to come on, and yet, through all those years I have never been able to get even on the three Shylockian wretches who so cruelly put up a job on Sally Jones, and me directly after Jerry Whitehead had gone to the bank, and returned, and he had stepped into a chink hole and seen us pass his cabin, and in order to beat me at my own game, and at the same time to justly punish my dinner, had gone not only without that supper the night before, but breakfast that day, besides drinking a bottle of whisky each in the interval.

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# MISCELLANEOUS.

## DR. JOHN BULL'S Smith's Tonic Syrup.

FOR THE CURE OF FEVER AND AGUE, Or CHILLS and FEVER, AND ALL MALARIAL DISEASES.

The proprietor of this celebrated medicine, Dr. John Bull, claims for it a superiority over all remedies ever offered to the public for the safe, certain, speedy and permanent cure of Ague and Fever, or Chills and Fever, whether of short or long standing. He refers to the entire Western and Southern country to bear him testimony to the truth of the assertion that in no case whatever will it fail to cure the disease, and that it is not only safe, but that it is a great many times a single dose has been cured by a single bottle, with a perfect restoration of the general health. It is a safe, certain, speedy and permanent cure of Ague and Fever, or Chills and Fever, whether of short or long standing. 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