

The Story of Eldorado Canyon.

By John L. Riggs.

(This is the conclusion of the story recently published regarding the mining feud over the ownership of the Savage mine at Eldorado Canyon, one of the greatest mines of the Silver state.)

Jim Jones and Tom King were cold in death, buried where they fell. Piette (not Pirtle), slowly recovered from a dangerous wound in the body, obtained in John Nash's fight for the last one-fourth interest in the old Queen City or Savage mine.

The following year a Mr. Davis, a brother-in-law of John Nash, arrived in Eldorado Canyon. He had some means and was one of the best mill-men of those days. He entered into an agreement with Nash to build a mill and operate it, taking shares in the Eldorado Mining company, organized by Nash, therefor. Davis quickly perceived the great possibilities of the Savage and Techatticup when equipped with a good milling plant, and wishing to secure as much stock as possible he induced a friend named Fuller to join him in the venture. Fuller sold his farm in the east and turned in every dollar he was worth, as did Davis, and it was this money that placed Nash's company on its feet and became the nucleus of its fortune. Davis had full charge of the mill and store at the Colorado river, six miles from the mine. William Piette was superintendent at the mine, and things were running along smoothly until sometime in the year 1873. The cross-cut tunnel had now reached the vein and developed a remarkable body of ore, both in size and richness, which was locally known thereafter as the "Bridal Chamber." From this one ore shoot was taken more than one million dollars.

The avarice of Nash was again excited and he began to plan the acquisition of the interests held by Davis and Fuller, and to divert the wealth that was going into their pockets into his own. As soon as the new ore body had been opened up Davis was sent for to come to the mine and view the wonderful showing of ore. The big ore team made a round trip between the mine and mill and Mr. Davis went up on the team in the morning and made the examination of the ore body by noon. Davis heretofore had eaten his meals when at the mine at the company boarding house, but this day he was invited to eat with Piette, who was living with a squaw. After dinner Davis boarded the ore wagon and the start was made to the mill. Within a few minutes Davis was taken violently ill and the driver made all haste to the mill. Nat. S. Lewis (the first representative from Mohave county to the Arizona Legislature), who was acting as camp doctor, was sent for and worked with the sick man until he expired, about twelve hours thereafter, with every symptom of strychnine poisoning. Davis was a Mason, as was also Lewis and Louie Cole, who were with him until the end, and these men both told the writer that there was no question of it being a case of murder by poisoning. Yet, such was the condition in that camp that no one dared to say a word or hint that Davis' death was not from natural causes or his life would be the forfeit.

Davis' death occurred in the middle of June, just when the Colorado was at extreme high water and the drift wood was running. Since most of the fuel supply for the mill was procured during this stage of water, it was a very busy season for all the whites in the Canyon. Mr. Fuller had a camp on the river with a large crew of Indians catching wood. This camp was established at the big eddy, about four miles above the mill, where hundreds of cords of wood was caught and piled up on the bank. A few days after the death of Davis, Nash sent Piette to the mill to look things over and during the day this worthy put in the time looking through the mill, cabins, store and boarding house. In the evening he concluded to go to the camp of Fuller and see how he was getting along with the wood catching business. He remained all night, leaving in the morning right after breakfast. Observe the incident: another man ate his last meal with this arch murderer. The Indians reported that soon after Fuller had eaten breakfast he was taken very sick, and soon died with the same symptoms of strychnine poisoning that

caused the death of Davis. An Indian came for Nat Lewis, but when he reached the camp Fuller was dead.

It would appear that in tracing a man's evil deed, this would be a sufficient indictment against him, but I must proceed still farther in the career of this man. Piette next in the year 1877, in company of Hans Godfritsen opened a little store at the mill. As neither one had experience in such business it soon became evident that they would have to take in a partner that did have. Henry Warner was taken in, putting up the money necessary to put the concern on its feet.

It is known that Piette and Warner had a quarrel and Piette backed down before it came to a gun fight, as it was well known that Warner was known to be a brave man. But in a short time Warner disappeared from the face of the earth, thoroughly, mysteriously and effectually, nor was there ever a trace of him found. His partners gave out the report that he had started down the river at night in a boat with all the firm's ready money to go to San Bernardino to purchase shares in the Eldorado company and to purchase goods. At that time the only means of travel was a buckboard line from Hardyville to San Bernardino, or by river steamer. No trace could be gotten of Warner at Hardyville, the stage line had seen nothing of him, nor had he taken passage on the steamer. He had said nothing to his friends in the canyon of his intention of going out, but on the other hand had left his business in such shape that it was unlikely that he would have gone so hurriedly. Therefore, the presumption is that Piette had also gotten him. If Warner was murdered, I wish to say that Hans Godfritsen had nothing to do with it personally, as he was an honorable man, but I do think he had his suspicions of foul play, if he did not even know of it. Had he known that Warner was really murdered he would not have dared make it known. After the disappearance of Warner Godfritsen retired from the firm and soon after Piette dropped out of sight for seven or eight years, turning up again in 1886.

In 1887 he undertook to run a blazer on a little Irishman named Thomas Jennings, but had to take water. But a vindictive man like Piette always keeps warm his hate, and being a squaw man and of Indian blood himself, he affiliated with the Putes. Getting one of the Indian boys drunk Piette got him to kill Jennings. Loco, the boy, shot Jennings in the town and escaped, never having been apprehended, the Indians refusing to bring him, as they said Piette was the responsible party.

And this man Piette lived to die of pneumonia many years afterward. About thirty years after the death of Davis and Fuller a freshet washed away beneath where their cabin stood and exposed their cache of bullion, their part of the profits from the investment of 10,000\$, and a man new to the camp, and a man who made good use of the treasure, found it. This treasure may have been largely the cause of their death. Who knows? But Nash did not get it, however; nor is there any use to ask me who did, as it is a matter strictly of confidence.

The old Techatticup and Savage mines are silent and have been for years, the habitat of bats, rats and owls; the slopes that yielded up their treasures of millions respond no more to the sound of the hammer and the reverberation of the blast, and the old mill, long since obsolete, is falling to decay, and a deep silence lies over all that once wild and lawless spot. A curse seems upon the place. No man wants it. Yet these mines contain millions of wealth, and their product is estimated at above three millions of dollars.

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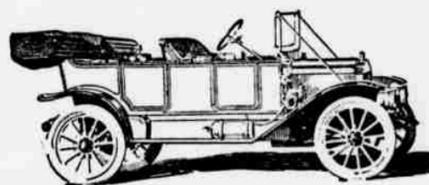
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