

SEPT. 1, 1908

TEN CENTS

H. M. Gibson

INYO MAGAZINE

How 200,000 Acres of Land May Be Turned
Into An Arid Desert by Corporation Greed

"A THEFT IN WATER"
BEGINS IN THIS ISSUE

- Read the Story of a Government Fraud
- Which Outclasses the Oregon Land Frauds

PUBLISHED AT BISHOP, INYO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

The Inyo Magazine

Published twice a month at Bishop, Inyo Co., Cal.

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Application made at the Postoffice at Bishop, California, for admission to the mails as second-class matter.

Subscription Price \$2 a year. Single copies 10 cents.

Advertising rates furnished on application.
Address all applications to THE INYO
MAGAZINE, Bishop, Cal.

VOL. I SEPT. 1, 1908 No. 5

The Hills at Night

Ho! for the hills at night,
Weird in the waning light,
 Ho, for the hills!
Shadows the canyons blight,
Only the peaks are bright,
 Sleeping the rills;
Moonlit, all black and white,
Vague shapes shrink out of sight,
 Gone, the day's ills.

Lost is the thought of care,
Soothed by the balmy air
 At peace I stand.
All Nature bows in prayer
Thanking the god that's there,
 Lord of the land.
From tree and rock and lair
Come dryads, bright and fair;
 Happy, the band.

Dark is the sky, and deep;
Close guard the pine trees keep,
 Murmuring low.
Perfumes of flowers creep,
In bliss my senses steep;
 Heaven is so.
Then, though the world must weep,
I in the hills may sleep,
 Knowing no woe.



A Section of the Great Owens Watershed

A Theft In Water

JUNE,
1903

The cycles of human events are marked with red dates; and in each cycle there is one such date that is larger, more deeply seared—a bright scarlet in its hue. The date most deeply seared into the minds of the people of Inyo is June, 1903. A scarlet date, this, which is turning day by day into a violent vermilion hue; this date of all dates that in the cycle of events in Inyo has its course through the hearts of these people. Under its burning color lies hidden the significance of the Los Angeles Water Theft, and as this significance is coming into the light the color of June, 1903, is coming out with a glare which reveals an honest people's credulity and a greedy people's avarice.

For the man who has never visited the Owens River valley we must write a few introductory words. We must draw back a little curtain which nature has hung about this valley, a curtain that is so fretted with odd conditions and local peculiarities that the best and brightest men of the nation have been unable to see through it. Inyo still apparently belongs to the unexplored land, the great unknown, and though only a few hundred miles removed from Los Angeles, the taxpayers of that city, the voters and the rank and file, have

remained in a benighted condition regarding it, though interested materially to the extent of some \$23,000,000. They have seen their purchase in water quite as clearly as the wise man sees what lies hidden under a millstone. Therefore, that all who read may understand this story of the Los Angeles Water Theft, we shall describe briefly the local conditions in the Owens River valley as they existed in June, 1903. It was in this month that the Reclamation Service came to Inyo to build there a new agricultural empire where 100,000 people could in future generations live in the most glorious climate which the Creator has bestowed upon any section of America.

Inyo's western boundary is up among the clouds. On the high crest of the Sierra range, beginning on the north at the Yosemite National Park and extending south past the summit of Mt. Whitney, this boundary line of Inyo, 150 miles long, cuts a broken and fantastic skyline into the western horizon. The northern boundary is just south of the first standard parallel south of the Mt. Diablo base line, and if it were extended into Nevada would cut the State south of Goldfield. The entire eastern portion of Inyo county, embracing a number of weird valleys, namely, Death Valley, Lost Valley, Saline Valley and the Panamint Valley, is altogether a howling desert wilderness, but so rich in precious metals that its fierceness has been entirely disregarded, and hundreds of bold men, prospectors and miners, are eagerly combating Nature's harshness to wrest from her this wealth. Our story has nothing to do with these sections but is confined to the Owens River valley—a fertile country, abundantly watered by what has been locally known as the Owens Valley watershed. Thus cut off from the rest of the State of California by a bulwark of high and practically impassable mountain ranges, and isolated from the other side by an equally impassable desert, the Owens River valley holds a unique place in the geography of this land, and has been granted advantages and been hampered by disadvantages that are as interesting as they seem peculiar.

The eastern slope of the Sierras which side-lines the Owens River valley differs from the western slope of this range as the side of a building differs from a low-pitched roof. While the western slope extends into the San Joaquin valley over miles and miles of gradually-descending foothills, the eastern slope drops into the Owens River valley with the same sort of abruptness which one would experience in leaping from the top of a skyscraper into the street below. There are no foothills, no easy gradations which break the fall,

and only the deep canyons, through which numerous mountain streams have found their way down falls and cataracts, afford a passageway from top to bottom, or from the bottom up. Granite walls upwards of 10,000 feet above the floor of the valley rise into the altitudes of everlasting snow, and just opposite these walls stands the long, though somewhat lower, range of the White mountains. Between these two ranges, having an average width of 12 miles and a length of some 80 miles, lies the valley of the Owens, the largest river south of the Truckee, which drains the eastern watershed of the Sierra Nevada mountains. This valley begins properly at the Deadman divide, in Mono county, at the north, and extends south to Owens Lake, that vast body of highly saline water, from which a number of excellent grades of soda are being extracted. J. C. Clausen, a Reclamation Service engineer, in a preliminary report on this valley, gives the total area of the Owens River watershed as 2800 square miles, and the area of the valley itself as 400 square miles, or 256,000 acres. Of this acreage 75,000 acres are now under irrigation and cultivation, and 50,000 immediately available which could be irrigated, while an additional 80,000 acres could be reclaimed by a systematic irrigating project, such as the government contemplated when Mr. Clausen was first sent into the valley in June, 1903.

Inyo possesses very few ancient things. **FARMING AND ITS HISTORY.** There are found here a few traces of prehistoric man; there are extant a few legends of the Pah Utes of aboriginal days when this tribe roamed over these wilds, and there remain the weird freaks of Inyo's geological formation. Everything else is modern. Mexican miners came into the Owens River valley and scouted among the adjacent mountains in search of silver and gold, possibly a good many years before the white man set foot in Inyo, and many traces of these early miners still remain. But the white man is of very recent history in here. He first found his way down over Deadman divide in the days of the Comstock excitement, less than half a century ago, and the farmer followed the miner. In many instances, in fact, the miner simply had an experience of falling asleep some fine day as a miner and awakening the next as a farmer. This period of over-night metamorphosis occurred shortly after silver fell in a tumble from its high value of the Virginia City days of its glory and became the pariah of precious metals. It was then that many a miner in Inyo and Mono counties heard the call of the land, laid aside his pick and drill, and took up the spade and plow. Farming was not very profitable in the Owens River valley then, for the markets were all too remote, but mining was a starvation business, while the cattle ranches and the sheep

ranches and the grain ranches at least provided a livelihood, and frequently brought in enough to provide for a rainy day. And besides this, farming was a very pleasant business. The mountains supplied all the water which the land needed. Man had only to exercise a little ingenuity and dig a few ditches to distribute the water over his land. The soil was sandy and very loose, and ditch-digging was not difficult. Thus, from a few isolated stock ranchers, the population increased steadily into small communities, and more land was brought under cultivation until all of the best soil had been reclaimed. A heavy duty was levied upon the streams that came from the mountains, a duty to support and make happy several thousand human beings, these same streams which for centuries had been wasting their energy and precious burden on the arid land of Inyo.

Thus it happened that the Carson & Colorado railroad, built down from Hawthorne, on a narrow-gauge plan, to carry out the silver ore of the Cerro Gordo district, became the highway for a farming community of no mean proportions. The community occupied the entire valley, tilled upwards of 75,000 acres of land, raised annually thousands of cattle, sheep and horses, produced the most remarkable alfalfa ever known to stock raisers, and in time supplied every mining camp in the arid State of Nevada with every sort of farm produce from meat to honey. The creamery business of the Owens River valley was for many years, and still is, one of the chief sources of the people's wealth. The bees, stimulated by the balmy air of Inyo's mountain-desert climate, did a great duty in honey-gathering and worked up such a wonderful product that the expert honey judges at the St. Louis world's fair awarded to it the first prize. One man, venturing farther up into the foothill region of the Sierras, planted grapes and raised such wonderful bunches of Tokays that a few good-sized vineyards were soon laid out. One man undertook to raise poultry and produce eggs on a large scale, and his success prompted another man to invest \$100,000 in a poultry ranch.

The altitude of the valley was too high for oranges and the species of citrus fruit which grow in semi-tropical climates only; but other than these, if there is anything which did not grow and flourish in the Owens River valley the people have failed to discover what it was. And the people themselves prospered without precedent. Their debts diminished, their bank accounts grew. Humble homes gave way to elegant ones, the children were given good education, the young women were afforded the advantage of seminary training secured in the best schools of the kind on the Coast, the young men so inclined were sent to the universities. The sun of prosperity, once it began to shine on the

people of this valley, never set, nor was it obscured for even a day by the clouds of financial and industrial depressions. Even when the rest of the country was groaning under the baneful excitement of panics, and felt gloomy under the depression of hard times, the people of Inyo remained undisturbed in their serene inter-mountain home, unmindful of and unharmed by the disastrous forces of trade which wrecked the fortunes and hopes of thousands less securely situated. This was true because the people of the Owens valley formed an isolated community. They were dependent upon just one thing—*water*—and *this* given freely and in abundance by the high guardians of their western boundary, was the secret of their happiness.

Just as the child becomes careless and even wasteful of the good things of which it has a surfeit, so the people of the Owens valley were less careful and economical of the water which was life to them. They had more than they needed. Hence the system of irrigation which they employed was but a crude one compared to the highly economical systems of the government Reclamation Service. In 1903 the valley had approximately a population of 5,000 people, and these irrigated 75,000 acres of land. They had water for more than 200,000 acres, so why should they stint themselves or build cement-lined canals or expend great sums on storage reservoirs? True, if the valley were to be invaded by an army of homeseekers, the thousands upon thousands who could find land here to reclaim—not large tracts for all these, but enough for each to support a family—then would it become necessary to husband the great water supply, store up the flood waters of the spring and summer, prevent too much seepage, and use again the return waters on the lower areas. Because this was possible and very desirable, the people welcomed the men of the Reclamation Service when these invaded the valley and asked for co-operation in bringing about the great government reclamation project which this service promised. With a view of ascertaining the extent of this project, Mr. J. C. Clausen from August, 1903, to July, 1904, made stream measurements and water observations, from which he determined that in acre-feet (in irrigating, four acre-feet supply one acre of land) the Owens River valley had the following supply of water distributed through its various streams:

Owens River	176,801	acre-feet
Rock Creek	22,593	"
Pine Creek	19,913	"
Bishop Creek	70,025	"
Big Pine Creek	33,686	"
Other streams	64,040	"

Under the present system of irrigation, necessarily a large amount of water flows to waste, going down the Owens river until it finds its way into Owens Lake, that inland Dead Sea of Inyo, where it evaporates or seeps away through the porous lava bottom of the lower end of the valley. It was with a view to saving this waste in water and placing the entire valley under a government project that the Reclamation Service, in the summer of 1903, sent engineers and field experts into this valley to study conditions, make measurements, secure water rights and make a preliminary report on the feasibility of such a project, which was to be executed along the lines of other similar projects which the government was inaugurating in other sections of the West.

In June, 1903, the great Truckee-Carson reclamation project in Nevada was nearing completion. This was one of the very first great irrigation schemes undertaken by the government, and its imminent success was pregnant with great promise. Thousands of people were to benefit from this new departure in empire-building, and hundreds of thousands of acres of a perfectly arid desert were soon to bloom as a garden in the very midst of the great American Sahara. Throughout the land the people were acclaiming the praise due to the men whose ingenuity and ability had made this project possible and a success, and the new sun of prosperity which had suddenly risen in the West was all but proclaimed a deity, a new god of the soil that would lighten the burden of thousands upon thousands of poor people and give homes to many times as many homeless. And it was then that the men in the government Reclamation Service, strong and ambitious in their new triumph over nature, tramped over the vast areas of the Western desert, explored every possible irrigation project, that they might conquer new deserts, and do good to many times as many people as had already benefited from their labors for the good of mankind. It was in June, 1903, that Mr. J. B. Lippincott, supervising engineer for the State of California, detailed Mr. J. C. Clausen, a young engineer and surveyor in the employ of the service, to visit the Owens River valley, make a reconnoissance of the valley, determine the amount of arid land, both public and private, and report upon the possibilities of its reclamation.

Upon this report of Mr. Clausen, and the following recommendation of Mr. Lippincott, the lands lying in Long Valley, Mono county, covering a possible reservoir site, were withdrawn from public entry, for reservoir purposes, and in a short time followed the withdrawal of all public lands in the Owens valley, pending further investigation, subject now only to the homestead law as affected by the Reclamation Act.

Under a heading, "Program for the People," Mr. Clausen reported to his superior, Mr. Lippincott, as follows: "In order that the Reclamation Service can insure an efficient irrigation system it is imperative that it be given control of the total water supply of the valley. The existing private rights must be relinquished, and to accomplish this the people should be required to form an association. This association should carry on negotiations with the separate holdings, formulate a plan of consolidation whereby the private rights pass into the hands of the government, on acceptable terms, so that the laws of the Reclamation Service may be completely unhampered by any existing claims."

The people interested, acting on the advice of the Reclamation Service agents, did relinquish their rights, and laid open the opportunity which a few designing persons had been seeking to gain.

(Editorial Note.—This is the second in a series of ten articles on the Los Angeles Water Deal. The next will tell of the abandonment of the reclamation scheme, and its cause.)



Another View of the Owens River Watershed

Adventures in Prospecting

PART IV.

There are a number of things which I learned during the weeks that followed my adventure at placer mining, and the rude shattering of my dreams of wealth. I had always known that I was sinfully green—a tenderfoot, who really ought not to have been permitted to wander away from his mother's apron strings, as the saying goes, but it fell upon the rude mountains to convince me that experience is the only teacher that is worth having; and in this school the unpardonably ignorant are apt to come to a sudden end in their course of instruction.

While romping around among the very high summits my enthusiasm for prospecting waned considerably, while my vagrant fancy for mountain-climbing was constantly increasing, with the result that I spent most of my time in the pursuit of adventures instead of devoting myself to the quest for gold. My ambition had not faded, nor had my determination to wrest a fortune from these bleak hills diminished, yet my aspirations had wandered farther into the imaginative realms of my mind, while my taste for material enjoyment was growing predominant. I did most of my prospecting at night, while lying awake under the ethereal canopy; and by day, when I should have been at work, I played. Browney seemed to enjoy my system immensely. I cannot for a certainty say that he, too, dreamed at night, but I know for a fact that his days were filled with an endless season of pleasure. He wandered, as I did, just where he liked, and always without the onerous pack, that would lie for days and days in some quiet nook, when camping was particularly luring.

A number of times we moved camp, but our trips were never long, and having found a new field of peaks to climb, a new chain of lakes to explore, or glaciers to wander on, I felt as care-free as a truant schoolboy, while Browney sought out his own haunts among green meadows and fragrant pine groves. Glaciers—those perpetual snow bodies which rest in the ravines of the high Sierras—were my chief delight. At first I merely skipped boulders down over their precipitous sides, but finally I took a fancy to coasting, and why I did not break my neck I cannot explain. Certainly I deserved to, and once I came perilously near to this predicament. I had come that day into a new territory, and finding a particularly long glacier which sloped apparently down the steep mountain side I undertook to explore it from above. The snow, as hard as ice, made poor footing.

but I cut my way down, step by step until by an injudicious bit of recklessness I slipped, and the rest of my journey was very brief. The details of that slide were like a flash-light picture, and when it ended I experienced a vague sort of sensation which was a mixture of a day-dream and a nightmare. All my physical senses were numb, and to make matters worse my ears were suddenly struck by ludicrous appeals made by a strange voice. I was being urged to hurry away from there, and I remember wondering dimly whether the speed with which I had arrived was turned a personal tormentor. I rubbed my eyes. But the ghostly voice still urged me: "Run, please! You're in danger! I'm blasting!"

"Wake up," I said, quite audibly now. "You're dreaming; wake up."

"Indeed, I'm not dreaming. Oh, please come away! I can't leave you here to be blown up all alone."

"Oh, yes! certainly," I said, my mind getting quite clear. "But I can't seem to move. I came too fast, I guess," I explained meekly. How many more silly remarks I might have made will never be known, for my voice was presently—in fact at this precise moment—obliterated from the atmosphere by a sort of violent earthquake, which seemed to have exploded. Yet nothing else happened. Some debris fell all about me—us, I should say—and when the roar had ceased I again found my tongue, quite as glib as before.

"I'll bet you're making a volcano," I said, addressing the dim object that still stood near me.

There was no reply for a few moments, but a cool hand passed over my eyes, and something pressed back my head. Then night suddenly came, and I remembered only a last twinge of regret to think I was so far away from camp.

I presume there is always a morning after. Mine came in due time, and quite alone, without a trail of ghostly and unpleasant reminiscences. I had opened an entirely new book in life, as it were, or, like Bottom, had somehow been translated. But, though newly born, I possessed a mature conception of things. I knew, for instance, that I was lying in a cabin; that the cabin was small, but very comfortable; that my head ached, and that I had a long growth of beard. Turning my head painfully I recognized another inmate of the cabin as a young woman, or a girl, my mind not being able to become clear on this point, but she seemed an agreeable sort of companion, as I soon learned. I had said nothing, but merely looked about; yet she observed my movement, slight as it was, and quickly came to the bunk on which I rested. Her light hands fluttered over my eyes for a moment, as though conjuring up a magic spell, and then a pair of very dark eyes smiled with a sympathetic sort

of smile directly down at me. Her lips moved. "You're getting better. Are you feeling any better?"

The idea of a ventriloquist came into my mind. I could not associate her and the voice together. "Are you a ventriloquist?" I asked.

She shook her head. "I don't know what that is," said the same voice, and again her lips moved. They trembled a little, too. The voice came again. "I'm Jim. It was pretty near all day with you when I first saw you."

"Jim," I mumbled. "Why, you are a girl and you're talking to me." It was all as clear as day now. She laughed. "Of course I'm talking to you, and of course I'm a girl. You stupid fellow!"

That last I thought was unnecessary. And then something else happened. I heard a noise, another strange sound from somewhere, and the girl sprang up and ran to the door. "Oh, daddy, he's come to!" she cried, and then a familiar sort of figure came to where I lay. The figure was not in reality familiar, but it was a man, and the fine distinctions of personality had not yet come back to me.

A few facts concerning my singular experience. My host was Baxter, and Jim was his daughter. They had taken me to their cabin after the accident of the slide and the explosion, and for some days I had shown very few signs of coming back to life. Something had struck me upon the head. But never mind the details about that. Baxter was a miner. He was working a claim in this out-of-the-way place, and Jim—well, Jim helped him. She attended to the cabin, and she helped in other ways too.

It is a sore temptation at this point to digress at some length from the issue of this adventure, while I give the treatise on "Bumps" which I worked out during long, idle hours while lying wide awake on the rough couch which was my bed. But the conclusion of this dissertation must suffice. The bump which I had received had been good for me. In the first place it had brought back my former determination to succeed in my effort to locate wealth in these mountains; it had brought me to the folly of my wayward fancies, and to realize that I must stand against these with greater energy; and, finally, the bump caused me to take a figurative grip on myself, so that in future travels I would not slip, as I had so recently, from the true course of my goal. I thought about all these matters as I watched Jim going noiselessly about the cabin, keeping the place as neat as a pin, preparing the meals and waiting upon her daddy, and upon me too, with a cheerful sort of willingness which made it a real pleasure to ask her to do something.

It was from watching Jim that the old motive which had forced me from the city had revived. For Jim, after all,

was not Jim to me. She was somebody else, somebody quite different, too. Her dark hair was not dark to me, and her black eyes were always as fair as the blue sky which I could see through the cabin door. Only her light hands with their bewitching touch, and her enigmatical smile remained the same, unchanged in the process of constant metamorphosis, the subtle foci of which were located somewhere between my heart and my eyes.

One day she assisted me to walk out into the sunshine, where the bracing mountain air sent my sluggish blood coursing through my veins. We made our way to the "claim," where her father worked alone, taking out the rich ore and washing out the gold by means of a crude crusher and a sluice. It was his property, too, and while the income from it was not great, it easily kept the wolf from the door. Sometimes Jim helped him to sluice the ore, he told me when the girl had gone back to the cabin.

"It's mighty tough on her," he reckoned, "but since her mother left us she turns right in, and I can't stop her."

That had been some three years ago. "It ain't a get-rich-quick game, this mine," he continued in his odd, droll way. "I've been in these here hills since the days of the Comstock, and all I got you can carry down in your pockets."

"Since the Comstock days? Why, that's been over forty years," I said, astounded.

"Prospectin' is queer business, sure. Some strikes it quick and some never finds it, no matter how deservin' or persistent they hunt. Now, when I fust came to this country I was a young feller, 'bout your age, and I'd been brought up on a farm back East. I calculated I'd come out and find a fortune in a few weeks and then go back and git the girl I'd promised to before I left. I figured I'd be back in a year at the longest." The old man ceased for a few moments as though counting back to find how far off he had been in his calculations.

"And how long was it before you got back?" I finally asked.

"Well, it was nigh on to twenty years. Made a start several times, but always something turned up to change matters. Several times I thought I had the goods, too. Made some fine locations, but all of them went up before I could realize on 'em."

There was another long pause, which I was at a loss to interrupt. The story was evidently getting on the old man's nerves. The memories, though old, seemed to him as vivid as of yesterday. Nursed as they were in the long solitude of these hills, they had no doubt become so well preserved, so intimate a part of his everyday existence that the ache of them had in nowise abated, and I wondered why he spoke of them at all.

"No, I never got back to the States," he began abruptly, "'cause my people all died, and her folks' family came West. They moved to Californy, and I met them on this side of the range. That's been about twenty years ago. At first my wife and I lived on the Coast, but I wasn't worth much at anything else, I guess. Anyway we didn't make a great go of our affairs, and after her people died we drifted up here. That's been fifteen years ago. Jim was a year old."

Again the old man stopped, and there really seemed nothing left to tell. He had covered a period of forty years of hopes and disappointments fairly well. My thoughts centered on the girl, and I suspected that his did too.

"She was away for a few years," he suddenly said, interrupting my solemn reflections. "It was 'fore her mother died. We sent her down to get educated. But she came back when Nell took to ailing, and since then she won't leave her daddy. I've tried to get her to go back to the city, but Jim, she's like her mother—never complains, and is just patient with her old daddy."

He stopped again and looked into the mouth of the small tunnel from which he extracted his ore. Our gossip had occupied a longer period than either had imagined, for the sun was already disappearing over the last fringe of mountains west of us, and the cheerful call of Jim came from the cabin, for supper.

(To be continued.)





On the road home.
A farm lane through
a large ranch which
is to be cut up into
small tracts.

The Call of the Soil

The call of the soil is the call to freedom. There are thousands who have been

raised on farms and have heard each day the call of the soil without recognizing it, who will not agree with us; there are other thousands of clerks and small business men who are paying a terrible price for the maintenance of a sorry state of genteel poverty in the cities, who have never heard the witching call of the soil, and who will not agree with us; but these are only two small armies of thousands, these unhappy toil-slaves, who are either too far removed from the soil to hear its call, or too deaf. They form only an army of unfortunates which is diminishing daily, while that other great army of the independent American farmers is growing daily, even as its numerous recruits preen themselves with their new-found, glorious power of freedom. The call of the soil is the call to freedom, and just as this soil which calls is rich or poor, so the freedom that it gives to its lord and master is great or little. For that reason the newest and richest sections of our agricultural country are looked upon as the land of plenty, and any man may come there to find health, wealth and contentment.

From everywhere comes this call of the soil; from the North, the South, and the West; but the call is loudest and most promising in the new sections which have recently been opened by systematic reclamation, and where great systems of irrigation have changed thousands of acres of arid desert lands into fertile farming regions. Such a section is the Owens River valley, once merely a suburb to Death Valley, but now a paradise of homes, where thousands of thrifty farmers have reaped a bountiful reward from the land of plenty.

In the older regime the Owens River valley was farmed on a very extensive basis. Each man's acres were excessively broad, and the land being given up largely to cattle and sheep grazing, the herds and flocks were literally countless in number. The ranchers became very wealthy, but this valley was too rich to be given up long to this wasteful sort of farming. As the population of the valley increased, largely from incoming homeseekers, these large ranches were cut up into smaller ones, and the more extensive system of farming began to give way to the more intensive.

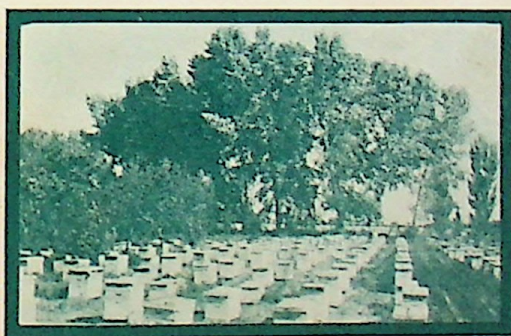
The era of big farms in the Owens River valley is passing away, for the call of the soil is being heard by the man of



A Harvesting Scene on an Inyo Ranch

smaller means, of greater ambitions; the man who wants a home where he may be as free as the air about him. The Owens valley is a desirable place in which to live. It is not only a beautiful place, a place that lures and tempts as no other section can lure and tempt, but it is rich with promises, and the ambitious man with smaller means, the man whose ears are attuned to the subtle call of the soil, is coming in.

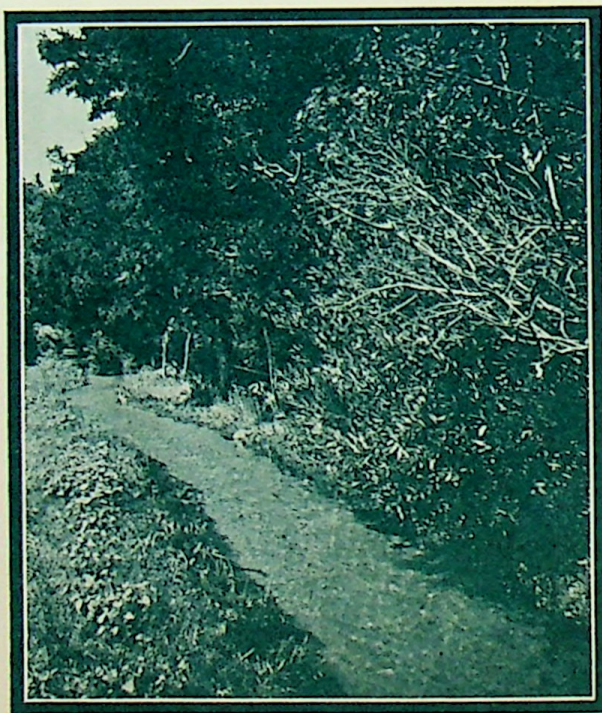
What can he do—this man with a thousand dollars as his sole capital, or a very few thousand, as the case may be? He is devoting himself to intensive farming, he is speeding the period of large ranches and is hastening the coming of the era of small ranches. He purchases a ten or twenty-acre patch of alfalfa land, from which the former owners harvested five and six tons of hay from each acre, and is devoting the whole small farm to fruit and vegetables and poultry. Where the alfalfa farmer made \$50 and \$60 from each acre, the small rancher is taking \$2,000 and \$3,000 from his small tract, enough to pay interest on his in-



An Inyo Apiary

vestment, support his family, keep up a small, though comfortable home, and enjoy himself in the feeling of security and contentment which comes from a growing bank account.

It so happens that the little things which a farm produces are the most profitable. Take poultry as an example. In no region on the face of the globe does poultry grow and produce more prolifically than in the Owens River valley. The climate is ideal. The air, common to the western desert, is perfectly free from disease germs, and all conditions conspire to make this an ideal poultry section. The sandy soil not only produces the most succulent vegetation, but the sharp grit necessary to the health and comfort of the domestic hen, turkey or duck has been supplied by the constant washings of granite disintegrated from the mountains into the valley. At Petaluma the poultrymen are confronted constantly by footrot. No hen has ever been known to have footrot in Inyo. This dangerous disease is entirely unknown; so are most of the other 999 afflictions which are common to poultry in the four corners of the world where the domestic fowl has become indispensable. And there you are. The young fowls grow like weeds; the mature ones lay eggs, or fatten, in a manner that is a con-



An Irrigating Canal—A Full Head of Water

stant surprise to the novice. So much for the production under ideal conditions.

How about the market? When you get your duck it's just as well to have a fire on which to roast him. So far, Nevada has furnished the fire for Inyo's production of poultry. The high-priced mining camps of the Sagebrush State have been a very gratifying source of wealth to the farmer of this valley, and every farmer will say so. Why shouldn't he? His eggs net him above 40 and 50 cents per dozen. His live poultry always finds a ready market and the highest mining-camp prices, and this market constantly calls for more, more, and still more. The Owens River valley cannot begin to supply this one market, and could not if it produced five times as much as it now produces. But Nevada is not the only possible market. The entire State of California furnishes a good market for poultry products. Millions of dollars' worth of poultry and eggs are imported annually by California. The building of the railroad into the valley from the south, which will give direct connections with Los Angeles, will open up a new channel to the very best market, and already the railroad company has made a promise to the incoming poultrymen of a cheap rate out, the same rate which Petaluma has to Los Angeles by water. This, in fact, has sounded the advent of the American chicken in the Owens River valley.

In vegetables and fruit the valley has an equally rich promise for the small farmer. Every sort of fruit except the delicate citrus fruits, grow and bear in unlimited quantity, and the same market that has been crying for more poultry and eggs is fairly begging for fresh vegetables. Yet this most lucrative industry has not so much as been undertaken here. The big farmers are too busy and too rich to bother with these small matters, and the small rancher is just beginning to come in and to see his wonderful opportunities. Bees are another true promise of the soil of Inyo, and likewise grapes, and dairying. Asparagus, crisp and white, asks only to be planted to return an astounding return for the trouble, and so one might say for every product which the small rancher may take up. The mines of Inyo have ever been lauded for their latent millions, but no mine in Inyo is more promising with the rich favors of fortune than is the mine of the soil—the soil that calls to freedom in Inyo; calls more and more alluringly, more insistently to the wage-slaves of our cities whose means are too modest for the great things of life, but whose hearts have been rightly attuned to the call of the soil, and whose ambition it is to have a home and be free.

(In a succeeding number will be told more in detail the methods followed and the great profit which a few are making by intensive farming of small ranches in Inyo.—Editor.)



The Hotel in gala dress, Big Pine.

Big Pine

An Ideal Residence Town

Like a gem newly cut from the crude material from which its kind are made, Big Pine, the town with a future, lies closely snuggled against the breast of the Sierras in the Owens River valley, the most ideally-situated town in the whole county. We say Big Pine is a town with a future, which merely indicates that the town belongs to one of the two classes to which all towns belong—such as have a future, and such as have a history—and of course to the man seeking to make his home somewhere, or seeking for an opportunity in life, the town with a future appeals most strongly. Having thus committed ourselves to an optimistic belief in Big Pine, it will be incumbent to outline briefly, at least, some of the elements which Big Pine possesses and which will enter into the building of a beautiful city, a veritable gem, in the valley of the Owens.

Snuggled close to the breast of the Sierras, Big Pine holds



A side of Main Street, Big Pine.

a most advantageous position in point of altitude, which in the rarified mountain-desert air of Inyo means a great deal to the comfort of her inhabitants. Were the town situated too high on the side of the mountains, its climate, though ideal during the summer months, would be subject to greater extremes in temperature during the winter, while the frequent electric storms which visit the Sierras almost every day during the summer would have their course over it. On the other hand, the low altitude of the Owens River meadows is not blessed with the same balmy mountain air which the areas only a few feet higher possess. The humidity during the summer is a trifle greater, and the temperature is very perceptibly higher, and by an odd arrangement in the air-strata of the mountain-desert land, these lowest areas are the coldest during the winter, excepting of course the extreme high portions of the mountains. It is, however, a physiographical fact, that a certain altitude which is reached by ascending to the highest levels of the valley along the very foot of the Sierras possesses as nearly a perfect atmosphere as may be found, and the people who laid out Big Pine, probably quite unknowingly, were fortunate enough to get into the ideal altitude which in all days to come will remain a great asset for the town.

Some day Big Pine will boast of a great tourist hotel. There can be no doubt of this, for the ideal locations and



The End of Main Street, Big Pine

sites for tourist hotels throughout the country are not nearly equal to the demand for them, and Big Pine has this location. Big Pine is marked by nature as a tourist town. It has the luring mountain scenery; it has the inducements of air and temperature for which sensitive people are ever seeking; it has a sparkling mountain creek, stocked with trout, making its way through the midst of the town; it has a fertile agricultural section surrounding it, where the products of orchard, dairy, vegetable garden, poultry yard and apiary are ready to give up their treasures to the hungry epicure who comes into the appetite-inducing climate of this section; and lastly the shadows of the Palisades that loom over the town are concealing numerous mountain resorts of the near future. The great, mystic glaciers, the numerous ice-bound lakes, and the waterfalls and cataracts of this most interesting group of mountains not only afford the finest sport to the mountain-climber, but hold an almost endless variety of entertainment in adventurous excursions, bewitching scenery and rugged climbing. And the trail to all these wonders of the mountains leads up Big Pine Creek, just as in the near future it will start from the front veranda of a tourist hotel.

All this is of the future, however, and Big Pine with its live population is quite too practical to exist on the hopes of what is to come. Already the town has a number of modern hotels, a dozen up-to-date stores, a postoffice, a newspaper, a bank, an express office, telegraph and telephone connections with the outside world, a modern saw and planing mill, beautiful churches, a modern schoolhouse, a government Indian school, and just about every convenience which people living in a town demand. It has other bene-

factions too which one finds in few other towns anywhere. All of the city lots given up to residences contain one full acre of land. This means that a Big Pine urbanite has his own vegetable garden, his own fruit trees, a poultry yard, possibly a few bee hives, besides a horse and a cow, and all on his own city lot. The land is highly productive, and one acre if properly cared for will produce a surprising amount of good things for the kitchen. All the land is irrigated, and the water therefor comes in abundance from the snows and lakes above the town.

Geographically, Big Pine is located in the center of the agricultural section of the Owens River valley, and a movement to make the town the county seat at the next election has been inaugurated.



A Church at Big Pine



One of the Hoists,
Skidoo Mines.

Inyo Mines

Illustrated

It may be that on the brink of Death Valley even the hopes of a mining camp must ebb away, but if so, they ebb very slowly if they ebb at all, for the camp of Skidoo is now nearly three years old; it is located on the very brink of this weird valley, and its hopes are much brighter today than they have been since it was first discovered. Some meritorious properties and a few plucky men are probably entirely responsible for this, however.

Skidoo lies in the very heart of the Panamint Mountains, and looks into the strange valley with the weird name. But its altitude is high enough so that the horrible heart of the valley below does not inconvenience the inhabitants of Skidoo. The first locations in the camp were made early in 1906 by Matt Hoveck, whose name was given by the government to the town, but whose name, of course, could not stand long against such a hoodoo charmer as "Skidoo." And Skidoo is the name today, instead of Hoveck. John Ramsey and a man named Thompson were among the first discoverers of gold ledges at Skidoo, and Bob Montgomery, of the Montgomery-Shoshone fame, was the first moneyed man to become interested. It has been his purse that has made Skidoo practically all it is today; that has developed the great Skidoo mine, and built the water line over the Panamints. He is said to have expended in all between \$700,000 and \$800,000 on these ventures. The Skidoo mine today has elaborate buildings, a mill, and is one of the steady producers of Inyo county's mines. Leasers have recently been permitted to begin work on this estate.



Buildings of the Skidoo Mines.

THE BLACK CANYON.

An entirely new ore level has been opened up in the Black Canyon mine, which proves up that property more conclusively and richer than any of the previous explorations. This new level was reached through an old shaft sunk in the largest chamber of the tunnel, which was once abandoned. At a depth of some forty feet the entire shaft dropped into ore, which from its very appearance indicated that it was richer than any that had yet been taken from the workings, and when panned gave a string of color in pure gold that proved the remarkable values of the rock.

Black Canyon ore has always panned rather freely, \$20 ore giving a good color, while \$100 ore, of which a considerable quantity has been extracted, pans like a rich placer. The characteristic of this gold is its fine quality, which has convinced the owners that it is a cyaniding proposition. With this in mind, a test run was made early in August by Strong & Sherwin, assayers and mining engineers, which gave the following results:

Strong & Sherwin report as follows to Col. Stovall under date of August 11th:

We have made a thorough test of the ore samples that you sent us from the dump of the Black Canyon mine to determine its adaptability for treatment by the cyanide method, and respectfully submit the following report:

The samples furnished consisted of a 25-pound sack for laboratory tests, and later of a 100-pound lot for a test run. The details of the tests are attached, and from their results we can make the following statements:

The ore is very soft, consisting principally of oxide of iron, and is quite porous. The gold is very finely divided, and is contained principally in a fine dust, filling the pores and cavities in the gangue. This makes an ideal ore for percolation treatment with cyanide solution, if due precautions are taken in preparing the ore for the leaching vats. The porous character of the ore permits of coarse crushing, still allowing the solutions to reach practically all the particles of gold. Samples crushed to pass through a quarter-inch screen gave very good results. The ore should not be crushed finer than this, as the tests show that the ore slimes enough with this crushing to make the final washing slow. It will take five or six days to leach a vat of this coarse crushed ore, although the gold is readily dissolved in 48 hours. Any method of wet crushing would result in slimes, impossible to work by the percolation method of cyanide treatment. As the gold is very fine and flaky, it will not be necessary to amalgamate any of it, and the ore can be dry crushed and treated direct with the cyanide solution.

A solution containing five pounds of cyanide to a ton of water gives the best results; a stronger solution increases the loss of

cyanide, and weaker decreases the extraction, without proportional results. While the ore gives a very slight test of acidity, the loss of cyanide during treatment was considerably lessened by the addition of lime. Lime will be required in the proportion of six pounds per ton of ore treated.

The final run of 100 pounds of ore was treated by the method above outlined and gave very good results. The loss of cyanide was at the rate of one and one-half tons of ore treated. Percolation, while slow, was satisfactory; solution values were normal, and precipitation in the zinc boxes was perfect, giving high-grade slimes and clean bullion.

The best plant to treat this ore is a dry-crushing outfit and a set of six leaching vats, with their necessary fixtures. This very simple plant will extract 85 per cent of the assay value of the ore, at a cost of 75 cents per ton of ore for chemicals. Cost of labor, power, etc., would depend on the size of the plant installed.

A. M. STRONG,

B. E. SHERWIN.

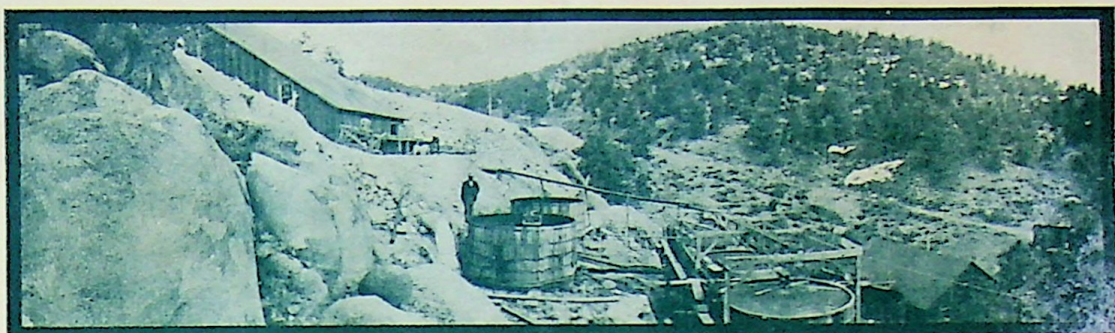
BISHOP CREEK MINE.

Unceasing activity at the Bishop Creek estate, that remarkable gold prospect in the Sierras, which is being developed with socialistic dollars by Gaylord Wilshire, has caused the most widespread enthusiasm among the stockholders of these shares, and stiffened up the market in these securities most remarkably. A huge body of good ore, said to run better than \$50 per ton, was cut by the diamond drill at a depth of about 500 feet, and during the visit of Mr. Wilshire himself, who, with his family, summered on the estate. A shaft is being forced down as rapidly as men and machinery can do the work, and the prospect for the immediate opening up of this great gold prospect appears imminent, judging from the reports of Mr. Wilshire and his superintendent.

A recent report on Wall Street had it that \$12,400,000 of the Bishop Creek stocks were about to be canceled, leaving only \$12,600,000 of it issued of the \$25,000,000 for which it was originally incorporated. The greatest call for these securities, which have a par value of \$5, is said to be from London, where Wilshire's promotions have considerable prestige. Local mining interests are greatly interested in the success of the Bishop Creek mine, since it will attract greater attention to the Inyo county mineral deposits than any one other development.

X-RAY MINE.

Messrs. French and Williams of this town have taken a bond of the X-Ray group of claims, owned by Dr. Skilling, and situated in Redding Canyon in the White Mountains. The consideration is kept secret, but the prospect has very promising indications of being a good mine. The workings adjoin the Old Georgia mine, and a tunnel has been driven 110 feet, which shows 3 feet of ore in its



A Cyaniding Plant, Casa Diablo Mill

face. The rock is a rich gold sulphide. The tunnel is so trained that it will cut into the workings of the Old Georgia mine. The men holding the bond have set several shifts of men at work on development and in taking out ore from the tunnel.

SOUTHERN BELLE MINES.

Despite the financial depression which has made it extremely difficult for mining prospects to interest additional capital for development work, the Southern Belle Mines Co. has maintained active operations all summer, and made its regular clean-up in its own mill. This mine is managed by its president, Gotlieb Gall, who has been in active charge of the work all summer. The Southern Belle Mines property is not in any sense a prospect, but an old mine, which has again been opened up, and in connection with its development work, exploring new ore bodies, the old ledges which remained untouched by the Mexican miners, who first opened up this property, have been yielding their precious material regularly to be turned into bullion. The company is planning considerable extension in its workings, which it hopes to increase as soon as the improvement in the country's financial market warrants.

KILLIAN MINING COMPANY.

These claims are located near Fohrman, 20 miles north of Bishop, and are being developed by the Killian Mining Company, the head offices of which are at Richmond, Ind., most of the officers being eastern people. Fifteen men have been employed on the property all summer; a shaft is being sunk as fast as three shifts can do the work, and shops and company buildings to house the miners are being put up. The company is proceeding earnestly with the work of development. L. B. Killian is superintendent. The officers are: President, L. M. Jones; vice-president, J. H. Spekenhier; secretary and treasurer, Alonzo Marshall. The directors are L. M. Jones, Steven M. Stratton, Jr., Alonzo Marshall, James Heath, J. H. Spekenhier, H. L. Ashley and L. B. Killian. The company is incorporated for \$1,500,000.

ALTA VISTA.

This property is nothing if not appropriately named. The claims are located near the top of White Mountain, 12,000 feet above sea level, and are reached, not by a balloon, as one would naturally infer, but by trail up Piute Canyon. Goldfield promoters and eastern capital are behind the proposition. John Austad has secured the sole ownership, having purchased the interests of R. P. Shive and others.

CHRYSTOPOLIS.

Considerable secrecy is being maintained by the men who have bonded this property. Smith, Lochrie and Black are working the property, and taking out ore that is good shipping dope, going better than 15 per cent in copper.

THE EVA BELLE.

A new vein has been tapped in this property which gave assay returns of \$150 in gold and copper. The specimen rock was brought in by J. H. McMillan. The property is a shipper.

GUNSIGHT IN ORE.

The discovery of the rich ledge on the 600-foot level in the Gunsight mine, one of the workings of the great Tecopa property, in the southern end of this county, has caused quite a stir in the lead-mining world. The Old Tecopa is one of the greatest lead mines of the west, and has given up fabulous amounts of this ore and silver, in which the galena of the Tecopa is very rich.

Some time ago, however, during exploration work, the famous ledge of the Gunsight mine disappeared, and the management was under apprehension that it had pinched out. Its recovery on the deep level lays these fears at rest, and adds materially to the value of the whole mine.

Operations are being pushed at the mine, the company, under the management of J. H. Lester, employing 50 men, and shipping about 50 tons of ore daily to the smelter at Salt Lake City. A big concentrating plant is being planned for the first of the year. Under the present management the ore has to be hauled some miles to the Tecopa Siding on the T. & T. Railroad.

KEANE WONDER BUSY.

The excessively high temperature in the Keane Wonder district, which happens to be uncomfortably near Death Valley—in fact, almost in this valley—has hampered greatly the production of the Keane Wonder mine and mill, but the management estimates that the output for August will be \$24,000. The two most recent clean-ups were for \$13,000 and \$11,000 each, the gold bars being shipped to the mint at Carson. To make the bar of the smaller size it required over 700 ounces troy pure gold, which assayed about \$17 per ounce, and this bar was the result of a 15 days' run

at the mill. One difficulty during the hot weather has been to keep the mill running, for lack of water, but this trouble has now been remedied. The Keane Wonder is undoubtedly the largest producer in Inyo county today.

GREENWATER.

Reports have reached this office from R. J. Fairbanks, who has a mercantile business at Greenwater, stating that the work of cross-cutting in the Queen shaft of the Greenwater Death Valley Company and sinking in the Furnace Creek mine is proceeding without interruption. Both companies have great faith in the success of their enterprise, and hope to locate the commercial copper deposit which must underlie that region.

W. J. Casey, superintendent of the Furnace Creek mine, was in Rhyolite recently purchasing a carload of lumber for shipment to the company's property at Furnace. He stated that the shaft was down 700 feet, and that his company would sink to 1500. He also stated that the Greenwater Death Valley Company was cross-cutting in the Queen shaft at the 500-foot level, as well as the 1000-foot level, and that the vein at the lower level improved with every foot of work as the drift east was pushed forward.

LEE'S CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

The camp of Lee, which lies in the Funeral range, on the east side of Death Valley, but still in Inyo county, is giving a good many signs of life, one of the most marked being the organization of a Board of Trade for the purpose of furthering the interests of that district. B. L. Wheeler has been made president of this organization, and Claude Kincaid secretary.

A strike has been reported from the Little Lee group, owned by W. C. Rice, and located in this district. The find was made at the 45-foot level on an incline shaft, and the values were found to be high in lead, silver and copper. It is one of the most important finds yet made in this section. Rice is also interested in the California-Bullfrog property at Lee, which has gold ore that is said to resemble very nearly the ore found on the Mother Lode in this state. A tunnel over 500 feet deep has been driven into their property.



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Just as there are people and other people
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View of portion of Bishop, in Owens Valley, at top of Inyo County, California.
(Looking west toward Sierras.) Photo by P. G. Bentley, Bishop

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