

In New York

Aug 20 1939
Father Crowley Featured
In Sun Article

Editor's Note—Those who heard Father John J. Crowley's five minute talk on the radio last Friday night, will be interested in the following column article about the Padre, which appeared in the New York Sun, issue of Saturday, Aug. 19. In his radio address from NBC studios in New York, he commented upon his local parish, the fact that it is the largest in the United States, and he spoke of his plans for construction of the Death Valley Chapel. The Sun article follows.

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The Padre of Death Valley is in New York for his first visit to the city in twenty years and is spending a certain amount of his time wishing that he had the more comfortable 120 degrees of that valley rather than the humid 80's of Manhattan.

He was standing in the window of what is not an uncomfortable place in midsummer, the office of his brother, Francis M. Crowley, dean of the education department

of Fordham University, on the eighth floor of the Woolworth Building. But he mopped his forehead, heavily beaded with perspiration, and smiled ruefully: "Death Valley was never like this."

The Padre—that is what everybody in his big parish calls him—is the Rev. John J. Crowley, who, since 1919, except for five years when he was detailed as secretary to his bishop, has been the priest of Inyo County, which embraces a large part of southeastern California.

Parish of Vast Extent

His is a parish that covers 10,000 square miles but has a population of less than one person to each of those miles. It takes in the highest and lowest points in the United States. From his study window he can look at Mt. Whitney, highest of the Sierras, and to reach one of his churches he travels regularly through Death Valley, the lowest point on the continent.

"I have said mass at both places," he said. "To get to the top of Mt. Whitney I had to travel by mule, but the trip into the valley was made easily by automobile. Since it has become a national preserve there are good roads and lots of travel. In July, 13,000 motorists went through, most of them just wanting to say that they had been in Death Valley in summer."

It still is not safe to go off of the beaten track, Father Crowley said. Only recently a man died of thirst after having gotten lost not far from the main road. It is also comparatively primitive, with prospectors and their burros going out into the hills in search of gold just as they have been doing for decades.

Place of Contrasts

Father Crowley's parish is indeed a place of contrasts. In addition to the highest and lowest points in California it has its wettest and driest. Death Valley, of course, is the latter, but it also embraces Owens Valley from which Los Angeles draws its water. The conflict of a few years ago, in which aqueducts were dynamited, has been settled through amicable agreement between the city and the valley residents.

In his big parish, Father Crowley has three churches, one at Lone Pine, where he lives, and the others at Bishop and Keeler. In addition there are two large CCC camps whose boys are working in the Death Valley Park.

The Padre admitted that while Death Valley is scenically beauti-

ful it is the presence of Death Valley Scotty that seems to attract most of the tourists. He laughed, "They all want to know where Scotty lives and he is still king of the roost. Out there we are somewhat skeptical about that mysterious mine from which Scotty draws his gold. But he is a great character and that castle, like something out of Arabian Nights, is fantastic."

Scotty's 'Hooey House'

"Scotty himself calls it his 'Hooey House.' He lives in a little place about three miles down the valley where he does his own cooking and entertains his own friends. He is a marvelous cook. Among other things he preserves the figs grown on his ranch at the edge of the valley."

Like most of the territory in the southern part of California, this wild parish of Father Crowley's has become movie conscious. That is partly because Lone Pine has been made the headquarters for location parties on many of the big film epics such as "Lives of the Bengal Lancers," "Gunga Din" and many westerns. He said "The Sierras in the background are like the Himalayas, and the Alabama Hills in the foreground provide the unusual rock formations that do so well as settings for fighting in the passes."

The cowboys of the section have formed a riders' guild that can provide movie directors with any required number of skilled horsemen to be put into cavalry uniforms or used as cowboys.

"Donkey Serenade" Recalled

Father Crowley laughingly recalled that "The Donkey Serenade," which became so popular, was first heard in the kitchen of his home. He explained, "There was no suitable room at the hotel to test out the recordings so the film people asked to rent my kitchen. Those who were listening outside were the first to hear Alan Jones and Jeanette McDonald sing that song."

New York, it seems to the Padre after an absence of 20 years, has made some great strides but none of them so great as the great network of parkways which now surround the city. He had driven from his brother's home in New Rochelle down to Jones Beach, and was greatly impressed by the highway bridges over which he traveled as well as that resort itself.

"It made me say, 'Thank God for men of vision,'" he said. "Of course a big city like New York cannot have national parks, but those parkways come as close to it as one could ask. It took vision, a building for future generations, to lay out and construct that parkway system and is something for which every New Yorker could be profoundly thankful."

Radio Helps Loneliness

Asked if he did not sometimes long for the cities and the opportunities they provide, Father Crowley said: "Only once in a while when I read of a beautiful opera, a big concert or some striking pageant. I should like to see those. But, of course, the radio helps offset that to some degree."

"I should also like a great opportunity to meet people interested in literature, art and things of that sort. Most of our folk are too hard working or lack sufficient background for arts and letters. I have a taste for writing and do columnizing for our local newspapers, trying to preserve in print some of the unusual characters one comes across."

"But I am very happy where I am now—where all the relationships are sincere, where it is man to man in everything. I don't know that people are any more religious, especially in church observance, but I do know that in all my years dealing with these men and women who still essentially are pioneers, I have never encountered an atheist."

Padre of the Desert, the Very Rev. Monsignor John J. Crowley, pastor of Lone Pine, who died in an automobile accident Sunday morning as he was hurrying back to his parish after an errand of mercy. This picture of him in the clothes he wore in his Death Valley country he turned in to the *Register* office less than 12 hours before his death, saying it was his favorite. His death ends the appearance of the widely read column, "Sage and Tumbleweed," for the real Inyokel was the beloved Monsignor.

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The Desert Padre

Dedicated to Father John J. Crowley and Reprinted
from Our Issue of May 5, 1939

Some men long for the cities crowds,
And some for the pagan land,
And some would toil in the wilderness
Where the heart is allied with the hand.
One such man came to the choice of roads,
And he chose a forbidding field.
His only arms was a friendly heart,
And the love of God was his shield.

He dwells where the far flung Sierra
Looks down on a land of death,
He knows the chill of the lofty peaks
And the heat of the desert's breath.
To mankind in pain, though the storm winds
howl
Intrepid he goes to their side,
Though weary and worn will he bring them
hope,
In whose breasts all hope has died.

Men call him the desert padre,
As he carries his message of love;
And he seems to have learned from the silences
And the vast star-decked Heavens above.
In his presence men feel only reverence
Though he speaks with a common touch;
His praises are free as his reprimands
And he never demands too much.

His mountains have taught him a steadiness,
His desert has drilled him in peace;
Sunrise have pictured glories of God
And the sunsets, divine surcease.
And we who stand on the outer edge
Of his all enveloping love;
May learn just a bit from this desert priest
Of the strength he draws from above.

And we'll point to him as the years roll by,
When we write with a failing pen;
As one who walked in the steps of Christ,
And loved all of his fellow men.
And his life shall stand as a monument
By the trails that his feet have trod,
For we know that this padre of desert wastes
Shall sit close to the throne of God.

—By D. S. Bromley, Bishop, Calif.

Sage and Tumbleweed

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The sage still sends its spicy breath
Across the rolling dune,
The tumbleweed goes rolling on
Beneath the silver moon.
The land that knew his kindly tread
Still lies unmarred by change;
But he is gone from mortal sight,
O'er other hills to range.

The dwellers of his parish wide
Shall no more hear his voice,
His merry quips shall no more ring
And make our hearts rejoice.
His car shall no more follow trails
So dim they're scarcely seen;
Nor questing lights that herald him
Shall bring one peace serene.

His words that weekly from this
space
Came humorous or grave,
No more shall brighten tiring eyes
And new hope bring the brave.
The pine-clad slopes shall miss his
step,
The desert skies shall weep;
For he has gone to his reward
And last eternal sleep.

The day is done, the book is closed,
Goodbyes are said to friends;
And at the bottom of the page
The pen has writ, "the end."
And when on Inyo county hills
There breaks another dawn,
The sage shall breathe its spicy
breath
And tumble weeds roll on.

—D. S. BROMLEY.

The Shepherd Of The Sage

BY CURLEY FLETCHER

His kindly voice forever silenced, his gentle hand forever stilled, the Shepherd of the Sage has vanished into the opaque mists of that horizon which leads through unsolved labyrinths to Infinity. And we desert dwellers will miss him. But, even as you and I, Father Crowley was mortal. And yet, with his quick transition into his new state of immortality, I know he will also remain immortal in the memories of those who knew, trusted and loved him. Yes, truly, he was the Shepherd of the Sage—and he passed this way. For that reason we should be grateful. Because of his passing to and fro among us, I believe we are better men and women.

Father Crowley's patient tolerance and kindly, generous code seemed to favor no especial sect nor creed. He recognized but did not condone the narrow line of demarcation between Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist or skeptic. His iridescent personality shown alike on the disheveled derelict of the desert alleyway, and the righteous piety of the Protestant Pulpit; both envy and jealousy were foreign to his makeup.

No, indeed, to him mankind was made up of one great clan of kindred spirits in which the sundred sects, with their irrespressable confutations would ultimately eventuate in some common doctrine that would bring peace and contentment to posterity and a just reward to The Trinity to Whom he had dedicated a lifetime of celibacy.

Greater love than this hath no mortal man. And no greater demonstration of such love and devotion to his fellows has been more courageously exemplified since the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Those fortunates among us who were fortunate enough to have basked in the incandescent radiance of his effervescent goodwill cannot but be better men and women for having done so. Unfortunately I am not one of these. You see, I never met Father Crowley. And I am poorer, indeed, because of my negligence, for I had several opportunities to do so. What I know of him I learned from those who knew and loved him; those who know of his energetic and untiring efforts to shepherd his far-scattered flock into the Folds of his Faith, and my regrets are in vain.

Procrastination is the sire of disappointments. I temporized. Now it is too late to meet him here. But, great mediator that he was here on earth, perhaps he may intercede for me when at last Gabriel's Trumpet echoes in my dying ears.

For it seems to me that, since his passing, the stonestrone scarps and snow clad peaks of the Sierras have become more somber and silent than is their custom, and the somnolent buttes of Death Valley have assumed a more sullen pose. Perhaps they, too, are missing his benign influence.

Could it be that the primeval Sierras had counted on his mediations to redirect their plentious, life-giving waters back to the arid wastes of that little Garden of Eden so recently destroyed? And, perhaps, the grim desert, steeped in eternal starvation, had hoped through him to eradicate some of its stark, primitive desolation. They could not doubt he had loved them, for he had spent many years in profound meditation in their solitudes. Who knows? Perhaps they too, had learned to love him.

Yes, Inyo will miss Father Crowley. But all too soon the poignant pain of his passing will be alleviated by our innate capacity to forget. Yet I doubt that his influence will be quickly forgotten. And it seems to me that it will not be easy to forget his benign smile and radiant tolerance. Although he has gone to a greater reward he has left to posterity an eternal token of his esteem—the memory of his irrefutable justice and goodwill towards all mankind, irrespective of code, creed, tenet, sect or doctrine. He denied no man the inherent right to analyze and believe as he himself saw fit, nor the privilege of mapping his own destiny. Few if any of us can justly claim to have attained equal tolerance.

Not by his own choosing, but because of the will of the Master whom he had served so well, our incomparable Shepherd of the Sage has left his flock to forage for themselves. But ere he departed he led them to the gates of a greater understanding and his gentle influence remains. Should we forget?

No, a thousand times, no. And perhaps, some day, where the highway he so often traversed winds over the summit of the stratified Panamints or pigmented Argus Range, some loving hand will erect a stone familiar to Father Crowley and inscribe thereon as a token to his memory these simple words: "HE PASSED THIS WAY."



Sage and Tumbleweed

By INYOKEL

EDITOR'S NOTE—Last Saturday night, on his way home from attending the funeral of Sister Anna in San Francisco, Father Crowley, contributor of this popular and widely read column, stopped long enough at Fresno to write this, his last contribution to valley newspapers and the Catholic Register. We are told that he spent much more time than usual, three hours in all, writing and rewriting this beautiful piece of prose about a dear friend of his and his family. Copies of the column were found among his effects at the scene of the crash. In the death of Father Crowley we have lost a beloved friend and contributor.

Correction: The "Death Valley Days" broadcast of the story of the padre and Steve Esteves and the All Souls Chapel plans—will not be broadcast in the East on Good Friday. The Eastern broadcast over the NBC system will be given on Holy Saturday evening, March 23, at 9:30, E.S.T. The Western broadcast will be heard, as announced here last week, on Good Friday evening at 8:30 P.S.T. And the padre requests me to assure some inquirers that he is not leaving home for the occasion, and that any voice pretending to be his and originating in Radio City will be purely coincidental, with no other resemblance to his past or present than that intended. He does hope, though, that it will help his future, at least as far as building the Death Valley Chapel is concerned.

Sister Anna went out the front door of the Motherhouse of the Holy Family Sisters last week.

Right down the terraza steps of the convent at Hayes and Fillmore in San Francisco she went, and into the waiting car. In all the years that we had known Sister Anna we could not recall her having used the main entrance to the Sisters' home, not since she had rung the door bell there three decades ago, when she was Helen Chambers, and said that she had come to stay. From that hour, she set out to arrange the flowers on the Cathedral altar, or to teach the poor at All Hallows, or to instruct the rich little Tobins and the fabulously wealthy Clarks at Burlingame and San Mateo, or even when she embarked to open the first convent of her community in the vale of Saint Joachim: on all those days

she had slipped out the basement door to Fillmore with her companion, a pair of shadows gliding through the city's maze, silent and unnoticed patches of darkness flitting across the sunny hills. But today she went down the front steps before all those people who stood aside to let her pass. Archbishop Mitty stepped back, and the royal-robed Monsignori. The padres bowed as she passed by, and so did her Sisters; bending over their lighted tapers. The bankers and the poor waited until she had gone ahead before they fell in step behind her, and State Relief Administrator Walter Chambers and Ed and Bob permitted their little big sister to precede them. For Sister Anna was dead.

If you knew Sister Anna you would have a hard time thinking her dead. If ever God put into the heart of one who was entitled to lilies on her black coffin more energy and exuberant joy of living than He had put into the making of this little nun He must have vacuum-sealed her to prevent an explosion. For with Anna to think was to do, and no task that spelled greater glory for the Master ever served as more than a challenge to her flashing intellect, impetuous prayer and tireless feet. She belonged in the reception rooms of the wealthy, and she begged shamelessly for the poor; she never forgot a baby's birthday, and dared the stagehand's union to charge her full wages for a benefit for her Sisters; because of her father's prestige she had a pass on every railroad in America and spent most of her days walking the hot pavements and climbing to dingy tenements in search of souls; she bore beneath her cloak her market basket laden with day-old bread donated by the bakery and laid it aside at home to play the organ and sing a faultless hymn for imprisoned Lord. It was this vibrant creature that the Creator, stroke by stroke, reduced to utter helplessness—first feet and hands, then speech and sight, and at the last He placed His finger on her warm heart and stilled it, releasing her straining soul for its flight into His arms. For Sister Anna is not dead.

The world would have called her helpless as she lay there during the first months of her illness, squeezing a rubber ball in her paralyzed hand or fingering a toy piano, battling to regain a moiety of external value to her Sisters. The world would not have understood her laughter then, not her refusal to discuss her plight. "Useless," the world would have whispered as she lay inert after her second attack, patient, smiling, waiting. Perhaps she remembered Christ's prophecy to Peter of the death the Prince of the Apostles had in store? "When thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself,

and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And when He had said this He saith to him, 'Come, follow Me.' " But the world would not have understood that either. "Useless," the world—which is you and I—would say to all that Sister Anna stood for, suffered and died for. The world could not understand Christ, and put Him to death 1940 years ago today. How can it be any

pected that the world would evaluate Sister Anna's life as anyhow useful? "If they do these things in the green wood, what will they do in the dry?" Helen Chambers' career is no more hidden from the eyes of men now that her soul has gone to its Maker and her body's bivouac is marked by just another cross in the row of Sisters left by the Reaper in Holy Cross Cemetery than it was hidden during the days when she was just another black-frocked gleaner along the King's Highway. One must have a little light from eternity to see, and choose, and follow the better part.

A group of priests stood by Sister Anna's open grave and sang the Cantic of Zachary, asking God to direct her "feet into the way of peace." There were elderly Monsignori who had known her as a child, and pastors who had leaned upon her for the instruction of their flock. There were young priests who had found in her an understanding friend in vacations during student days, when she had smuggled cake and candy to them in reward for their assistance at summer school. I hope she saw there Father Harry Clinch and Father Fred Crowley, who used to serve Mass at the convent for the padre in his Fresno days. And that she was laughing in heaven as she did that morning when the two met the padre at the convent gate and pestered him with some new devilment which he suffered without comment and asked them to jump on the running board of his car for the ride to the building. With them safely aboard he drove straight across the lawn through the revolving sprinklers, thoroughly wetting the future priests in their nether hemispheres. Are you chuckling in heaven, Sister Anna, as you did at Mass when the two cassockless acolytes bent over at the Confiteor and your eagle eyes beheld their sopping seats? That is why they were singing at your grave, I am sure—because they found in you how to serve the Lord with gladness, and that candy and cake and devilment and laughter leave only bitterness unless they are enjoyed along the Way of the Cross.

(Reprinted from the issue of
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"There goes Annie," I mused, observing the stooped figure of the little old lady outlined in the church doorway. The padre looked up from his writing and smiled. He always smiled when he saw Annie Romero, whether her bent shoulders matched the curve of Whitney's summit as she bobbed her head in a mock serious castigation of Aunt Elsa after Mass or whether she plodded her lonely mile from home to town, her basket drawn to her side. For to the padre Annie spelled all that he could ask for in fidelity to the faith of her fathers, plus all that was noblest in the story of Lone Pine, the Pueblo de las Uvas. If her feeble feet were still set down with a decision that indicated that they had not been accustomed to being budged, and if her advice to the younger generation, from six to 60, came forth with the rattle of a machine gun and the authority of royalty, the padre grinned and whispered admiringly, "I'd like to have known her in her prime!" If his dog, Tray, comes home with his ears drooping, his tail hidden beneath his belly, and bearing the general look of a meat roll, the pastor knows that the terrier has been caught chasing Annie's hens and has been peppered with a few loads of impeccable Spanish, descriptive small shot by a lady who used to teach Spanish in an old Spanish town. And, if the padre turns to give the congregation the Benediction at Mass and glimpses a sour-faced 13-year-old lassie, he guesses that she has just received a poke in the back from the apparently absorbed duenna who refused to let her stay seated during the blessing. I often think the padre secretly approves of Annie's doings. May God forgive me for talking about a priest, but I can't help wondering whether some day he is not going to shout, "Bravo!" when Annie pins a squirming urchin to the pew during the sermon.

Yet Annie was married before the justice of the peace! When I remarked on this fall from grace one day to the padre, I learned some theology. "What would you have done?" he demanded. "A priest used to visit Inyo about once in ten years when Annie came to Lone Pine from San Jose in 1880. She and her mother made the journey in a two-horse wagon driven by Santos Ramirez. Remember Santos? Half blind, he had no difficulty, for the horses knew the way, and no one could miss the ruts. Annie's father had been in Lone Pine for three years previously, in fact was notary and justice of the peace up at Cerro Gordo. When she met Romero priests were coming a trifle oftener, sometimes once a year, but with no certainty. So marriages, when they were celebrated at all, usually took place before

the judge, and the priest fixed things up when he appeared. Annie and her spouse actually drove to Santa Paula later to have their union blessed. Did you know, Inyokel, that the Church permits marriages before two witnesses even without the presence of a priest under such circumstances?" He was taking Annie's part again.

Mary Austin has told in her "Land of Little Rain" how the Catholic faith was kept alive in Lone Pine at the close of the 19th century. Those who knew her have no difficulty in recognizing "Old Lady Arambula" in Dona Inez, whom the novelist pictures as gathering young and old at her dwelling and leading them in prayers and devotions suited to the time, before an improvised altar or shrine. There the children were prepared for First Communion against the coming of Father Bannon or another missionary from Los Angeles or Visalia. There the older boys and men knelt in the garden when the crowd overflowed the parlor, and Annie, because of her clear enunciation and special gift for language, read from a prayerbook or led in the litany. When the priest came they set up an altar in one of the saloons, either Fuentes' or Carrasco's, or in Palmer's dance hall. Once on a memorable day, when Bishop Montgomery visited Inyo, they had Confirmation in the town hall behind the Chinaman's, followed by a big dinner beneath the trees.

To Mrs. Arambula, Lone Pine owes the little church that serves her great-grandchildren today, for not only by her keeping alive the spark of faith but by her leadership in raising funds for the building did it ever come into existence, long years after her death. Everyone attended the bazaars conducted for the purpose, non-Catholics as well as the children of Old Mexico. Of course when the Protestants ran an affair the Catholics all turned out, too. Annie once counted as a pupil in Spanish the Methodist minister, "a big man, but not much at Spanish," she says. She also recalls taking the part of a widow in the play the natives put on for the church fund in Palmer's hall, which stood on the site of the present Standard service station. The performance was in Spanish, of course, and proved profitable. The name has been forgotten and the lines, but Annie does recall that her hair at that time was golden and came to her knees. Which undoubtedly contributed no little to the success of the performance, and eventually to the coming of Santa Rosa church.

Annie has never seen Bishop, 60 miles to the north of us, nor Big Pine, much nearer. Independence she has visited twice, each time with her father. Darwin she knows only by repute and from the stories told her by Ned Reddy's wife, who became her neighbor in Lone Pine. Yet the canons of Beveridge and the Keynote and the famous Cerro Gordo she knew well, for there the men worked, thence Lone Pine drew its livelihood in those mining days. Her world was no smaller than that of those around her, and she looked up at the same snow-capped wall of the Sierra then as now, bent over more beautiful roses, danced to livelier tunes, and found plenty of time for laughter and reason to laugh. Her loom stands idle most of the time now, but, when she does sit down to weave again in the twilight, what dreams and memories she must wrap in the woof as she shuttles it across the warp of the years! Only her cat, who knows but Spanish and cannot hear that for the ticks in his bedraggled ears, is there for company, but Annie is not alone. She walks again the river to fish for catfish with Carmelita or Catalina. Or she is reading the story of the Passion to the boys kneeling among Old Lady Arambula's lilacs. Or, as she hearkens to the call of the bell for Lenten devotions and she slips on her coat and hat and begins her measured way to church, she is back in the hall above Palmer's saloon playing the widow for the chapel that was to be, that night when Lone Pine staged the great Spanish drama, and Annie let down her hair.



Sage
and
Tumbleweed

By INYOKEL

If I were a radio script writer, or a penner of "short shorts" for the weeklies, I would buy me a high-wheeled jalopy and drive up every canyon in the Sierra, the Panamints and a hundred other western ranges. Then at night, by a greasewood blaze in the lee of a water-worn cliff, or in the amber glow of a prospector's kerosene lamp I would count the day's bag. Never would I want for grist for the printer's mill, for these lonely defiles truly hold "sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in every thing." If no human footfall echoes from the overhanging walls there will be an abandoned tunnel, a vestige of a shack, a petroglyph or a kit fox. If no rusting shovel records the works of man the striated mountain face will mark the moving finger of God. Come all ye of the typewriter—who look in vain for a harvest on the whited plain of curling paper—come to the silent streets of the mountains for your drama. In this abode of peace you can pluck throbbing tales, literally, from the canyon's mouth.

Take Darwin Falls, for example, that freak of nature in the heart of the desert which local admirers are endeavoring to have incorporated in the State Park system. That its name should immortalize Dr. Darwin French and the party he organized in 1860 to come here in search of the Lost Gunsight Mine is not extraordinary. It is worth writing though that one of the additional attractions of the area is the inscription of two members of that party, Bailey and Hitchens, upon the walls of the wash. The Gunsight was never found, but its seekers may help to bring tourist wealth to Darwin, a town they never knew. Their names and the date of their encampment are scratched on a ledge safely above the water-line of the cloudburst that took old Fitzgerald and his celery garden down into Panamint Valley one sultry summer's night. The celery still grows rank below the falls, but successive belches from heavy August skies have spread our rough monument above the gardening miner, if not old Fitz himself, over ten thousand acres.

Fitz must have passed Harry Floyd's cabin on the way down. Whether he knew it or not, he could not help but float by the quadrangle of loose, unplastered black rocks that served as a tent base for that odd English remittance man who came to the desert after the turn of the century, to die of tuberculosis. He scorned a bed, slept in his blanket on the sand, lived on his remittance and the few vegetables he raised at the water's edge between cloudbursts. He hiked over crag and basin in sun and rain, photographed the torn banks of the wash and the timeless faces of the Indians, married a wife who objected not to his uncut hair and his filthy attire and who lived, as he did, beneath the stars. In 1915 Floyd was strong enough to return to England to do his bit, "as a trailer," he said, and was last heard of when he brought back his wife's body after the war for interment in her native soil. His garden is gone, but the black walls of his hut still cling to the slope, decked with fragments of a buckboard, a necklace of lavender bottle fragments and a lavalliere of tin cans.

Fitz sailed by Livingston's place too that night. Livingston, you may recall, was the original gentleman who piped the thin stream from Whippoorwill Spring, near the mouth of the wash, to the cottage he had trimmed with auto doors and windows. He had sliding glass from some limousine to frame the slopes of the Argus, a sink that had once been the door of a sedan, and a hanging bed that would hold him, for a little, above any rising tide. But he became entangled with the California Labor Commission over a matter of wages for an esrtwhile partner in his tale mine, and vanished from his castle of Fordor-on-the-Wash. Whippoorwill has been re-christened Panamint Springs, and its historic waters go into ice-cubes for stool-perchers at Bill Reid's resort, or cool the fevered brows of gaso-

line greyhounds.

I should not forget that sandy bench at the fork of the Falls road and the Zinc Hill grade, where three years ago cactus stood in martial array. It had been planted by a chap who dreamed that passersby would purchase a bristling cotton-top for a bill-file or a cholla for mother-in-law's birthday. This enterprising merchant has been a fingerprint expert before tangling with the opuntia, but neither of his talents availed him when the girl he had left behind him in the East discovered his hideout and tried to collect alimony. He left us, and naught but memory remains of the thorny path he trod.

Beyond where the torrents of the centuries have spewed their tawny freight across the valley floor mountainous sand dunes show, like a wind-sock, where summer trade winds swoop to Joshua-peopled heights from the baking adobe below. Above the sand dunes lies a little spring, and towards this isolated oasis little Charlie Walker was bound when he died, alone, at his camp by the dunes one day in 1932. It was the Prohibition era, and Charlie was headed for the spring to set up a still for the brewing of bottled beer. Darwin men will tell you that his silent partner was one Weir, a Scotchman, who spent an uneasy week or two after they had brought Charlie home, but who at last, like so many other canyon dwellers into whose fastness the accusing finger has pointed, went over the hill. But Charlie Walker had died possessed of a bearskin overcoat, a massive garment with a lot of warmth which Mickey Summers figured Charlie didn't need where he had gone. So during these long Darwin winters Mickey hibernates in Charlie's bearskin and dreams of twenty-five cent lead, half-pound nuggets and for all I know, of the still—oft in the stilly night.



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"I was tying my shoes, Shorty Harris, was just getting up, and I said, 'Shorty, I dreamt last night that I found a mine.' He laughed. 'That so, Frenchy? Not here. This country is no damn good. All lime and schist. Let's get goin'.' So we left Blackwater Spring and started up the trail from Death valley on our way to Ballarat.

"I had met Shorty for the first time two days before down at Furnace Creek, and since we were both going over the hill we bunched our burros and came on together.

"It was the Fourth of July, 1905. Shorty rode on ahead while I, who had never seen this country before, did a little prospecting without getting out of the saddle. 'Nothin' there,' Shorty yelled when I pointed out this dike to him as he rode past.

"But I stopped anyhow, got off the burro, and began to look around. Pretty soon I picked up a piece of float colored like the rock I had seen at the Jumbo mine in Goldfield. I didn't even have a pick along, as the pack burros had gone ahead with Shorty, so I hit the rock on a ledge that stuck out close by. In one of the halves I thought I saw gold, but I tried it in every light for a few minutes to make certain it was not pyrites or peacock copper. But it looked the same from every angle, and I began to feel sure. I searched again, found another piece, and finally I knocked off a hunk of the quartz. There was free gold sticking out all over it.

"I got gold fever then and there, and my hands began to shake as if I had a chill. Then I remembered my dream, which had seemed so real the night before. I also remembered that I had dreamed the same thing twice before, and in those dreams I had thought I was awake, too. Was I awake now? Did you ever feel that way?"

Pete Aguerberry was telling me about the discovery of gold on the butte in the flat above Emigrant canon. From where we stood at the entrance to his mine the olive-grey plateau rolled away from us toward the path of the Forty-niners; the white shoulders of Telescope emerged a half mile southward; behind us the saddle, piebald with snow, cradled the road to Aguerberry point, whence you could look straight down for a mile into the depths of the American continent.

Pete had built this road and tried to coax men to come up for the view. But it was gold, not scenery, they sought in these mountains, and it was Uncle Sam who finally drew a circle about this fascinating hollow, declared it a national monument, and immortalized the name of this 65-year-old immigrant from the French Pyrenees.

The tourists rolling by do not suspect that the corrugated iron hut snuggling in the butte houses the man who has made history here, nor that behind the hogback can still be discerned the foundations and the middens of Harrisburg, the town that blossomed when Pete dismounted from his burro 33 years ago. This was the town that Pete built, yet it was named for Shorty Harris. Harrisburg is gone. Shorty Harris lies buried, hard by the highway, down in Death valley as he wanted, for he loved the headlines. Aguerberry point remains, and Pete still ships \$80 gold ore from the hole in the hill.

Although he has failed in the past 18 months—heart, the doctor says—Pete's hair is still black, his slender frame unbowed, his face, as always, earnest and keen. Rain water and white of egg, he told me, when I asked him for his secret scalp tonic. The physique I knew had been developed in the 33 years of hammering and mucking through a quarter of a mile of the rocky heart of the Panamints. The candor of his gaze has not been dimmed by his disappointment in Shorty or his betrayal by shyster partners or the consequent loss of a sale of the property for \$120,000.

He estimates the value of the ore he has sold since 1905 as \$150,000. When I held my carbide lamp up to the dripping seams in the limestone and listened to the rattling of a stone caroming down the 300-foot winze and divided his net profit by 34 I turned to look at him. He knew my thoughts. "No, it hasn't paid. But what could I earn in the world outside? I am only a laborer. If I had brains, things would have been different. But you see how it is."

When he caught up with Shorty at Wood canon on that Fourth of July the irascible five-footer was so mad he would hardly speak. Instead of being willing to look at his specimens—for Pete had decided to let him in on the strike even though they were not partners—he cursed, broke into his memorable whistle, mounted his animal, and rode off. Only at the next stop did the Frenchman succeed in persuading Shorty to look at the gold, which was greeted by a profane outburst ending in "We've hit it, Fourth o' July Pete!" Pete extracted a promise from him that they would keep silent about the find until they had returned to post location notices.

But at the first stop at Wildrose the conceited little "Short Man," as he called himself, practically let the cat out of the bag to Frank Kennedy, Thurman, Jack Byrne, and others. Still Pete managed to return with him to the spot before others found it, and magnanimously gave him his choice of half the hill. Shorty feigned indifference, protesting that it was no good anyway.

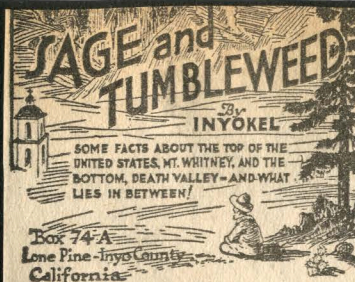
So Aguerberry wrote out and posted the notices, four claims for himself, four for Shorty, and they went on to Ballarat, where Shorty disappeared. Three days later the hungry and homeless Pete overheard miners in York's store saying they were bound for the new strike that Shorty and the Frenchman had made. He raced back to the location and found Thurman in possession. Thurman pointed out that there were no notices in the monuments Pete claimed to have erected, and he asserted that he had placed the mounds of rocks there himself. Pete knew then that Shorty had jumped him, but he was able to prove his prior possession to Thurman by demonstrating that the handwriting even on Shorty's notices was his (Pete's) own. And to Thurman's credit be it recorded that he admitted Pete's ownership.

It is a long story, but Shorty fell into the hands of speculators and was assessed out of business. Harrisburg bloomed and folded up while the courts strove to adjudicate Pete's claims.

Today, as for three decades past, Pete lives in his little spic-and-span house half buried in the hill behind the runs of Harrisburg, the Harrisburg where Adams' saloon made \$6,000 in three months. It is a long way from Mauleon in Hautes Alips, but one can still ship enough ore to pay the grocer and garageman, read L'Opinion at night, and wait for a purchaser to come in from outside. Some day, Pete hopes, he will see France again.

Pete was caught once, as many of us have been, in a savage wind sweeping unimpeded across the Mojave. As he drove towards Death valley junction, his pipe in his teeth, a sudden blast caught him at a turn and bowled his car completely over. Not once, but three times the machine somersaulted down the bank, ending right side up with Pete's head firmly wedged between the seat and the gear-shift lever. His pipe still in his mouth, but blood was running from a half-dozen scalp wounds down his face to the floor.

As he regained his senses he beheld a pile of grey matter on the rubber mat directly beneath his eyes. It was the ashes from his pipe. But in his daze he was not sure, and as his gore dripped into the heap he found himself asking, in detached fashion, "I wonder if those are my brains?" But a swift review of his life made him breathe easier. Brains he had never had.



(Reprinted from the issue of March 15, 1936)

Travelers from less rugged climes must be momentarily puzzled when they see on the sage-bordered highway a great gob of icy snow sitting solitary in the sun. All about are sand and aridity; whence came this frigid meteor? The question is answered if the visitor encounters a truck or car coming south from Reno way after a storm in the higher elevations. Snow adheres to the under side of the fenders, freezing to the frame, and frequently remains there until the vehicle is scores of miles distant from the white-mantled slopes. Even to us who live here, this perpetual contrast of sun and sleet, parched desert and ermined pines is an unending excuse for a "Benedicite," "Bless the Lord, all ye creatures!"

On the travertine terraces of Furnace Creek inn, doddering old dames chatter and nod. Below them, lithe youths and maidens shout "Love" across the tennis courts or slip beneath the emerald veil of the placid pool beside the palms. A breeze caresses the Stars and Stripes above the ranger's checking station at the mouth of the wash and bears to the lotus-eater's ears the clomp of hoofs. Some Hollywood-dodging star or capitalist incog is off for a morning canter. But across the valley floor, where the singed and tortured land is lifted in crumpled ridges and purple canyons speak of lonely labyrinths, the towering Panamints stand hooded in white. Around the pinons that cling to Telescope's flank, I know the cold fingers of the gale are searching mercilessly. But, in Death valley, the gale's gentle little sister zephyr fondles the shorn lambs.

Not many days ago, a sizable group of the velvety snowflakes, of which the poets sing, executed a coup in Big Pine canyon. Marching their forces after the latest storm, they descended upon Glacier lodge and literally flattened two cabins and filled another with tons of snow. Posts were reduced to matchwood, iron bedsteads twisted like wire. Plumbing was sheared off at the floor, and the fixtures may or may not be discovered somewhere down stream when the big thaw comes. I think it was that afternoon that I watched the bluebirds flitting about the rabbit brush and spotted the first curling stalks of

(Turn to Page 5—Column 5)

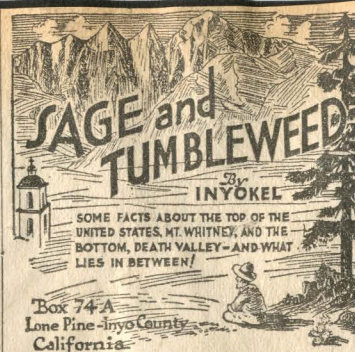
the brodiaea on a sunny slope. Incredible Inyo, county of contrasts!

I hear that the publicity agents for a certain popular car (I own a share in one) plan to conduct an endurance contest on the Mt. Whitney-Death valley highway in the near future. One of their cars is to be driven from the end of the Whitney road down to the bottom of the United States, Bad Water, in the floor of Death valley, and back again continuously for a specified period; then carefully checked for results. Afterwards, the machine is to be painted with appropriate legends and sent on a tour of California and possibly of the Union. So, we may be seeing you, if the promoters want to take along any local exhibits. Also, if the manufacturers wish to save a lot of time, I would consider permitting the use of my CR8 for the advertising tour, as it has already made the aforesaid ups and downs beyond all endurance. As compensation, I would be satisfied with the cancellation of the uncompleted payments on my juggernaut.

Some specimens: Signs on the highway, "Under New Management." Most people have never met the old management. . . . Death valley has a motor cop now. . . . Lone Pine has a dentist named Derrick, an electrician called Stringer, a justice of the peace whose name is Skinner, a banker yclept Wiley, and now a new chain store manager who signs himself Cheatham. Good fellows all. . . . In a recent Wild West movie on location in the Alabamas, four men, all local, were supposed to carry a safe out of a burning store, and one of them was to be shot by a gunman waiting outside. Ed Diaz tipped off the marksman to shoot at a different individual than the victim scheduled and guaranteed that he would fall. He did. Ed tripped him slyly as they lugged out the papier-mache safe. The scene had to be taken over.

I watched two golden eagles frequent the highway near Big Pine this winter. Two months ago, one of them was killed by a passing motorist; they are slow to rise while feeding. I have the bird, stuffed. He measures seven feet from wing tip to tip. . . . The first press used for an Inyo county paper is now in the Ford museum at Dearborn. It had been brought across Panama before the canal and sunk in a lake there for months before it was rescued. In the East, it had been used in Van Buren's campaign. . . . Frank McGlynn, who took the part of the minister in "Captain Blood," quoting Scripture to justify his lusty skull-cracking, has a son a Dominican priest.

Worst pun of the local week: Captain Otto Buer of the highway patrol decided to splurge after a meal at Heady's Mt. Whitney cafe, and ordered a nickel cigar. "Another nickel gone to Hades," he sighed. "To Heady's," corrected Mrs. Heady.



(Editor's note: The following column was written by Monsignor Crowley for the issue of Feb. 2, 1935.)

"Inyo, be yourself!" Thus would I apostrophize my desert home when I find her transferred to the flickering screen as India, China, or other lands forlorn. In "Lives of a Bengal Lancer," the current tremendous hit which "Time" says was filmed within 50 miles of Hollywood, our Sierra becomes the Himalayas. Perhaps our glistening bastions will be "stand-ins" for the Himalayas again in "Oil for the Lamps of China," filmed this week at the Inyo Marble company camp. Tar paper slapped over the shingle roofs; white-washed and mud-spattered canvas sheathing weather-boarded shacks; rattan awnings and false, up-ending gables tacked on the ridgepoles—thus did the set-dressers transform this bleak desert village into a hamlet in Cathay. All this could have been done more cheaply in Hollywood, but since the mountains will not come to Hollywood, Hollywood comes to the mountains.

Few children in the cities have the opportunities for travel in foreign lands afforded the youngsters here. The whole kaleidoscope of the haunts and ways of men revolves, in endless variety, before the little spectators on the movie location. School busses brought scores of wide-mouthed bairns to view the camels, the lumbering wooden-wheeled carts and the

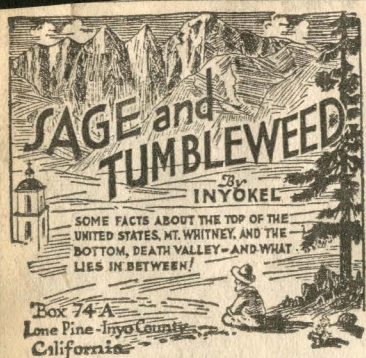
plodding bullocks, the rickshaws bobbing before the camera's eye. The little Mexicans were quick to recognize the ships of the desert as the conveyances once used by the Wise Men. It was one of their elders, however, who said the camels had feet like Greta Garbo.

I chuckled as I watched the huge airplane propellers, mounted on trucks creating a synthetic sand-storm. If the Lord had not been kind enough to send them perfect days, and one of our South winds had broken loose, trucks and propellers would have been thoroughly sanded, perhaps barricaded, by flying particles of Owens lake bottom. Our winds have never been dignified with distinctive titles, such as monsoons, simoons, and typhoons, but we have nothing to be ashamed of in our facilities for moving large bodies of air from one place to another in a hurry. While a little cramped as to directions, Mojave being the only spot where the wind blows from all points of the compass at once, our winds do not scatter their energies, but, gathering every stray gale from the Gulf of California to Canada, course up and down the valley for days at a time.

I have heard some of my partners claim that the wind blows from the South till it reaches the North Pole, then turns around and races down through the gap again, laden with chilblains and frostbite. Whatever the cause, I know that newspapers enjoy a greater circulation hereabouts than in much more densely settled areas. Today you may find your favorite daily or weekly anchored beneath a sagebrush at Little lake, tomorrow it may rest against a fence in Big Pine. It may be a month before the copy reaches Keeler, but reach there it does. And I have seen empty gasoline cans gliding in one of these zephyrs, hitting the ground every 30 feet or so for a fresh takeoff, while cars struggled in low gear against the current of air.

But the wind we fear in this country comes not from the North or the South, which winds are common because of the way the valley lies. But when from some Aeolian cave in the fastness of the Sierra a gale roars down the eastward canons, we hie for the cellar. For we have not forgotten the night of the big wind in the twenties. Then, in an hour, great pines crashed all the way from Bishop to Mono; houses near Aberdeen were folded up like cookie boxes and spread over the valley floor. The Alabamas sheltered Lone Pine from the direct breath of the blast, but in Independence auto fenders rolled up like shavings from a plane. Windows collapsed in the new courthouse, wire lath partitions cracked, and books from the judge's desk were driven, wedge-fashion, into the cracks. Telegraph poles were polished like billiardballs by the flying sand. Barbed wire was ripped from fences and carried across the highway. Auto club enamel signs, on two-inch pipe standards, were bent to the ground, tulips in the breeze. Not a life was lost, but many a homeless one literally clung to his native soil that terrible night, for naught else was stable, and much of that was in motion. In an Independence garage a group had gathered for mutual solace and safety. The Westward-facing doors began to bulge inward under the tremendous pressure. Then every car in the building was driven, either against the door, or to support cars that held the front line. All were placed in low gear. When the frightened watchers beheld that mass of steel being pushed back, inch by inch, one piteous cry broke out. "Hey, do any of you fellows know a prayer? For God's sake, say it now!" West winds, in Inyo, we class as unusual weather.

One night in Mojave I saw a passenger step off a train, to be caught by a hurrying gust and slammed back against the car. As soon as he could battle his way to the lee of the waiting room door (all entrances in well-constructed building in Mojave have doors facing in two directions, the Catholic church having three such) he gasped to the nonchalant brakeman, "Does it always blow like this here?" "No, sir. Sometimes it's worse!"



(Reprinted from the issue of April 2, 1939)

Ever hear of Le Roy, N. Y.? Well, neither did I. That is, I had never heard of it until I met John Lapp and his wife over at Ray Goodwin's domicile in Death valley a week ago. Lapp is the proprietor of the Lapp Insulator Mfg. Co. at Le Roy, if that means anything to you. No? Well, most of the insulators—which are those little piles of Franciscan pottery you see hanging from power poles and sub-stations — used in the United States are made by Lapp. And Le Roy, N. Y., is 50 miles east of Buffalo on the New York Central. And John Lapp and his wife come to Death valley every year for a real vacation. So at their friends', the Goodwins, I ran into them and learned a lot about insulator. Also about Le Roy, N. Y.

It seems that these pagoda-like gadgets, which brave marksmen like to shoot at when there are no

Auto club signs about, are made of at least two kinds of clay—ball clay, which is imported from Cornwall, England, and kaolin, which comes from the United States. The kaolin may come even from Casa Diablo in these parts, for they are mining much of it now up in Mono. Then there is a flux made from feldspar, and perhaps some other ingredients I have forgotten. First you separate your clays, the yolks from the whites, as it were. Then you mold your "insuls"—or is it "insoles"—with a cookie cutter, add the kaolin beaten stiff, place in an oven at 1,200 Fahrenheit. Cook until nicely browned, remove, and place on a pole to cool. If white insulators are desired, there is a special recipe for the frosting. In normal times the Lapp firm keeps about 400 people at work on this sort of confectionery. The jitters the utility companies have suffered since the advent of TVA and the holding corporations' excitement have diminished the staff of 250.

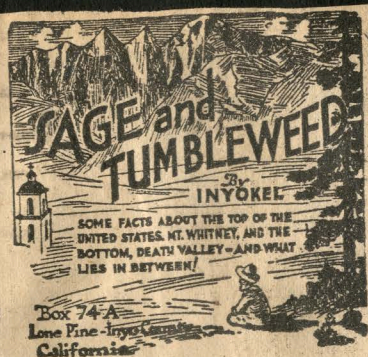
This gentleman, who has devoted his life to keeping electricity where it belongs, told me that the tallest radio towers in the world, in Czecho-Slovakia (Note to editor: If the geography over there has changed again before press time, please make the necessary corrections), 1,000 feet high, were made at Le Roy. More, when he visited St. Ives in Cornwall last summer to inspect the source of the ball clay, he discovered that the power line going down into the pits was carried on Lapp insulators. The clay had been drawn from the pit, shipped to the United States, fabricated here, and shipped back to England to be used to dig out more clay.

But back to Le Roy. This town of 4,500 population is the home of several—the words are Lapp's—"get-rich-quick" enterprises. One chap named White found a way of mixing fruit flavoring, sugar, and gelatin and peddled it from door to door in Genesee county. After a little while he sold out to one Woodward for \$500. When the Woodward family disposed of their holdings to the General Foods corporation for around \$60,000,000 in cash and stock, their Jello plant at Le Roy was netting them \$2,000,000 annually. I wonder whether Jack Benny has ever stopped at Le Roy? At that, it might be a salubrious climate for Carmichael, his polar bear, who doesn't seem to be doing so well in the Hollywood fog.

Then there was the old druggist in Le Roy who responded to the desperate plea of one of his cronies for relief for aching feet by mixing boracic acid and talcum powder and instructing the sufferer to dust his shoes "with that." Again an alert Le Royan saw the opportunity, and the tons of boracic acid crystals shipped into the town today testify to the popularity of Allen's Foot Ease. Not that that is all there is to the nostrum, but that is how it began. Out of Le Roy too come King's Celery compound and other panaceas that find their biggest market down in the Southern Bible belt. So you see what can be done! And we in Inyo, wiping borax out of the corners of our eyes after an Owens lake dust storm, brushing talc off our hats and kaolin from our shoes, having raised enough sugar beets in the past to sweeten the European situation, and even yet fattening enough calves to jell Los Angeles, we set up our radio antennae with Lapp insulators, kick off our burning brogans and dust our sox "with that," take a swig of a tonic from the Empire state, and twirl the dial until a cheerful voice from Hollywood's Radio City informs us that gluttony could hardly be called a deadly sin if the other six were "strawberry, raspberry, cherry, orange, lemon, and lime!" So you have never heard of Le Roy, N. Y. Well, well!

When Secretary Ickes called all the national park and monument superintendents back to Washington in January for a powwow, it was the first time that many of them had met. Someone spotted Ray Goodwin and announced his station as superintendent of the lowest spot in America. Whereupon, Ray pointed out that Superintendent Leike of Mount McKinley National park was the highest-up superintendent on the continent, and Guy Edwards of Boulder dam reservation the biggest dam superintendent in the country. The park service thought the idea had publicity possibilities, and a few days back it had the Mt. McKinley "super" pose for a photo down at Bad Water, the nadir of the nation. Ray Goodwin hopes he will not be asked to have his picture snapped on Mt. McKinley, as the present superintendent is one of the six men living who have climbed to the top of Alaska, and the only man who has ever stood on both the top and the bottom of the continent.

Main street for a bit in the weekend, bed slats fastened to their tops, and disgorged baggy-panted gentlemen with leprechaun hats, gay feathers and all. Bound for the state ski meet up at Mammoth, no doubt, but it is hard on us old-timers who have managed to accustom ourselves to movie elephants and Scottish Highlanders. Not five years back we cursed our luck when winter closed in. Now we have old Ford engines and blocks and tackle fastened to every free pine between here and Reno, pulling United States males and Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's lady up the slopes in order that they may Jack and Jill it down again with varying degrees of elan, joie de vivre, and just plain cartwheels. What are we coming to? Reminding me that Arnold Lunn, distinguished English convert to the Catholic Church, has been for years an expert on skiing, or, as they call it over there, "sheing." He has, in fact, written several books upon the matter. More recently his writings have been on the apologetic theme, and explain his entrance into the Church. In his latest work, "Within That City," he tells of the disappointment of a young winter sports enthusiast who had purchased a copy of Lunn's first book as a Catholic, "Now I See," believing that it was a professional guide to skiing. I hope the young man did not throw the work away. He might still have found it helpful. "Christiana's" and "Christe Eleison's" come from the same root.



A young fellow hopped off from Santa Monica a few days back, stopped at New York, and landed a little later in Ireland. In the same week two mining engineers set out from Los Angeles for Death valley. One of them reached help at Cave Springs after a harrowing trek from the broken-down car. The other was found two days later in the characteristic posture of those who die of thirst on the desert—naked, face down, fingers worn to the bone in a mad search for water. A reckless lad leaped o'er land and sea while a seasoned traveler had the life burned out of him in California. Strange pranks of fate! One man with a chocolate bar skims a quarter way 'round the earth, another drags a couple of cans of tomato juice to his rendezvous of death on a well-worn road. Water for Corrigan would have meant death, for Van Tyne life.

Many a time I have repeated herein that you cannot trust the desert. She is Medusa, Lorelei, Circe, and vampire according to her mood. She allures by sight and sweet song, she lulls her victims into moments of unweariness, she turns them into petrified corpses or battens on their blood. The wild-flower guides distributed by the gasoline companies say nothing of what dwells in the waste places after the blossoms have withered. Yet where this man dug for the water his delirious eyes saw around him primroses and coreopsis and verbenas spattered the sand last April. Next spring, as in springs past, poppies will spurt scarlet from rubble-strewn mounds in forgotten places, mounds that are there because the desert does not always spurt poppies. So beware! If you must come this way when the sun is a peep-hole in the sky through which you glimpse an incandescent lake beyond, come over the main highways. If some grave need compels your coming by another route, say one that is thrown like a piece of brown twine across the hills, then inform your friends and the police or park rangers of your departure and arrival. Bring gas, but even more oil in proportion, and most of all, water. Ten gallons of water

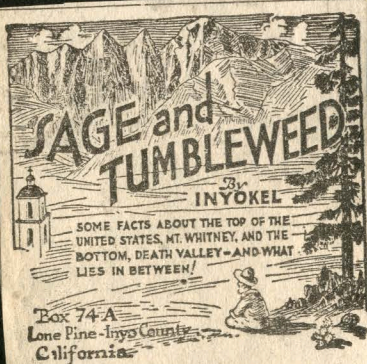
is not too much to carry in the trunk or between the seats. A canteen is valuable, canned tomatoes are splendid. A shovel may mean the difference between life and death, a map should be in your pocket if this is your first journey. Try to drive in the cool of the day or at night, and, if trouble comes, do not attempt to walk for help in the heat. Rest in your car until sundown, then strike out for civilization. Find or build a little shelter for the next day, conserve your water, and keep your head. Most of the desert's victims have come to grief because they became excited and did not plan, or adhere to, any definite course. The hellish heat, which addles a man's brains, did the rest.

Oliver Roberts, whose reminiscences of his experience burying lost miners in Panamint have been quoted in The Inyo Register, sums up a few of his observations in the paragraph: "Most of the people who perish on the deserts are Frenchmen, Germans, Swedes, and Danes. The Americans, Irishmen, Scotch, and English stand the desert best. Of course the Mexicans and Indians are natives and seldom die on the desert, as they know when and where to travel over these places." Here is something for the ethnologists to explain. If it were entirely true it might offer a solution as to a possible refuge from certain forms of government extant across the water. When their propagandists or even their armies land on our shores and read the All Year club ads and head for California, let us herd them into Inyo in July or August. In no time at all a lot of the isms would become just isms.

I mentioned a shovel. Innocent looking ruts are frequently bottomless, and side trips into the sage may churn up holes that will take hours to get out of. If there is a piece of gunnysacking in your car, put it under your spinning wheels. Sage or other brush is almost always available for the same purpose. Lacking those, small rocks or planks are good, if you happen to be stuck near an abandoned shack. You may have to jack up the car to lift the housing off the hump and then build a short road to terra firma before setting the wheels down again. As a last resort, and then only if you are sure you have a pump aboard, or two spares, deflate the rear tires to about 20 pounds pressure or less. The added traction thus provided will extricate most cars if the frame is not perched on a rock.

There are extraordinary means for extraordinary occasions, but they cannot be conceived unless you sit down and calmly figure out the problem and the equipment at hand. Thus Carl Nellen could find nothing else in the old 'dobe days of the Los Angeles road than a skeleton of a cow to put under his soapy tires. Some have jettisoned their overalls or other garments to furnish traction. And I, on one memorable occasion, finally jockeyed my model T out of a sand pile up on the narrow-gauge railroad and drove two bumpy miles to safety along the ties. A team of mules has proved providential in times past when ditches were high, while a gentle but irresistible push from a road scraper once lifted me out of a certain contretemps in Death valley. Many are the perils in the way.

Nor are all the dangers on the ungraded roads. There are times when the white stripe is little protection, as witness Bob Gordon down at Homestead station. A huge beer truck and trailer bound for tonsil relief in Eastern California stalled two miles south of Bob's place recently. The driver sent word over the hill begging Bob to try to tow him across the ridge, as he was afraid to leave his precious load while he walked to a telephone. Homestead has no phone. So Bob gassed up his little pickup and bravely tugged the fearsome burden to the crest, an ant pulling a baby carriage. Then down hills towards home they rolled, but the driver had forgotten to tell Bob that the air brakes had given out. A hundred feet from the summit Bob beheld the beer truck pass him, still fastened to the rear of his car by a chain. In an instant he was being dragged backwards, down grade, at the mercy of 10,000 drinks, and no hope of rescue. Miraculously the truck driver managed to maneuver the vehicles into the sagebrush after a quarter of a mile of the tail wagging the dog. Bob said the occurrence did not bother him until one of his friends remarked that he never could hold his liquor.



(Reprinted from the issue of Feb. 19, 1939)

The WPA Guide of Death Valley, long promised, has appeared of the credit for its compilation there. The foreword gives most of the credit for its compilation to Cora Vernon Lee of the Federal Writers' guild. We knew her hereabouts as the wife of Bourke Lee, whose Death Valley and Death Valley Men were probably the first works to picture the region in broader strokes than the conscientious historian dared use. The new work is a combination of both schools of writing—as factual as an automobile strip map, with mileage in decimals; yet it dawdles long enough at historic spots to tell a tale. The pictures, over half a hundred of them, are photographs by some of the country's best. This paper-bound volume will fill a need in local literature for those who have neither time nor funds to read the larger works, and it puts down for future historians personal impressions of characters, some dead, some slowly slipping away, whom the world should remember. P. S. The glued-on paper cover is about as useful in a handbook to be bandied about Death valley as dance pumps would be in Cottonwood wash. Mine fell off in five minutes.

A line in fine print in this guide answered a question I had never

asked: "Where did our burros come from?" The writer credits these ships of the desert to the Spaniards, who also brought the horse to California. I must tell George Francis about that. George is our district attorney, and I have mentioned him in relation to wild asses before. Hearsay, perhaps, but it is rumored abroad that he championed the cause of the lowly companion of Balaam in a weak moment, and has since had to beat the slings and arrows of outrage, unfortunates like Bill Reid. Bill is still standing guard over his mulberry trees at Panamint Springs, torn between desperation at the quadrupeds which kick over his garbage every night and fear of the tourists who think the stony-faced beasts "just darling."

I wonder whether George has heard that the Death valley monument boys are having a tough time keeping the valley sign-posted? Where trees are 40 miles apart a firm white pole is a boon to itchy burros, besides providing an occasional bite or two of breakfast food. Or has it filtered through to him that the Great White Father in Washington has sent two or three experts to us to discover (a) whether there are really wild burros here (b) how many? and (c) what to do? Without doubt two or three White Papers, or perhaps Pinto Papers, in re "Donkeys" already repose on the President's desk. Donkeys should interest our Chief Democrat. I look for the asses to reach the floor of congress any day. Wouldn't it be a strange prank of fortune if Inyo's young district attorney should ride to Washington on his burros? Stevenson, Sancho Panza, St. Francis, Balaam—the list of donkey lovers grows. Ride 'em, George!

A miner springs to defend the tradition that nobody has ever seen a dead burro by explaining that Old Red, the ancient beast whose demise was recorded herein a month or so ago, did not die from natural causes. It appears that the prospectors at the Minnietta were in the habit of leaving a tub of water outside the door of the cook-shack for Red's use when he felt a thirst coming on. The old hand whose duty this was moved away for a spell, the newcomer forgot it, and the ancient brute was forced to drink of the waste water in the tank by the Little Johnny Mine half a mile below. But the tank contained cyanide of potassium, which dropped him in his tracks. Thus another desert legend remains unsullied. Nobody has ever seen a burro dead of disabilities that would ordinarily be included in a wild ass's life insurance policy.

The Death Valley Chuck Walla in March, 1907, printed the following: "Elegy Written in the Desert." Since the editor made no apologies, I presume none is called for.

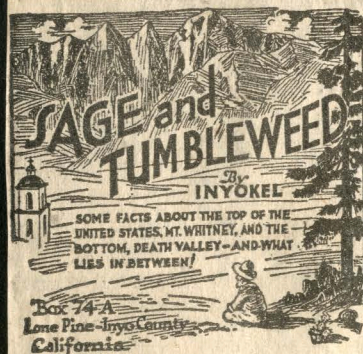
"The burro tolls the knell of parting day,
And with his tail shoos one lone fly away,
Then nods his head, and pricks his ears the while,
And wonders shall he walk another mile.

"The silent herd winds solely o'er the sand
The man behind—he will not understand
That burros do not wish to climb a hill
When they might just as well be standing still.

"And so the outfit plods its weary way
Into the hills, where precious metals may
Lie buried; and the hills are just ahead,
But tired burros might as well be dead.

"So, as the sun behind the hill drops down,
The burros cease their toil and turn around,
And, with one last despairing bray,
Lie down to rest until another day!"

On re-reading the troubles of District Attorney Francis with burros, I am afraid I have been a little hard on him. He probably had secret reasons for being kind to dumb animals. He may even have remembered the time he clashed with the all-powerful Church of Rome on the rights of brute creation. And remembering, he probably shuddered. For in those days Juan De la Cerda and his wife and a houseful of children lived in the shack at the desert's edge behind the Keeler roundhouse. Because of the children, or because he was a fancier, De la Cerda kept goats. Or rather, he didn't keep them. For they wandered all over town, seeking such tidbits as they could find on clothes lines, in garbage cans and dumps. This was bad enough, but when a particularly playful old billy hid in the post office and played Chinese checkers with stooping patrons peering into the mail-boxes somebody complained to the district attorney. He reported it to the sheriff, who could not corral the goats, but warned the owner. But the "button, button, who's got the button" business continued, and George was forced to indict a stiff epistle to De la Cerda. That gentleman promptly replied that "the district attorney had better watch his P's and Q's, that De la Cerda had no intention of keeping his goats at home, and if the law mentioned the matter again he would tell the padre about it, and then where would George Francis be?" So you see how things are.



(Reprinted from the issue of Oct. 18, 1936)

After six weeks—or was it two months?—of scanning this page for "Sage and Tumbleweed," a woman has written to inquire after my good health. A gentleman told me yesterday that he now reads The Register from the front page in the normal fashion, instead of from the rear, as formerly. In the face of this extraordinary turn of affairs, and overwhelmed by the above-mentioned popular demand, I must bow to the will of the people and peck out a few words a week for a little longer. "The public be served," is my motto, "coute que coute."

That last phrase is French, or used to be. It means "Cost what it may." I have gone Gallic in my idioms since Father Lejeune came up the trail. Sixty-seven, he said, and he had climbed 77 peaks. Maybe he was 77, and the peaks were 67. I am not sure, for it was about at that point that I was weak enough to suggest that he cease floundering in English and tell his troubles in his native French. Then I was in beyond my depth, and my desperate efforts to reach a footing on some shore, English, Latin, Spanish, or Esperanto, only sent me sprawling back into the mire of "oui oui," "vraiment," and "les montaignes." He seemed to gloat in my struggles—in fact so pleased was he to get on the terra firma of his own speech that he did not even observe that I was shouting "merci" with the accent on the first syllable. Here an old vaudeville jest comes to mind: "When I find someone who understands my French, I am awfully suspicious of his French."

The old man—and his springy step put me in the patriarch class—was on a three months' leave from his native Archdiocese of Rouen. "I love the mountains, and I want to climb your Whitney, the top of your country." I had met the type before, and a glance at his outfit, a baggy-panted clerical suit, rubber collar, and a raincoat, plus a camera, convinced me that he was but No. 3,467,398 of the tyros who "just love the desert or the mountains" and set out for impossible objectives with little equipment and less tact. Bent on dissuading him, I asked idly: "What other peaks have you climbed?" "Oh, Mont Blanc, Pike's peak, Rainier . . . about 77." Then I realize why the padre had sent him up to me. Here WAS a mountaineer, come clear from France to essay what many of us who live in its shadow would not dare attempt, Mt. Whitney afoot. For horses cost \$3 a day, and he could not obtain a horse without paying for a guide as well, with francs rated at 15 to the dollar. So afoot he went. I thought of Ichabod Crane as I watched him vanish behind a rise, the flannel

shirt the padre had lent him worn outside his pants; the padre's knapsack, with a sandwich or two and an apple, swinging from his shoulders. Down about his ears, its crown resting on his own, flapped the borrowed sombrero, for our padre's hat size is in the upper brackets. . . . Next evening at dusk, he rapped at my cabin door, and left a note for the padre, and the outfit, and a smile. He had won the top easily, and now was away on the stage to other fields: Yosemite and Glacier and La Belle France.

Not a fortnight before, a be-whiskered chap, of the style you observe walking barefoot in downtown Los Angeles, pushed his bicycle to the very foot of my hill, rested a bit, and decided to turn back. For a while, I feared he was out to pedal to the summit. A few days later, I picked up his trail at the Wildrose checking station on the western rim of Death valley. He had endeavored to get by the CCC checkers there on a blazing afternoon, bound through the valley on his bike. Washouts ahead, killing heat, distance from help—none of these would deter him. But the boys managed to hold him until Ranger Tom Williams drove up. Tom carried the cyclist, cycle and all, in his pick-up to Death Valley Junction, much to the adventurer's disgust.

Not long since either, a man whose business takes him into the Panamint in fair weather and foul caught up with a hiker trudging down Darwin wash in one of those spells when the mercury does not return to the hundred mark for days and nights on end. "Where are you going?" "Death valley." "All right, I can take you as far as the junction with the Wildrose road. It is a short hike from there to Babcock's and the CCC camp, where you had better report to the park authorities. Are you prepared for the trip—that is, are you going to meet some friends who have a car? Or how do you plan to get through?" "No, I have about seven cents, and I am going to walk through." "Who the . . . do you think you are?" burst out the indignant Good Samaritan. "Sir, I have walked through many deserts. God will take care of me. I am Rev. Mr. . . . of the Bible institute in . . ." "Well, in Death valley in summer, God works through Ray Goodwin, the superintendent, or Lieutenant Beall. You'd better see them first." With this warning, the trusting soul was deposited at the crossroads. He reached Si Babcock's store in Wildrose canyon that night and bought a chocolate bar, admitting to Mrs. Babcock that he had now two cents left and was en route to Death valley. The lady called Si and told him the story. "Who the . . . do you think you are?" exploded Si, as only Si can explode. And the next morning, when Ray Goodwin discovered the intrepid one seated on a rock and asked him his destination, Ray's "Who the . . . do you think you are?" was the straw that broke down the ministerial gentleman's patience. "I am the Rev. Mr. . . . of . . . and I am going through Death valley, and I don't want any more of your Death valley language." But the reverend did not get to Death valley, for Ray shipped him out by car, not finding anything in the rules of the park service permitting him to allow a tenderfoot to enter that inferno in August with a bottle of water, two cents, and an abiding trust in Providence.

Father O'Shea writes from Tehachapi that the inmates of the women's prison there are among my constant readers. Perfectly understandable, Father. Why should not the wide, open spaces appeal to the dear ladies?



If you are reading this under date of Sept. 11 you will know that Inyokel caught the train at the water tank four miles south of town and handed S & T to the brakeman. Reason: The padre has had me out all day gathering political placards. He intends to use the reverse side of the cardboard for advertisements of church doings, suppers, and rummages. But yesterday the aspiring gentlemen whose visages graced the countryside guarded jealously their vantage points on telegraph poles and store windows; today the majority of them pass unseeing by and pray that some good Samaritan will gather up the relicts of the "robbery" and transport them to Jerusalem, or Timbuctoo. Hence my sense of exultation as I relieve the burdened shop-keeper of what he had not dared refuse; as I remove from view what the losing candidates would fain forget, as I do my bit for the missions by stocking up our sign department with prime material.

"Imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O' that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall, to expel the winter's flaw!"

H. A. Setley, president of the Lions' club of Hollywood, Fla., climbed the hill last week and smoked a pipe with us as he leaned against the rock table and squinted at Whitney. "No, Florida has nothing like this. There isn't an elevation in the state you could shift gears on. And climate? Well, we have one kind of climate, you have all varieties." And so on. He had been advised to come up and borrow a book or two on Death Valley to read on his stay. "Want to get some of the romance of this country of yours." He took the books, and left me a story. He is a man of 42, and, while his mother is alive and mar-

ried again, he has but the faintest recollection of his father, his parents having separated when he was about two years old. Experience taught him that inquiries about his father were tabu in the household, so he grew up knowing no more than that his dad had been a baseball player. This spring he was standing at the desk of a hotel in Oswego, N. Y., when the manager introduced him to a local newspaper reporter, foraging for news. "Kegley? Kegley? Nothing to Wild Bill Kegley, are you?" "Was he a ball-player?" "What, you never heard of Wild Bill? Will you be here tomorrow morning at 10? All right, I'll bring you something that will interest you." Next morning he brought with him a newspaper, the Oswego Palladium-Times of July 31, 1937, describing a Bob Ripley "Believe It or Not" broadcast of the preceding evening. The program merited a column in the paper because the chief actor was Wild Bill Kegley, who had pitched for Rome and Utica in the old days, and had many admirers in Oswego. Ripley had asked the 76-year-old vet to come on from Tulsa to New York to relate one of baseball's freakiest plays.

It happened in Allentown, Pennsylvania, back in 1893. Setley was pitching, "King" Kelley was catching for the opposing team. The redoubtable Tim Hurst, later of big league fame, was calling the play. In the 11th inning, with the score tied at 2-2, the players ran out of bats. Either all had been broken or the spares had been misplaced, and Hurst told them to find some substitute. They did. Kelley came to plate swinging an axe. "No, not that. You can't—" "Why not? There's nothing in the rules that says you can't use an axe." Nor was there, and King smashed the first ball pitched, meeting it squarely with the edge of the blade, half the ball going over the fence, the other half being gathered in by Setley and thrown home, where Kelley was declared out. "Out? What the . . . ? Why, a man can't be put out with half a baseball! I'm safe, and this is a home run." "Home run, nothing," yelled Hurst, "you can't score a home run with half a baseball." After much wrangling the umpire gave the decision, which resulted in the addest score on record for our national game, 2½-2. Kelley's team had won by half a run.

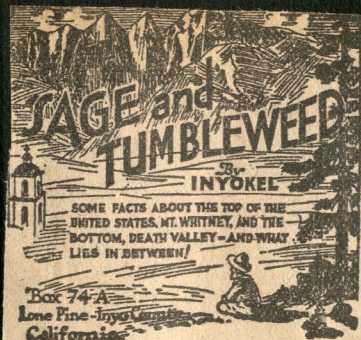
Mr. Setley of Florida wrote to the chamber of commerce at Tulsa and received "Wild Bill's" address. So far the old man knows nothing about his sons whereabouts, but within ten days, perhaps before you read this tale, another story worthy of Ripley's "Believe It or Not," and in fact directly consequent upon that program, will have been enacted in Tulsa. For my caller is going back that way. "I may be his heir. I don't care about that. But the old man may be in need, and if he is, I've got to help him." The Florida Lion brought back my books before he departed, saying that he would like to return here to live. "This is such a romantic country. Now back East . . ."

They tell me that Kern county, among other exhibits, is displaying a colored movie of Death Valley at the state fair in Sacramento. While of course Death Valley is just 100 miles or so out of Kern county, we are not com-

plaining, since Inyo has no exhibit at the annual festival. And since porax is now mined at Kramer, in Kern county, and no longer in Inyo, there is a remote connection. Like St. Joseph and the confessional. Remind me to tell you of that one some time. Particularly of interest in the film, we are told, is the footage devoted to the Mt. Whitney-Death Valley highway dedication a year ago, showing the Twenty Mule Team in action for the last time, and comely Josephine Breen of Hollister riding in the covered wagon. They do say too that Josephine was scolding somebody until tipped off that there was a camera in action, when she beamed her sweetest at the movie man. The result is charming. Are you going to the fair? Look for Josephine, a lineal descendant of the heroic Donner party.

Walter Dow, who owns the hotel named for him in Lone Pine, loves not liquor. He has persistently refused to put a cocktail bar in his hotel. In this he is following his sincere convictions, as he comes of stern Protestant stock, and his wife is an active Methodist Church worker. Hence he spoke with real feeling when he told the padre that on a recent trip to San Francisco he had chatted with the assistant manager at the Empire hotel, and that that worthy had informed him that the hotel's new cocktail room on the roof netted \$1,200 a month. "Think of it," half whistled Walter, "\$1,200 a month!" "Yes, I'm thinking of it," answered the pastor. "Isn't that hotel the old 'William Taylor'?" The one built by the Methodists with a church downstairs and a hotel upstairs? Yes, I know it is. I think they planned to pay the church expenses with the hotel revenue. But they couldn't make a go of it and sold out. Now the church is a garage, and the hotel is making \$1,200 a month on the bar." Walter had no answer. Neither had the padre for that matter, although he did recall an unkind couplet he had heard upon the situation some time ago. It runs:

"Don't cry, little church, don't cry,
You'll be a cocktail bar by and by!"



"Fruits of the Retreat," or "Why the Padre Ate No Dessert." As per immemorial custom at all retreats, at the last meal common talking is permitted, in contrast to the repasts in the exercises, when one of the retreatants reads from some book on the spiritual life. So at Glacier lodge there was a sound of revelry by night as 12 ladies vied with one another to tell Father Leahy at our Sunday night dinner how perfectly lovely everything had been, and when would they see him again, etc., etc. Our own padre, who must continue to

live on in Inyo and meet the dear women every day, sat back and smiled. After all he had the rest of the year in which to talk. So he wiped any revealing traces of the venison steak from the corners of his mouth and leaned back to catch the whisper of Bertha Hall, the motherly non-Catholic proprietress whose co-operation has made these annual retreats possible. "I want to see you in the kitchen right away, please." Envisioning another culinary gem, perhaps a huge cake on which she had written some Latin tribute to Father Leahy and for which she wished the pastor's corroboration, the padre excused himself and slipped out from the banquet hall.

Alas for dreams! No cake awaited him in the pantry, although Bertha had indeed prepared a true surprise. With genuine distress in her tones she informed him that she had checked the linen in the bedrooms and had found one blanket, two sheets, a pillow-case, and three or four towels missing. Worse, one of her employes had looked into the parked cars and had located the missing blanket and one of the towels on the back seat of a sedan which was due to depart for Bishop immediately after supper; hence her haste to inform the speechless pastor. "Whose car," he asked weakly. "Come and see." So while the laughter rang within he went out into the night to see what he could not believe, the missing articles in the car which had been driven up by Zoe Farman, and in which she and Mrs. Latour were going to leave for Bishop in a few minutes. Nora Talmon had come with them also, but that lady had announced her intention of waiting over until the morrow and going home in another conveyance. "Where is the pillow?" It was a straw, but he grasped at it. Perhaps he could still save the name of his parishioners, and with it the whole retreat movement. "I do not see it," was Bertha's answer, "but the trunk is locked." And it was. "What do you want to do about it? They will be settling their bill in a little while, should I speak to them? Or will you?" she demanded. Was ever a trusting shepherd in such a plight! To speak or not to speak? To say nothing and try to pay for the purloined articles from parish funds, or to risk the alienation from the Church of a neo-convert, Zoe Farman, or the permanent distrust of two of his hitherto sterling supporters? Yet there were the damnable bits of evidence, and Bertha waiting for an answer. "Leave it to me," was his slow reply, "I'll fix it somehow." Brave man! He confided to me afterwards that he had not the slightest idea of what he was going to do at the moment, but he found his way back into the dining-room and sat looking into the happy faces of Zoe Farman and Mrs. Latour, but ate no dessert.

As the retreatants gathered at the desk to pay what they owed, the padre stood beside them to see that both they and the proprietress should avoid errors in balancing the accounts. Came the two who were about to depart with the linen and they smilingly settled for their board and lodging, and assured Bertha that they had enjoyed every moment of their stay, and hoped they would be able to return next year. What could Bertha say but "I hope so too," and "It has been so nice to have you here," the while she looked over their shoulders into the eyes of the anguished padre with a glare that spelled "Don't let them get away. I'm relying on you."

The padre had to wait until Mrs. Farman was en route to the lobby to break the sad news. "Zoe, there is something troubling me. Mrs. Hall has found some articles missing and one of her boys has located a few of them in your car. I . . . er . . ." "Why of course, we are transferring them from the cabin, where three of us slept last night, up to the room that Nora Tolman is going to occupy in the main building this evening. You

see, she was so cold last night that Helen Gunn went around and gathered up sheets and blankets out of the idle beds and gave them to us to use in the cabin. So now that we are leaving we told Nora we would bring back the bedding to the lodge as it was a bother for her to transport it. We are going over to get it now. What's the difficulty?" "Difficulty?" The padre leaned against the stone coping,—"Zoe, will you please go and tell Mrs. Hall what you have just told me?" "Of course," and she was off. The padre stumbled back to the dining-room, but his dessert had been removed. He had his revenge the next morning when Bertha, a thoroughly contrite Bertha, was embracing the departing group. "Have you searched them all?" was his saucy query. If he had not ducked, her impulsive slap would surely have caught him on the ear.

I quizzed the padre about the puff he received in last week's Register from Ralph Merritt, and got the following riposte. "Regardless of what Ralph may say, I know that our program with Los Angeles would never have succeeded unless it had a great deal of Merritt, and that is Owens Valley's united belief. Ralph's letter, praising my poor help, reminds me of a story related by Archbishop Hanna. A grieving widow sat with her brood of orphans at the obsequies of her spouse and listened to the priest expound the virtues of the deceased. To hear him tell it the dead man had been an extraordinary provider, a lover of his family, a model of temperance. As the list grew the widow looked up from her handkerchief and nudged her oldest. 'Johnny, slip up there and look in the coffin and see if that's your father!'"



The same day that four men in Munich signed a momentous piece of paper, deciding the fate of millions, four men in the city of Los Angeles attached their signatures to a document that spells the end of civil strife for a large part of California. On that day the commissioners of water and power agreed to cancel all existing lawsuits against Inyo county, to bind themselves never to interfere with the local self-government of the towns in Owens valley, and to offer for sale, now and henceforth, lots owned by Los Angeles in Lone Pine, Independence, Big Pine, and Bishop. Thus, the page begins to turn upon a tragedy hardly paral-

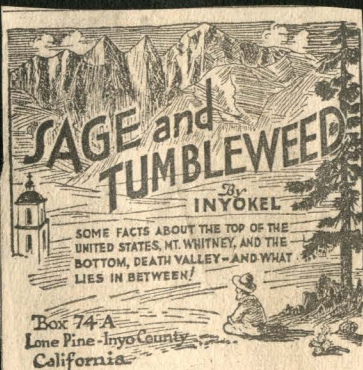
leled in America, save possibly in the seizure of Indian lands so vividly pictured in "Ramona." Only those who had lived through a few decades of Ireland's absentee landlordism could have feet at home in Owens valley in the past quarter century. Eighty per cent of the land in town and country was owned by the city, which refused to lease arable areas, would not build new structures upon town lots or make major repairs on existing buildings, controlled electric light, water, and sewer systems; dictated how many service stations, auto camps, or grocery stores might serve each community, and, finally, attempted to coerce the only incorporated town into disincorporating, on the promise of "a more unified and direct control." As Ralph P. Merritt eloquently phrased it in his address to the commissioners on their recent fact-finding visit: "If this isn't Fascism, what is?"

How these things came to pass is a long story, and not a pretty one. The facts that are beyond controversy are that early in the century certain engineers in Los Angeles looked long and thirstily upon the waste waters of Owens valley, then a remote region reached by a narrow-gauge railroad and two ruts in the sand, and that they planned with a few influential citizens to build an aqueduct. People in the valley heard of great stock farms about to be installed, for which they had been selling options on their river-front ranches, and of a vast reclamation district, evidenced by the presence of a government engineer. But one day they discovered that they had sold their birthright, literally down the river, that the government engineer had entered the employ of "The City," and that the waters of Owens river were to be borne 250 miles to convert the dollar-an-acre sagebrush land of the San Fernando valley into orange orchards and real estate subdivisions. Legal battle availed naught—what could a handful of farmers do against the Angels? So they accepted the situation as a hard fact, for there was still much water available, and many had retained their holdings. Nor did the city express any desire for further water, so sure were the engineers of an ample supply. So sure in fact that they battled about the advisability of building a storage reservoir in Long valley to hold back the surplus in years of heavy snows, finally deciding that it would not be necessary. But they erred, and when Los Angeles continued to outgrow one suit after another the original tactics were re-employed. Secretly controlling options were obtained on the remaining water-bearing lands, and panic broke loose when the truth became known. Those who would not sell at the city's prices found water being pumped from beneath their land by compressed air pumps on adjoining city property. The "checker-board purchase plan," we called it. Merchants and town residents faced bankruptcy, for no provision had been made for them. Floodgates were opened on the aqueduct; dynamite put Owens valley in the nation's headlines; gunmen patrolled our streets.

Why does not the rest of California love Los Angeles? Whatever the reason, it was this antipathy of the "cow counties" and San Francisco to the Southern California metropolis that resulted in action by the state legislature "enabling" the city to buy the remaining agricultural lands and town properties, if the owners wished to sell. Where individuals wanted merely to dispose of their underground water rights, as in the towns, the city paid them 15 per cent of the value. Desperate, and dazzled by the prices, which were usually handsome, the owners of the aforementioned 80 per cent soon sold out and either departed for other climes or rented back their homes and became the prey of every automobile and mining-stock salesman this side of Mars. Water was withdrawn from the farms, orchards died, houses were either razed or sold for a song and moved to locations in the settled sections, and the sage and rabbit-brush took over Owens valley.

But still Los Angeles grew. Boulder dam was transferred from the engineer's drawing board to the Colorado, furnishing power that made Parker dam and a huge aqueduct possible. Still a hundred miles north of us the city reached and bought—and how those ranchers made them pay—the waters that fed Mono lake, and an 11-mile tunnel was begun to lead those streams into the Owens river watershed, where at last the Long Valley dam had been started. Federal aid highways found Owens valley, and over them came tourists by the hundreds of thousands, and new blood for the towns. Level-headed residents took stock, granted the needs and the rights of Los Angeles, and began a campaign to convince the powers that it would be impossible to serve the mountain-minded vacationers from the metropolis unless adequate accommodations could be provided for them in the valley, and enough water leased or sold to certain acreages surrounding the towns to provide dairy, fruit, and truck farms. This water, they pointed out, would now be available from the combined sources of Owens and Mono basins, with the copious supply from the Colorado in reserve. Fortunately, time marched on in Los Angeles, too. Death removed the original actors from the stage, and, as in Owens valley, there came some who were willing to bury the past and work out a common future together. Hence the announcement from the board last week. For this, and

other blessings to come, Inyokel is truly grateful. So are all who love Inyo, and who have longed to see again the day when we can watch the storms on Whitney through the vines that frame our door, rather than through the ghostly arms of a long-dead poplar. It is a joy to tell the world that the old quip is no longer true, that "Owens valley is dry because Los Angeles is all wet."



(Editor's note — The following column, written by Monsignor Crowley for the issue of Feb. 17, 1935, is typical of the intensely interesting lore of the country over which he was pastor that he was able to incorporate into a tale that was as pleasant and readable to city dwellers as it was sacred to the people of the desert.)

Johnny Mills sits on the travertine coping outside the luxurious lounge at Furnace Creek inn, around him a gaping group of cloak and suit magnates, butter and egg men, and their ladies. Just beneath his outstretched arm, Furnace creek tumbles into the turquoise swimming pool, spilling over into goldfish ponds, chattering amongst the palms on its way to the green isle of the ranch below. His eyes, baked to a milky lavender—like glass that has lain

under the inexorable sun—follow his finger as he lives again the romance and the tragedy of Death valley, grim, dark bowl spreading far and away, floored with dazzling salt, as if one had chipped the enamel from the basin's bottom. No other living man has lived so long in that dread sink, few know its secrets half as well as Johnny. Grizzled and dwarfed like the shrubs that cling to the scorched washes of the valley by his 40 years of lonely trekking, prospecting, and borax mining, he is as outre in this, one of the most swank resorts in America, as Mahatma Gandhi on Market street, yet he belongs even more eminently than the specimens of colemanite or the ox-yoke on display in the lounge. This son of the great silences and vast sufferings dwells in a palace and endures the "Ohs" and "Ahs" of the quintessence of "cake-eaters." The while he dreams of the lost Breyfogle mine.

No two stories agree on Breyfogle's history, save that there was a Jacob Breyfogle, and that he did find gold ore of almost fabulous value on the brink of Death valley. Chalfant starts him from Austin, Nev., where he was a blacksmith in the 60's, on a prospecting trip with two horses and supplies. His horses escaped one night while he camped by a spring. This disaster, coupled with the heat, so bewildered him that some Indians found him wandering, temporarily insane, took him into camp, and nursed him back to his senses. Somewhere in his crazed meanderings he had knocked a piece of rock from a ledge, and the inability of himself or hundreds of others ever to locate this ore has led to one of the most intensive "lost mine" hunts in history. Rourke Lee says that Breyfogle had acted as a guide for a party of Southerners bound from Austin to Yuma, and returning alone was set upon by Indians near Daylight Springs and terribly beaten. Recovering consciousness only after he had loped into Austin on his horse, he could not recall where he had found the ore he brought with him.

J. Frank Dobie of the University of Texas got his version of the Breyfogle mine from a man who had often looked for it, and who was well acquainted with Gooding, who had frequently listened to Breyfogle's own narrative of his experience. When rich silver ore was uncovered in Austin in 1862 by the hoof of a stumbling pony, all the foot-loose miners in California raced for the latest "excitement." Among those to attempt the hundreds of weary miles to the strike were three Angelenos, Breyfogle, O'Bannion, and McLeod. Camping one night at a rock tinaja on the Panamint slope of Death valley, McLeod and O'Bannion stretched out together near the water-hole. Breyfogle made his bed a few hundred yards down the hill. Shouts during the night brought him the harrowing knowledge that his companions were being slaughtered by Indians. Seizing his shoes, the only article of clothing he had removed, he raced over the rubble-strewn wash into the valley, where he hid for several hours. So bruised were his feet that he could not put on his shoes, yet in the terrific June sun he struggled across the floor to the Funeral range. His shoes he used as canteens to carry water from an alkaline water-hole, beside which he dared not rest. Seeing a green spot three miles south that suggested a spring, he staggered towards it. Somewhere before reaching it he stumbled first upon some grayish-green, and then a pinkish feldspar ore in which free gold was plainly visible. He gathered up a few pieces and wrapped them in his bandana. The promised oasis proved to be a lone mesquite, with no water, but a plentiful supply of beans. He gorged himself on these and shortly lost his senses, never to return to them again till he reached Baxter Springs, 250 miles north. From here, Dobie's story agrees with the other versions.

Johnny Mills, who is a Catholic, was not long from old St. Mary's college in San Francisco when he drifted to the desert, landing at the World Beater mine, high in the Panamints, as a mucker. There he met Shorty Harris, who was later to discover Bullfrog and Harrisburg, and from him heard of the Breyfogle. With Shorty, he packed into Death valley, and was prevailed upon by Jimmy Dayton, caretaker of the borax company's ranch at Furnace creek, to take employment there. From this point d'appui Johnny has looked for 40 years for the Breyfogle, and today its secret is still locked in the bosom of the tantalizing

hills, there to remain perhaps till God shall melt them down again at the last curtain. He has examined every prospect-hole in the region. As head prospector for the borax company with 24 others in his employ to seek borax claims, with a bonus of \$100 for each location, plus wages and board, he literally combed southern Inyo. He visited Breyfogle's wife and family in San Francisco and could gather no information, save Mrs. Breyfogle's expressed hope that someone would find the mine in order to vindicate her husband. At the Ferry building, before the fire, he saw the reddish ore that had started him and others on their search. He even found the assayer who had assayed "the red streak," \$60,000 to the ton. He has stood by Shorty Harris' grave in the shadow of Telescope peak; by Jimmy Dayton's, where he dropped, and his horse beside him, one blistering August day in 1898. He knows where Billy Corcoran lies, Billy, who thought he had found the Breyfogle when he located the National Bank mine at Bullfrog. The wearied questers have sunk by the trail—Johnny alone remains, and answers fool questions and dreams of the red ore in which a fortune gleams.

Johnny had been recounting the hardships suffered by the Manly party on its way through the valley in '49, the party whose privations, thirst, and starvation gave the region its lugubrious title, so often since justified. One of his female listeners interjected, "Why didn't they stop here at the inn?" Johnny couldn't believe he had heard aright. "I beg pardon, ma'am. What did you ask?" She repeated the question. "Oh," retorted the nimble-witted veteran, "you see, the paint wasn't dry!"

(Reprinted from the issue of
June 11, 1939)

Mrs. Eva Lee Gunn read in her sick bed—and let us say a prayer for her speedy return to her window seat—about Frank Winkler, and remembered an Independence affair in which Frank played the lead. So add Frank Winkler file: The big, homely Dutchman not only lacked an eye, but wore a small black mustache. One afternoon he emptied several tumblers in search of something, perhaps of slumber, for it was slumber that eventually came to him after he had staggered into a chair at Harris & Rhine's. While his fuddled fancy wandered through the abandoned tunnels of the years, the Independence wags shaved off half his mustache. When he discovered his loss many hours later he roared through the town with a gun, threatening certain extinction to any of the Delilah-like gentlemen who had shorn him of his one strong point. He never found them. Add idle speculations: What would happen to the world if Hitler were shorn of half his bristle?

Both George Savage and Will Chalfant, editors of The Lone Pine Progress-Citizen, The Inyo Independent, and The Inyo Register, have been magnanimous enough to incorporate this column in their respective papers as a regular feature. Inyokel feels now like the high school valedictorian who has been caught by his little sister rehearsing his speech before the mirror. It is easy enough to write for distant readers, with only a chance in a million of ever meeting one of them. But to have the family looking over your shoulder while you try to strut your stuff. Gawsh! I suppose I should say "Thank you, Bill," and "Thank you, George." But to all these new readers, "Please don't titter. After all, this five-year-old tower of babble was not planned for the multitude but only as a weekly report on California east of Whitney for The Central California Register, the official organ of the Catholic Church in Central California. So, if my good Protestant, Masonic publisher friends have decided after half a decade that their subscribers can be safely exposed to Inyokel's mouthings, let your maledictions, benedictions (cross out one) rest upon their heads. They asked for it."

For five years also have I watched the aforementioned publishing house of Savage and French print "narrow-gauge" and "broad-gauge" with the "u" before the "a." Knowing something about gages, I felt that I should beard the editor in his den and point out that he had wrecked several trains of thought on the switch of letters in his line. But what was it to me? I was only one reader. And besides, perhaps the new deal, in spelling as in legislation, was to put "A" in second place, and "You" first. But when "Sage and Tumbleweed," as it did last week, mentions such things as gauges broad and narrow, and they too become transposed, I knew the time had come for me to explain that when the railroad left me it was as Webster would have it. For this week I must use the word again, willy-nilly. And I have no fear that The Independent's editor will not publish this chiding, for he is broad-gauge.

It was Marie Ryan that started me on that track. Marie is now Mrs. Canady of San Francisco, but we knew her 20 years ago as the daughter of "The Silver Queen," Mrs. Kate Ryan of Cerro Gordo

fame. Marie stopped in last week on her honeymoon, all of which she was spending in the land her mother loved so well. She reminded the padre of the time he used to say Mass in her mother's home at Cerro Gordo, or down at Diaz' in Keeler. And of the day his old Model T burrowed so deeply into the sand of the highway that John Harrington and her brother, Henry, had to help him lift the whole machine to another location for a fresh start. The padre smiled as he recalled the business, and added that it was on one of those trips that the going became so tough that he finally jockeyed the car up on the narrow-gauge tracks and drove a couple of miles along the ties until he hit the cross road at the salt works.

Ruth Simeral dropped in, too, last week. She isn't Ruth Simeral any more, having relinquished her honorable widowhood in favor of a pleasant naval aviation mechanic. But the padre had not forgotten her wedding to Fred Simeral in Bishop 20 years ago, the first nuptials at which the pastor officiated here. Nor could he quite eliminate from his recollection the occasion on which he called upon Fred and Ruth a year afterwards up at the power plant in Lundy canon. Fred was on night shift, and at the time of the padre's arrival was deep in sleep. Ruth asked the father to wait until she called her spouse, and the visitor could not help but overhear what ensued. A series of grunts, increasing in intensity, indicated that the sleeper was being rudely shaken. Then, "What do you want?" "S-sh, Fred, Father Crowley's here. Get up." "Who?" "Father Crowley." "Who the hell is Father Crowley?" "Fred!!! S-sh!" "Is that the duck that married us?" The padre knew there was only one way to save the embarrassed Ruth, so he sang out, "Yes, Fred, I am the duck that married you. How are you?" Poor Fred died several years ago in San Diego from illness caused by gas in the World war, but his happy ways will never be forgotten by those who knew him, least of all by "the duck that married them."

Mrs. Bill Bonham plans to spend the summer with her husband and children at the talc mine Bill is working in the Inyo range. Of course, this will keep Benny and Betty from attending vacation school, much to Mrs. Bonham's regret. For she knows well the need of religious instruction and appreciates the boon to Lone Pine and Bishop in having the sisters teaching here each summer. She remembers her own catechism days when she was Bernice Lubken, and trusts that the padre has forgotten, or that her own children may never know, that she once described an immortal miracle of the Old Testament as "Moses and the Burning Mush."

March 17 will mark the anniversary of the death of the Very Rev. Monsignor John J. Crowley, Padre of the Desert and the *Central California Register's* beloved "Inyokel." But with many his memory will never die. For a year now he has spoken to us through "Sage and Tumbleweed." Never before did we read it as avidly as we do now.

A regular contributor to the *Central California Register* for the past eight years, the late Monsignor began his writing in the former "Frater Con" column, which dealt with the activities of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Fresno. After leaving Fresno and arriving in Lone Pine he started the current popular column, "Sage and Tumbleweed," under the pseudonym of "Inyokel."

Ireland gave birth to the famous padre some 50 years ago, but it was in America that he received all of his education. Worcester, Mass., where his parents settled, was the locale of his early schooling. Those early days painted a Horatio Alger tinge to his life, for it was by dint of selling newspapers and betimes working in a market that he saved the pennies necessary to aid the large family and provide the means of attending Holy Cross college. Many of his writings are still extant that appeared in the old *Holy Cross Blue* of which he was one time editor.

From college to seminary was the next step when he began his studies for the priesthood at St. Mary's seminary, Baltimore. Attracted to the West, he became attached to the Diocese of Los Angeles after ordination.

One year later, in answer, to Archbishop John J. Cantwell's call for a volunteer to take the lonely desert parish of Lone Pine, his old T model Ford rattled to a stop before one of the loneliest mission parishes in this country. Nor did he ever fail to enjoy the fact that he had volunteered and been accepted just a few moments before the present Bishop of Reno arrived at the Chancery office bent on the same errand. Father Thomas K. Gorman's words to him at that time, "Congratulations, John. I see you are going to the desert," were

surpassed only by the classic telegram sent by the padre to Bishop Gorman later at the moment of the latter's Episcopal appointment to Reno, "Congratulations! Now, you are going to the desert."

Thoroughly in love with the desert, the young padre, although called to Fresno by the first Bishop of the diocese to act as Chancellor and rector of the Cathedral parish, never lost his cherished wish to go back to his desert and his people. In 1933 came the opportunity when, broken in health, his Bishop acceded to his request that he be allowed to return to the land of his first pastorate. Inyokel went back to his people—to live—and to die.

He gloried in the rugged freedom of the desert and from it drew a vigorous health that carried him untiring to its every corner, to its every inhabitant regardless of creed. He was the padre of the desert and the padre of its people. Hoary Whitney must have smiled to see Inyokel scurrying in quest of sun-baked bodies and shriveling souls, now amid the Panamints, often in Death valley, much seen in Bishop, Lone Pine, Keeler, sometimes close to the great mountain's very crest as if from that vantage point to seek out unperceived by-ways in the vastness that was the desert. Inyokel was as great as the country he loved.

We cannot thank him now for his words. We may not even raise a physical monument to his memory. Inyokel would not expect it, for he knew human nature as few men understood it. His success was based not on human nature, but on the God that made the desert and its people. He built a monument in the heart of his people and, long after we on the other side of the mountains have ceased to remember him, among those on the desert the legend will continue to be retold from Whitney to Death valley—the Legend of the Padre of the Desert.

A Man—Who Matched Our Mountains And Our Desert



PADRE JOHN J. CROWLEY—DEC. 8, 1891-MAR. 17, 1940
* * *

One year ago on Palm Sunday, sudden death called Father John J. Crowley to that bourne from which no man returneth, but his memory lives on in the life of that great expanse of desert and mountains he loved so well.

His works live on, and the leadership which he gave still guides those who follow in his footsteps. His devoted labors in behalf of a happier, prosperous valley were given fruit in a new understanding between representatives of Inyo-Mono and those of the great metropolis of the south. He envisioned the need of cooperative action so that our beloved land might prosper spiritually and materially and through him such progressive organizations as the Inyo Associates and the Inyo-Mono Assn. came into being.

His was a life dedicated to service—a life that has challenged those who knew him to dedicate themselves to the service of the land and people he loved.

What Father Crowley meant to the people of Inyo and Mono is interpreted below by Curley Fletcher in one of the most beautiful tributes we have ever published.

Time may pass but the memory of this man, who matched our mountains and our desert, lives on.

Lest We Forget

A Tribute One Year Later

By CURLEY FLETCHER

Even as it did a year ago, each desert dawn the blessed sun rises slowly over the frowning Funerals above Death Valley, pauses for an infinitesimal moment to brush the serrated scarps of the painted Panamints with a careless brush, then, casting its horizontal beams across the darkened defiles of the ancient Argus Range, it tints the alabaster peaks of the Sierra Nevada with delicate evanescent colors. Thus, having outlined in vast relief what was once the far horizons of Father John J. Crowley's desert domain, the saddened sun journeys onward to bless the less fortunate lands with its scintillating brilliance.

Although it is only one short year since his departure, it seems long since our beloved Shepherd of the Sage passed through that quick transition which perhaps ordained him a Shepherd of Souls in those elysian pastures beyond the last horizon through which we who have missed him are all too blind to see.

Truly, Father Crowley as a mortal is no more. But in spirit he is still among us. He is still watching over his desert flock and, **lest we forget**, his teachings have become a saga of the sage and sand dunes through which he once trod on patient feet. Padre of the Desert, Shepherd of the Sage or Sanctuary of Lost Souls, as you will, and **as God willed**, Father Crowley will never be forgotten by those to whom he in his patient piety granted absolution.

And, **lest we forget**, it was he who quickly overlooked and forgave the innate idiosyncrasies and shortcomings of his fellowman. Irrespective of his own religious concepts, he granted to each mortal the innate right to interpret and analyze his introspections in retrospect, and worship his God as he, himself, saw fit, even though his chosen creeds and beliefs did not conform to those which he, tolerant and generous Father Crowley, had come to teach.

None can deny that this world is a better place in which to live since Father Crowley came to spend the span of a few short years among us; neither can any truthfully deny that the desert seems more destitute since his departure. Each pristine peak, each primordial plain, each primeval path and each primitive stone seems to recall to our forgetful minds the poignant memory of his passing, proudly and possessively boasting, "He passed this way."

Were he to speak he would tell us how much prouder he is to know that he remains fresh in our memories, than he is to gaze upon those monuments of mortar and stone erected by loving hands in his honor. Yet, too, he would appreciate our feeble attempts to prolong the memory of his having been one of us, and our proud reconsiderations of his teaching and philosophy. We feel honored to know that we knew him. And, perhaps, he still is proud to have been one of us. Who knows?

On the desert Father Crowley was an institution, a synonym of tolerance and fortitude, and, with God's help and our own memories he will, in time, become an honored memorable tradition; a tradition of goodwill toward our fellowman, forgiveness to our desecrators, and tolerance for his tenets, his beliefs and his concepts of God. Although he has departed, his sincere equitable and just teachings remain with us and the shadows that form the obscurity of ignorance are a little clearer since he came to the desert he loved, and **lest we forget**,

"HE PASSED THIS WAY."

LONE PINE, CAL. OWEN'S
VALLEY PROGRESS CITIZEN
OCTOBER 22, 1937

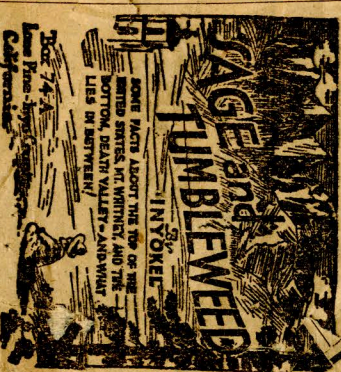
Celebration Guests

Among the guests at next week's highway opening celebration will be Larry Goshorn, publisher of the Sierra Madre News, Lee Shippey, columnist for the Los Angeles Times, Perley Poore Sheehan, formerly of the Paris edition of the New York Times; and Ay Myers, city manager of Sierra Madre. Representing the University of Southern California, will be Marc N. Goodnow of the School of Journalism, accompanied by John King, publisher of the Hemet News. Both parties will be registered at the Winnedumah hotel, Independence.

...who had come for a rest hiked a mile to the lounge and returned through the blizzard with two blankets and the information that a truck was coming up from Big Pine with assistance. Instead of the truck came the padre, Ray, Brother James, Helen Gunn, a shovel, and two sets of chains. Along presently came the truck with still another set, and in a few minutes we were rolling into the lodge under arches of dropping flames, the confiers bending low beneath their freight of white. There may have been retreats opened under warmer skies and with greater numbers, but I've never forgotten that night at Glacier as we shuffled towards the little chapel, the full moon lighting the fairy landscape which had become so suddenly hushed, as if God had dropped an ermine cloak over all its harshness. From cabin windows yellow squares of light jeweled the night, and sagging snow from the eaves completed the illusion of a Christmas card. Blessed were the women who had come for this day to hear again the words of the foundation, "And God made all creatures that they might help man to attain his last end, to save his soul."

How could a newspaperman have heard what Ray said to Helen Gunn as we sped along, and what Helen thought Ray said, and how we all laughed uproariously as we sped into the storm? Helen, whom I once memorialized herein for her acquisition of a colorful vocabulary from her father's miners, and her subsequent loss of the same at the Ursuline convent school, is not celebrated for—shall I say, her taciturnity. Her conversation is always charming, but it is never lacking, and she is not ashamed to own her desire to permit no dull spots on the program. So Ray, who had but met her for a brief moment previously, listened. He continued to listen, as she expressed her joy at the anticipated silence, and her sorrow that the padre had not brought along the Sunday Missals for the retreatants. Several minutes later, at an unlooked-for pause, Ray offered a suggestion. From the front seat we could not catch it, but we did hear Helen's amusedly indignant retort: "A whistle? You want to lend me a whistle? What in heaven's name do I want with a whistle?" It was a few minutes before Ray succeeded in overcoming the mirth enough to be able to tell us that he had asked her to use one, and not a whistle. But she had been done, and I shall never know what she will not soon do. The night when she offered her a whistle.

And I do not think Francis Baker's experience with two Ford weeklies. Which reminds me that a strong metropolitan daily in Los Angeles labels one of its Sunday sections, "This Week Magazine." Well, Mr. Baker is one of the highway engineers at Bishop, and some years ago was stationed in Tuolumne county. One night, driving along in his old model T, he came upon a Cadillac bogged down in a ditch. At first he was skeptical about his ability to help, but he was willing to try. Removing some strands of barbed wire from a fence he made a tow rope and tugged and spun and soon had the big car back on the highway. A tall gentleman attached himself to the group and remarked, "Great little cars, these Fords, eh?" "Yes, sir," rejoined Baker, "there's nothing like them." "Yes, I know," came the memorable reply. "My father makes them. I am Edsel Ford."



(Continued From Last Page)
not tell was that Howard Ellis had just spent \$50 making the roof leak-proof, and that the carpenter had assured him that "nothing can hurt that roof now." I have anchored it firmly to the chimney. But today Howard is looking up at the blue sky and his roof is lying 10 feet away. The chimney, most of which went along.

Nor did any gentleman of the press see the distress of J. Lincoln Ritchie, manager of the Dow hotel, as he stood in front of the Lumber company office with a \$3,000 gold brick in his hands, looking for its owner. Lawson Linde, son of the bustling postmistress at Keeler, has a third interest in the Keeler Gold Mine, and of late has been shipping a sizeable quantity of bullion. The afternoon in question he brought in a great muffin of 90 ounces of the metal that "is forbid by law," mixed with a seasoning of silver. Ritchie met him at the garage across the street from the lumber office and proudly borrowed the treasure to show us bumpkins what three grand looked like. After a few of us had reverently caressed it, "rubbed our nickels' worth," Rudy said, the dummy maître d'hotel sought Lawson. But there was no Lawson in sight, and we, safe behind plate glasses, watched the horror grow on Ritchie's face as he realized that he was marooned on Main street with a small fortune in contraband. Of course, this was Main street in Inyo county, not in Los Angeles, but no hoard was ever delivered to Fort Knox with half the joy that J. Lincoln manifested when Linde at last appeared.

No reporter was on hand either when the Rev. Charles Leahy, S.J., fresh from a jaunt to Death valley and its more than comfortable sunshine, motored up to Glacier lodge to conduct the women's retreat and stuck fast in the snow. Ahead of him three of the retreatants, including Mrs. Clifford Baxter and her sister, were stalled because of a steep incline and no chains. So they were to Inyo.

Auto club signs about, are made of at least two kinds of clay—ball clay, which is imported from Cornwall, England, and kaolin, which comes from the United States. The kaolin may come even from Casa Diablo in these parts, for they are mining much of it now up in Mono. Then there is a flux made from feldspar, and perhaps some other ingredients I have forgotten. First you separate your clays, the yolks from the whites, as it were. Then you mold your "insuls"—or is it "insoles"—with a cookie cutter, add the kaolin beaten stiff, place in an oven at 1,200 Fahrenheit. Cook until nicely browned, remove, and place on a pole to cool. If white insulators are desired, there is a special recipe for the frosting. In normal times the Lapp firm keeps about 400 people at work on this sort of confectionery. The jitters the utility companies have suffered since the advent of TVA and the holding corporations' excitement have diminished the staff of 250.

This gentleman, who has devoted his life to keeping electricity where it belongs, told me that the tallest radio towers in the world, in Czechoslovakia (Note to editor: If the geography over there has changed again before press time, please make the necessary corrections), 1,000 feet high, were made at Le Roy. More, when he visited St. Ives in Cornwall last summer to inspect the source of the ball clay, he discovered that the power line going down into the pits was carried on Lapp insulators. The clay had been drawn from the pit, shipped to the United States, fabricated here, and shipped back to England to be used to dig out more clay.

But back to Le Roy. This town of 4,500 population is the home of several—the words are Lapp's—"get-rich-quick" enterprises. One chap named White found a way of mixing fruit flavoring, sugar, and gelatin and peddled it from door to door in Genesee county. After a little while he sold out to one Woodward for \$500. When the Woodward family disposed of their holdings to the General Foods corporation for around \$60,000,000 in cash and stock, their Jello plant at Le Roy was netting them \$2,000,000 annually. I wonder whether Jack Benny has ever stopped at Le Roy? Climate for might be a spring climate for Carmichael, his polar bear, who doesn't seem to be doing so well in the Hollywood fog.

Then there was the old druggist in Le Roy who responded to the desperate plea of one of his cronies for relief for aching feet by mixing boric acid and talcum powder and instructing the sufferer to dust his shoes "with that." Again an alert Le Royan saw the opportunity, and the tons of boric acid crystals shipped into the town today testify to the popularity of Allen's Foot Ease. Not that that is all there is to the nostrum, but that is how it began. Out of Le Roy too come King's Celery compound and other panaceas that find their biggest market down in the Southern Bible belt. So you see what can be done! And we in Inyo, wiping berax out of the corners of our eyes after an Owens lake dust storm, brushing tale off our hats and kaolin from our shoes, having raised enough sugar beets in the past to sweeten the European situation, and even yet fattening enough calves to jell Los Angeles, we set up our radio antennae with Lapp insulators, kick off our burning brogans and dust our socks "with that," take a little of a tonic from the Earth, and twirl the dial up from Hollywood.


When Secretary Ickes called all the national park and monument superintendents back to Washington in January for a powwow, it was the first time that many of them had met. Someone spotted Ray Goodwin and announced his station as superintendent of the lowest spot in America. Whereupon, Ray pointed out that Superintendent Leike of Mount McKinley National park was the highest up superintendent on the continent, and Guy Edwards of Boulder dam reservation the biggest dam superintendent in the country. The park service thought the idea had publicity possibilities, and a few days back it had the Mt. McKinley "super" pose for a photo down at Bad Water, the nadir of the nation. Ray Goodwin hopes he will not be asked to have his picture snapped on Mt. McKinley, as the present superintendent is one of the six men living who have climbed to the top of Alaska, and the only man who has ever stood on both the top and the bottom of the continent.

WOUL

SAGE and FUMBLEWEED
INYOXEL

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE TOP OF THE UNITED STATES, MT. WHITNEY, AND THE BOTTOM, DEATH VALLEY—AND WHAT LIES IN BETWEEN!

Box 74-A
Lone Pine-Inyo County
California



If you are so minded you can go to Fresno from Lone Pine by driving to Whitney portal or to Kearns valley or to South lake or any other road terminal and there entrain on a pack horse and ride for three weary days until you come to the end of another road. Thence you can drive to the Raisin city in a few hours. Taking it that way, Fresno is far from us. But when you sit down in front of Ernest Laskey's microphone up at the Alabama gates of the aqueduct and wait until he has jiggled a few gadgets and repeated to the wall a couple of times, "W6CUCY Lone Pine calling W6LPE Fresno" and has twitted another whatemayacallit and a voice comes out of the wall and chants, "W6LPE Fresno, hullo W6CUCY" you are in Fresno slick as a whistle. And, if you doubt it, the chap at the other end will tell you he is Angelo Astone, and do you remember his wife and that there is a girl listening named Laura Yregaray or something and what can you say to that? There just is no privacy any more. Here we are boasting about our pure air, free from city contamination, and all the while it is alive with chaps like Angelo and Ernest swapping alphabets and remarks about the neighbors.


Before I finished chatting with Angelo recently another ether hound began to bay, "KPM Fresno calling W6CUCY Lone Pine." It was Howard Edmunds, telling me that his wife, Frances, would have a word with me, and that he had a baby named John, and that he lived right across the street from the Bishop and did I have any message. I told him I would mention it to the padre. Then both Howard and Angelo made up some nice things to say about this column, and asked to be remembered. So here it is, and "Station W6CUCY Lone Pine is now signing off with Fresno." Let me add a word for Emil, the mail carrier at Selma who calls in frequently from his amateur station, Ernest tells me,

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SAGE and FUMBLEWEED
INYOXEL

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE TOP OF THE UNITED STATES, MT. WHITNEY, AND THE BOTTOM, DEATH VALLEY—AND WHAT LIES IN BETWEEN!

Box 74-A
Lone Pine-Inyo County
California



"Died. In San Jose, of natural causes, Mrs. Simons Ryan Harrington. Funeral Mass at . . ." I wonder if there were some story-hungry reporters who glanced at that item in San Jose papers this month and passed on to the traffic accidents or the society notes in search of an item for a human interest tale. Yet that line rang of romance, for its every word summed up a chapter in the career of one of Inyo's most picturesque characters. Simons, her first husband, had been killed by a railroad train, leaving her with three children, two boys and a girl. When her marriage to Ryan, a miner, brought her to Inyo, she transported the children across Death Valley in August by placing them in empty water barrels aboard a freight wagon and by driving the team herself. The son of her daughter, Susie, attended the recent Mount Whitney-Death Valley highway dedication. Her son, Henry, was at her bedside in San Jose. But the other lad, now a Jesuit priest in her death missions, learned of her death within the hour by a short wave message from one of his conferees at Alma, who succeeded in reaching the Jesuit observatory at Sikawei. The message was first intercepted by the Japanese, but the sender told them he had no desire to use them as his agents, and he finally received an acknowledgment from Father Simon himself.

When I first met Mrs. Ryan, she was working the Estelle mine up back of Cerro Gordo, living with Marie and Henry in a lonely cabin 8,000 feet above the sea. I well recall the morning the padre, after being awakened frequently in the night by coyote carols and garbage-snooping wild burros, rounded up all hands for Confession and then set up an altar for Mass and Communion. Marie was the daughter of her marriage with


(Turn to Page 7 — Column 3)

IPPOINT

SAGE and FUMBLEWEED
INYOXEL

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE TOP OF THE UNITED STATES, MT. WHITNEY, AND THE BOTTOM, DEATH VALLEY—AND WHAT LIES IN BETWEEN!

Box 74-A
Lone Pine-Inyo County
California



Occasionally, even out here, I run across something that another has penned, which I cannot tell half so well, leaving me no choice but to quote. Such is the "Brief History of Darwin," printed on the back of the menu at The Outpost, one of the two coffee shops that form one-eighth of all the places of human habitation in that hamlet of vanished glories. The cafe in question stands at the junction of the town's only streets, or, more accurately, at the bend in the highway to Death valley, for beyond that corner the streets lead nowhere. Yet the face of the menu bears the legend, "Market and Main Streets, Darwin, California," and the population of that metropolis is listed as, "Whites, 48; Indians, 19; burros, 500."

The story runs: "Darwin was founded in 1874, and in 1877 the population was 4,500, or the same as Los Angeles in the same year. Our pipeline was laid in 1875 by Patrick Ready. There were 20 saloons on the main street, and all disputes were settled by Mr. Col Boot Hill is one mile west of here Darwin has been wiped out by fire on three different occasions. Only one of the original buildings still stands. Seven miles west of here is old Fort Coso, where three times Indians massacred the Whites. . . . Three miles away is Cold Springs, where Mexicans took out millions of dollars in gold through means of arrastras. Thirteen miles from there is King's canyon, where thousands of pre-historic petroglyphs are to be found. You may travel over the same road Vasquez,

(Turn to Page 7 — Column 4)

FRESNO MINGLE IS SUCCESSFUL

(St. John's School, Fresno, Oct. 30, the day when the pupils of St. John's School were

SCHOOL

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The Ship of the Desert
(Written at Olancho, Inyo county, Calif., in 1875 by W. T. Grant and Pap Walker.)

In the Inyo Mountains, where grows the stately pine,
Where the rocks are torn asunder, and bear marks of untold time;

Where the restless deer and panther stalk abroad not fearing men,
Where the grizzly and the cougar have their dark and lonely den;

Where the lovely Paiute maidens wander forth with guileless mien

To gather pine nuts for the winter, for their camp down in Saline,—

There amid the lonely canyons comes a torrent rushing down,
Tumbling over rocks and boulders, with a strange, unearthly sound:

There upon a naked bedrock, jutting far out o'er the stream,
Sat a band of old prospectors, like the spirits of the scene.

They had heard that Spanish legend—how, in the days of old,
A hunter on the mountain had found a ledge of gold;

How he went down to the valley and started with a train,
But was lost out on the desert and was never seen again.

Old Uncle Dave was talking and he told a wondrous tale
Of a ship that had been drifting at the mercy of a gale,
How she sailed up in the desert after cruising 'round a while,
At last had come to anchor close by a big sand pile.

Then they lowered all the small boats and struck out for the land

But were overtaken by a mighty storm of sand,
And of all that noble ship's crew not a soul was seen again,
Except sometimes an anchor or perhaps an anchor chain.

How his partner once while hunting for the long-lost Gunsight lead

Saw that ship a-sailing round the desert at full speed—
As she came towards him and went sailing quickly by
The lookout in the foretop sung out, "Al-ker-ii!"

How the taller 'gin to melt in his partner as he lay
All night beside his burro waiting for the day.
And when the sun had risen and the daylight came around
His burro lay beside him dead as blazes on the ground.

Then he rolled his blankets and struck back for the mine
And for seven solid days he never looked behind,—
He never had a drink of water or ate a blessed thing

Until he struck a mining camp,—they call it Resting Springs.
There the miners gathered 'round him and as he told a fearful tale

Of his wanderings on the desert,—it made their cheeks grow pale.

They filled him up with whiskey—but Bill was too far gone,
They showed him every kind-

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Until McPhail laid down his pipe, then spoke and broke the spell.

"If that is what you call it, that very thing I've seen,"
And he pointed with his finger to the valley of Saline.

"It was one summer evening outside my cabin door—
I was sitting on an oil-can pounding up some ore,
When I thought I heard the echo of a digger's dying wail

As it floated up the valley, borne on the evening gale.

I began to feel uneasy, I shut my cabin door
And walked out on the hillside to look the valley o'er.

There below me on the desert I saw such a fearful sight,
I could not move a muscle, I was paralyzed with fright,—
It was that ship of Davy's, with a ghostly crew all manned

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As he passed the order, 'Forward man! the flying jib down haul!'

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Our grub had all but petered and we had lost our nips;
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First a red light, then a white light, then it shone a bluish grey.

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"It kept moving nearer, until there came in view,
The largest ship I ever saw, in fact as big as two;
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She was passing on to leave us when my partner—foolish boy,
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Where the restless deer and panther stalk abroad not fearing men, Where the grizzly and the cougar have their dark and lonely some den;

Where the lovely Paiute maidens wander forth with guileless men

To gather pine nuts for the winter, for their camp down in Saline,—

There amid the lonely canyons comes a torrent rushing down,

Tumbling over rocks and boulders, with a strange, unearthly sound:

There upon a naked bedrock, jutting far out o'er the stream,

Sat a band of old prospectors, like the spirits of the scene. They had heard that Spanish legend—how, in the days of old,

A hunter on the mountain had found a ledge of gold;

How he went down to the valley and started with a train, But was lost out on the desert and was never seen again.

Old Uncle Dave was talking and he told a wondrous tale Of a ship that had been drifting at the mercy of a gale, How she sailed up in the desert after cruising 'round a while, At last had come to anchor close by a big sand pile.

Then they lowered all the small boats and struck out for the land

But were overtaken by a mighty storm of sand,

And of all that noble ship's crew not a soul was seen again, Except sometimes an anchor or perhaps an anchor chain.

How his pardner once while hunting for the long-lost Gunnsight lead saw that ship a-sailing round the desert at full speed—As she came towards him and went sailing quickly by

The lookout in the foretop sung out, "Al-ker-lee!"

How the taller 'gin to melt in his pardner as he lay

All night beside his burro waiting for the day.

And when the sun had risen and the daylight came around

His burro lay beside him dead as blazes on the ground.

Then he rolled his blankets and struck back for the mine

And for seven solid days he never looked behind,—

He never had a drink of water or ate a blessed thing.

Until he struck a mining camp,—they call it Resting Springs.

There the miners gathered 'round him and as he told a fearful tale

Of his wanderings on the desert,—it made their cheeks grow pale.

They filled him up with whiskey—but Bill was too far gone, They showed him every kindness, but his spirit passed beyond.

Old Uncle Dave ceased talking and

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Poteye in

"Beware of Barnacle Bill"

a silence on them fell Until McPhail laid down his pipe, then spoke and broke the spell.

"If that is what you call it, that very thing I've seen."

And he pointed with his finger to the valley of Saline.

"It was one summer evening outside my cabin door—

I was sitting on an oil-can pounding up some ore,

When I thought I heard the echo of a digger's dying wail

As it floated up the valley, borne on the evening gale.

I began to feel uneasy, I shut my cabin door

And walked out on the hillside to look the valley o'er."

There below me on the desert I saw such a fearful sight,

I could not move a muscle, I was paralyzed with fright,—

It was that ship of Davy's, with a ghostly crew all manned

And like the very devil she was tearing through the sand.

At last she came so near me I could hear the captain bawl,

As he passed the order, 'Forward man! the flying jib down haul!'

Then my legs got started and away they packed McPhail;

Like a double-barrelled shotgun I went up the Lone Pine trail;

When I reached the summit I turned and said 'Goodbye,'

But the lookout in the foretop only answered 'Al-ker-lee!'

Jack Ely had been sitting with his chin between his hands,

His upper lip was shaking as his story he began:

"I once had for a pardner a wild son-of-a-gun,

He came down here from Bodie, a land above the sun;

It was the vigilantes that made him leave that camp;

The chances are you knew him—his name was Billy Grant;

How I talked and toiled and labored to lead this wayward youth

From the trail of the unrighteous and lead him to the truth.

In vain were all my teachings, he would pass them heedless by,

And smile a gentle, sad, sweet smile and murmur, 'Jaky-er-lee!'

"We were out upon the desert—I forgot the day and year,

Hunting the Breyfogle, along with Reuben Spear;

For weeks and months we traveled, nothing had we struck—

I trusted Him who made the mines, and William cursed the luck.

You talk about your weather—we had it there, you bet;

The days and nights were all the same, I think I feel them yet;

It melted both our burros, their bones lie side by side,

And the yaller-bellied lizards just turned on their backs and died.

"We were loafing in our camp, near the sink of Furnace Creek;

Our grub had all but petered and we had lost our nip,

Five hundred miles from anywhere—things looked mighty bad,

To hoof it into Darwin was the only show we had.

The sun had done its setting, the moon just come in sight,

When out upon the desert we saw a moving light;

First a red light, then a white light, then it shone a bluish grey,

You bet yer life it scared me when Reub began to pray.

"It kept moving nearer, until there came in view,

The largest ship I ever saw, in fact as big as two;

Not a rattle broke the silence, everything was still,

And down my back there wandered a cold, an icy chill.

She was passing on to leave us when my pardner—foolish boy,

Stepped out into the darkness and yelled out, 'Ship ahoy!'

I heard the creaking of her rigging as they braced around her spars,

The lights from off her cat-heads shone like two burning stars;

My blood ran cold within me, my brain began to reel,

I saw Pap Walker on the deck, the devil at the wheel.

"My pardner then sprang forward to where a rope was lowered,

He took a turn around his neck, they hoisted him on board;

I saw him climb the rigging and I heard his farewell cry,

As he sung out from the foretop, 'So long, old man. Good-bye!'

She went sailing up the valley, in silence as she came,

My pardner he went with her—him I never saw again;

A faintish spell was on me, a kind of sickly dread,

I turned to look for Reuben, but Reuben he had fled.

"Next day I left the desert, a lonely broken man;

When I arrived in Darwin I could scarcely stand;

Jack Gunn's 'Woodlawn Daisy' soon braced me up all right,

But if I live a thousand years I'll not forget that night."

David looked at Dan, and Daniel looked at Dave,

Then both with admiration at Jack Ely they did gaze;

McPhail took up his pipe, old Davy heaved a sigh,

And muttered something like, "Blow me bloody eyes!"

Jack, when I tell a story, I sometimes prevaricate,

But I think of all the liars you're the damndest in the state!"

SAGE AND TUMBLEWEED

I offer no apology for copying the following from the faded original, written in a flowing hand on blue-ruled paper. I regret only that it may overrun a little the usual bounds of these wanderings, but, save for one stanza, I could find naught that could be omitted without spoiling the story. Mrs. Eva Lee Gunn, widow of the Jack Gunn whose "Woodland Daisy" chased Ely's fears away, found the document among her husband's effects, and to her discernment I owe this opportunity of publishing this racy fragment of Inyo fiction. Robert Service would have enjoyed the tale, even if the rhyme at times seems to have anticipated the advent of Ogden Nash. What, if aught, the writers knew of the legends of the Headless Horseman, the Flying Dutchman, or their ilk we have no way of discovering, but it is evident that these old-timers (and they were good men all) had quaffed deeply of Hassayampa, that river whose waters, once tasted, make it impossible for the partaker to distinguish henceforth between fact and fancy. And Jack Gunn may have packed home a canteen from the river's brink, for Mrs. Gunn confided to us that "you know, they have found a ship's mast in Death valley."

The Ship of the Desert
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Except sometimes an anchor or perhaps an anchor chain.

How his partner once while hunting for the long-lost Gunsight lead

Saw that ship a-sailing round the desert at full speed—
As she came towards him and went sailing quickly by

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