

No Duplicates

H38.

THE PILGRIM DIGGERS OF THE 70's.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN
OF
PILGRIMS REST

(1873 - 1881).

PREFACE.

When a mass of old papers, which had accumulated in the Pilgrims Rest Offices of the Transvaal Gold Mining Estates Ltd., was sorted out, a typewritten copy of "THE PILGRIM DIGGERS OF THE SEVENTIES" by the REVEREND GERALD HERRING, annotated in manuscript by the author, was found. I thought that this detailed and informative record of the early days should be made available to a wider circle of readers and, having obtained the author's consent to publication, sought the support of the company's Chairman, Mr. G.V.R. Richdale, knowing that he was keenly interested in the history of the district. He very kindly agreed to provide for publication of the work in printed form.

It may seem supererogatory to herald a booklet of these modest dimensions with both a foreword and a preface. The author's short foreword, in my opinion, admirably fulfils all requirements and it is only at his express wish that I write a few additional introductory lines. When he was Rector of St. Mary's, Pilgrims Rest, I was stationed at the Elandsdrift Mine near Sabie and I well remember seeing him from time to time approaching over the slopes of Spitzkop on horseback to hold divine service in the little mining camp, and also recall with pleasure the many interesting talks we had about the early days on the Goldfields.

At Synod in Pretoria, Bishop Talbot asked the rectors in his far-flung diocese to write up historical notes on their parishes. In the Author's case it is very obvious, that what may have begun as a task of duty was completed as a labour of love. He must have become thoroughly absorbed in his delvings into the past, and his understanding of human nature and pleasant manner with high and low enabled him to elicit information from sources which would not have responded to the ordinary touch.

The author deals with two phases in the development of the district, the days of the Voortrekkers and the period of the individual alluvial gold diggers. Two more different types of pioneers it would be difficult to picture. The Voortrekkers came to seek new homes, pastures to graze their cattle, land to sow their crops, and were filled with the great desire to live unfettered and worship as their forefathers for generations had done. The diggers followed, driven solely and simply by the "Auri Sacra Fames", without tradition and with no intention of staying longer than the creeks and terraces yielded payable gold. Yet the descendants of both are still with us in the district today. Others, however, there were who played memorable parts on the same stage. Outlined dimly against the dawn of South African history there appear the European precursors of even the Voortrekkers, the Portuguese; those intrepid explorers and adventurers, who penetrated into our mountain fastnesses long before the Great Trek in search of gold, ivory and animal skins. Then, in modern times, after the colourful and romantic digger came the matter of fact, methodical miner to be succeeded in turn by the great remodeller of our landscape, the forester.

Recent research in old archives is throwing more and more light on the exploits of the Portuguese pioneer, the achievements of the Voortrekker are established facts of history, the results of the miner's work are evidenced in the still prosperous villages of Pilgrims Rest and Sabie, and as to the forester: "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice" but the life and times of the digger might well be fading into oblivion, were it not for the chronicle which the author has given us in the following pages. To him is due a debt of gratitude, which I, on behalf of all who know and love our district, gladly acknowledge.

J.H.A. DIERING,
"ALANGLADE",

PILGRIMS REST.

MAY, 1948.

FOREWORD.

This little Memcir is only a Child's Guide to Knowledge

It is not meant for the mining expert but for the plain man that he may know something of the origin of the place and how the first pilgrims arrived, and what manner of men they were.

The account has been put together from old letters, conversations and records and I think it is pretty accurate. I am grateful to all who have kindly sent me reminiscences, books, letters, etc. The name of Scully often appears, and some of his information appears in this story. He is the only pilgrim who wrote at any length on the early days and, as those who know his books will admit, his descriptive ability is great. In a recent letter Mr. Scully speaks of Pilgrims Rest with real affection, "but", he says, "I had a very hard time".

Those who have been in these parts for many years will no doubt be able to criticise this account by a comparative newcomer. They may say that this and that is omitted, or over-emphasised. In which event I also would use the words of Anthony Trollope. As he went about South Africa 51 years ago, seeing and hearing many things from many people, he said - as Mrs. Millin reminds us in "The South Africans" - "I will write my book and not yours".

GERALD HERRING,
PILGRIMS REST.
APRIL 1928.

NOTE.

The material for this little sketch of the Pilgrims Diggers has been gathered for the most part from old letters, papers, etc., but the following books have been of use:-

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| BAINES: | The Gold Regions of S.E. Africa. |
| SCULLY. | Reminiscences of a South African Pioneer. |
| MILLIN: | The South Africans. |
| TROLLOPE: | South Africa. |
| WARREN: | On the Veld in the Seventies. |
| RICHARDS: | The Truth about the New Goldfields. |
| CUMMING: | Five Years in the Interior of South Africa. |
| SANDEMAN: | Eight Months in an Ox Wagon. |
| ATCHERLEY: | A Trip to Boer Land. |
| FULLER: | Paper on the Tsetse Fly (Government Research). |
| | The Journal of the Small Mines and Claimholders. |

G.H.

THE GRAVES OF THE VOORTREKKERS

1.

There is a grave in Ohrigstad,
Full eight foot square it lies;
Heaped high with stone from long ago
It tells a tale of ancient woe
And old world tragedies.

The old Voortrekker dug that grave;
He dug it wide and deep,
And tenderly he laid them there;
He sang no psalm; he said no prayer,
Nor ever turned to weep.

He spanned his oxen at the drift
Then took the river course.
He trekked all night till dawn of day;
The bitter, barren dawn of day
That came up like a curse

-A. Scrymgeour.

THE DIGGER of the Seventies who came, with creaking ox wagon, up on to the rocky heights of the Drakensberg, and wandered in his search for gold along its precipitous edge, was not the first man on the spot. Before long he found little walls of stone, carefully built up, enclosing spaces of a few feet each way - graves of the Voortrekkers. But few are visible now. Still fewer can be identified. The local stone has sunk into the ground. Dust to dust and stone to stone, the little cairns have become in many instances just part of the landscape.

Some memories remain, however. One grave, on the farm London, is known to be the resting-place of two little Voortrekker children, drowned in the Treur River, and the grave of the elephant hunter on Ledouphine is clearly marked. His story, later to be told, came from an old native who worked as a picannin for him.

But the history of these men is vague. These graves are those of Ohrigstad Boers, mostly of the forties, who hunted along the edge of the berg and in some cases decended in a desperate attempt to reach Delagoa Bay; an attempt which frequently cost them their lives. And so their bones lie along the road between Ohrigstad and the Low Country; by the Blyde, the Treur, Kaspernek, and the surrounding country. Long before the gold seekers came, they played their part on the great stage of Africa. All unconscious of the precious metal, they died by the roadside....

2.

As early as 1836 two great treks were made by Boers in the Transvaal; their leaders were Van Rensburg and Trichardt. Van Rensburg, with forty-nine followers, went North over the Zoutpansberg to the Limpopo where the whole party was massacred in July of that year. Trichardt, with a party of forty-five (only nine of whom were huntsmen), in the middle of 1837 made an attempt to cross the Drakensberge and reach Delagoa Bay. Of him and his party something must be said; for his was the first great fight with the "Dragons Mountain" and his route through the gold regions.

Coming South from Louis Trichardt, by way of the Leydsdorp country, they reached, in October, the Olifants River. They crossed its winding course thirteen times. After the thirteenth crossing a retreat had to be made owing to the ravages of the tsetse fly. They struggled up the heights of the mountain; men, women and children, in a desperate effort, worked to hack out a road up the slopes. After sixteen days they reached the top and there, in the mist, the fly-struck cattle began to die.

Then came the descent. First the cattle were taken down. Then on December 1st. the wagons were taken to pieces and brought half way down. Twenty-three days were occupied in getting into the plains. Finally the trek started again on February 5th. 1838, from a point near the junction of the Steelpoort with the Olifants. It was April when the party, weakened by want

and disease, at length reached Lourenco Marques. Here most of them died, including the brave Trichardt himself.

For many years the Voortrekkers were on their journeys. From the Cape they came in 1836; from Natal in 1843; from the Orange River in 1848. Always they sought open country, space and freedom. Always they fled from Government; especially British Government. On and on they steered their wagons into the wilderness, further and further North.

Lovers of the Old Testament, which meant more to them in the conduct of their daily lives than the New, ever they remembered Abraham. Of him they would read by candlelight in the tent wagons. Did he not go out not knowing whither he went; into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance? And did he not, by faith, sojourn in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents? Ach, sekerlik!

4.

In 1843 when the British annexed Natal, there were a few white men, farmers, scattered between Potchefstroom and what is now Zeerust. Cut off from a port by the annexation they were advised to get into touch with Delagoa Bay. Their Commandant, Andries Hendrik Potgieter, then made a treaty with Sekwati, father of Sekukuni, and the whole community, estimated at six hundred males, trekked from Potchefstroom and founded, in August 1845, a village at Andries Ohrigstad. But the place proved unhealthy, and in 1847, they left it for Lydenburg. By 1849 the office of the Landroost had been moved there.

Desperate and disastrous attempts were being made all this time to cross the Drakensberge and open up connection with Delagoa Bay. In 1840 came the famous Smellekamp to Durban on the ship "Brazilie". There he signed a treaty with the Volksraad on behalf of the Government of Holland, and sent word to the Voortrekkers that he would come again. He would bring, he promised, a shipload of arms, ammunition, clergymen and schoolmasters - a strange mixture.

In 1843 he arrived again at Durban on the "Brazilie", but the British were now in possession and would not allow him to land. And so he went to Delagoa Bay and got in touch with Potgieter. But he brought no ammunition, only a clergyman and a couple of schoolteachers.

A last attempt to trade with Delagoa was made in 1848 when Smellekamp arrived once more. He came on the Dutch ship "De Animo" with merchandise for "the Dutch Africanders". On this occasion Potgieter came to Delagoa with a strong party of Boers. But they lost nearly all their cattle, many men died of fever, and the financial loss was considerable. After this it was agreed that no further attempts to open up direct business relations with Holland should be made. And so, for some years the grass grew over the Delagoa track; the lions were undisturbed, and many a man lay in his grave along the Ohrigstad - Low Country route.

5.

Between 1846 and 1849 there was a good deal of hunting. Ohrigstad was then on the edge of the ivory country and most of the men went after elephant. And it was a profitable business. Cumming, the pioneer Scotsman who was hunting in those days, says in his book that ivory was worth £28 to £40 per 112 lbs. and a single tusk would weigh from sixty to one hundred pounds. The hippo was much sought also as, in those days, its ivory was used in the manufacture of artificial teeth. Ivory was the sole export of these pioneer Boers to the Bay. And so they would push out from Ohrigstad and descend the rocky slopes of the Berg after game.

Old routes in this district can still be found of which Zwartboois' Footpath is a good specimen. It runs down in the Bushbuck Ridge region on to the farm Versailles. It has the appearance of having been used for generations. Its surface is of huge slippery boulders, green with moss, and across it are the creeping roots of trees. It runs down the Berg through a tunnel of trees like some nightmare staircase. A friend who accompanied the writer described the descent as "like going down the wall of a house under the Virginia creeper".

6.

A grave on the farm Ledouphine No. 457 recalls these days of the elephant hunters. Three men who lived on this farm used to go down the Belvedere path hunting ivory along the Oliphants River. On one occasion, returning from a trip

their ammunition exhausted, they met a large herd of elephants in the neighbourhood of the Boschbokrand Mountain. The African is the fastest mover of all the elephants, and wonderfully quick over precipitous ground. The men were hard pressed in their retreat. One man of the three, de Villiers, already weakened by fever, never recovered. His two companions, Neethling and Viljoen, buried him on Ledouphine, and his grave is still able to be identified, for on the headstone of local shale, now fast weathering and chipping, can be read:

HIER J.....LLIERS DEN ... Feb. 1847.

The names of many of these places tell their own tale....

In memory of their sufferings in the Ohrigstad Valley the town of Lydenburg was so called - the town of Pain. The Blyde is the river of Joy. It was upon its banks that two parties of Boers rejoined after missing each other at the Treur, the Weeping River. The origin of the name of Pilgrims Rest is, however, English. Whilst paying due respect to the fifty year old statement of Baines that it comes from "the resemblance of a prospecting tour to a pilgrimage, and of the likeness of the fortunate discovery to the arrival at the shrine, "to be preferred is the plain statement of a digger of 1873:-

One of the first men in the creek, Alec Patterson, as he saw the diggers, swag on shoulder, coming in to search for gold, used to say of each as he passed: "Here comes another pilgrim to his rest". (The party of some twelve men who came to Mac Mac with Herbert Rhodes (see Page 9) were given the name "The Pilgrims", according to R.T.M. James who supervised a claim rush for them in 1873.)

Of the coming of the pilgrims the following pages tell....

THE APPROACHES TO THE GOLDFIELDS.

THE FAMOUS Karl Mauch had prospected around Lydenburg in 1868, and Button in 1871. Both found gold. Then MacLachlan discovered it on Hendriksdal and Spitzkop in 1872 and did a little primitive washing on Geelhoutboom. But it was not till February 6th. 1873, that payable gold was discovered near the Blyde River by Parsons, MacLachlan, and Valentine. The following month one hundred and eighty diggers were at work on Mac Mac, and on the 14th. May the Government proclaimed the area as a payable gold field.

In the following year, 1874, the Pilgrims Creek was rushed consequent on a discovery, according to learned books by William Trafford, a miner. But old tradition acclaims Alec Patterson as the finder of the gold.

Almost at the same time Nolan found gold on the Waterfall creek and some sixty diggers got to work there. That is how the whole thing started

2.

Immediately an enormous pilgrimage began. The smell of gold reached the furthest parts of the Cape. Men converged from all directions. From Kimberley, from Grahamstown, from all points on the coast. And from overseas. Many came from Kimberley through Pretoria and Middelburg. The latter, then called Nazareth* was a kind of half-way house. Here were, at one time, a hundred wagons outspanned and twice that number of diggers.

The Natal route too, was packed with travellers. In the little up-country hotels men slept in any corner they could find. At Newcastle, returning diggers with treasure from Pilgrims Rest, would amaze the public by spreading upon newspapers all over the hotel billiard table, the nuggets and specimens they had dug from the creek.

The untiring explorer Baines, was, meantime, preparing numerous itineraries. From material gathered between 1869 and 1872 he was able to direct the traveller from almost any point in Africa to any goldfields then known. Baines was a most accurate man. He could give you a wide choice of roads. He had noted all the prominent trees, grasses, marshes and waterholes. His were the books to have in those days. It was a great thing to know whether the water in the river to which you were coming was clean or dirty, light or dark brown. These things, together with information about the tsetse fly, and many another unpleasant creatures, Baines could speak about with an astonishing exactitude.

He could tell the adventurer who was intending to make the direct trip

*Burgers changed the name as he said Nazareth reminded him of leprosy!

4.

from Lydenburg to Mac Mac, or Spitzkop, over the Devil's Knuckles and through Hell's Gates what to expect ... all about the mountain passes like broken "stair-cases", and the last descent to Spitzkop, down a hill "like the wall of a house" where, one reads, that the wheels of a Scotch Cart had to be tied up with reins, as, with all four of the party hanging onto the back, it slid, scraped and drifted down the Berg.

3.

For the most part the pilgrims were British. Many had had mining experience in other parts of the Empire. The Lydenburg Goldfields, to give them their earliest name, were dug almost entirely by men whose flag was the Union Jack. To this day the district is one of the most solidly British districts in the Union.

A line of communication seems always to have existed between the British of the goldfields and those of Natal. There was a going to and fro, and the first stores to be opened on the fields were those of Natal firms.

Although the Dutch dorp of Lydenburg was near, (and the Natal route ran through it), there was not much love lost between the two places. To the Lydenburgers the diggers were a rough and ungodly crowd. When the "rebellion" mentioned later, broke out at Pilgrims Rest it was well that the matter was finally patched up on the spot as the appearance of a commando of "filibusters" would have precipitated serious trouble.

ooooOoooo

DELAGOA BAY

1.

THE SHORTEST and most direct route was from the sea. It was a much quicker way of approaching the goldfields than the trip over-land from Durban; that worked out at some 450 miles. And so a great number of men landed at Lourenco Marques.

A party of New Zealand miners even chartered a schooner from some point in the Cape to this port. These men, Scully says, he remembers well. He worked for them for wages. In a recent letter to the writer he recalls the leader of the party, one Bill Smith. Another man who left vivid memories behind him was called Morris. He had a habit of eating his meat raw.

The little port was no health resort in those days. On three sides of the town was a "crescent of foulness", a swamp. Hence the constant fight against a fever of a billious, remittent type which all too many of the pilgrims were to carry up with them through the Low Country to the heights of Spitzkop and Mac Mac.

From a study of letters and records it is not hard to picture the kind of trip awaiting the man who chose this road in the seventies.

2.

Perhaps he would come by boat from Durban to save time. There, at Durban, to begin with, he got much discouragement. The Natal folk were not cut to encourage the Portuguese landing place. They would rather have the traveller use their Natal transport.

And they talked a great deal about the fever on the inland route. But the goldseeker was in a hurry. Besides the stores in Durban were more than ready to fit him out with all the necessary, and unnecessary, gear. They bristled with mining and camping material. And so, on, perhaps, the "Lady Wood", or the "Sea Nymph", the pilgrims would embark up the coast.

All sorts of men. One had been mate to Bret Harte in California, nineteen years or so earlier. Many were deserting sailors. These were very apt to be caught by the gold fever; they could later be recognised, very often, by their nicknames on the fields. Men of every social grade, of every type and temperament, landed at Lourenco Marques. But that was the simplest part of the whole business. The trouble lay in front of them

3.

The pilgrim would not wish to stay.

There were no attractions then. No bathing beaches, no bands, not one Hotel. A Dr. Graham tells how he had, in 1874, to sleep in a mud stable,

where all the party of twenty-four caught fever and most of the inhabitants of the place were suffering too. Later, in 1877, Capetain Warren says the port had only fifty inhabitants, mostly married to Kaffir wives. In the main street, ankle deep in sand, he was able to outspan his wagon and watch his Natives build a fire and cook their food.

That was the sort of place it was

But, even as early as that, the Portuguese had begun to drain the marsh, and it is due to good work on their part that mine managers and their wives can go down there for the weekend and listen to the band.

The traveller of those early days could not listen to the band. And he would not have wanted to go and see any lions in the Botanic Gardens. But, to pass the time, he could go and look at the nice railway line which was reposing on the beach; at any rate, the first instalment of it.

President Burgers had gone off to Holland to raise the money. He came back and gave out that he had got all of it - £300,000. As a matter of fact he had managed to raise £79,136. Of this he had spent on the plant £63,200. It was mortgaged to pay for the freight.

And then too, labour was scarce. No one wanted to sojourn in that fever country. When, at last, the rail came to be built, the casualties both among the black and white, were terrible.

Scully gives some idea of the unhealthiness of the country when he states that of thirty-five men who descended into the Low Country in the Autumn of 1873, twenty-seven died.

The story of the Delagoa road is a depressing account of the struggle of Man with Nature. Every kind of attempt was made to establish connection between the inland parts and the seaboard.

As early as 1860 it was proposed to use traction engines between Delagoa and the Zoutpansberg. In 1864 McCorkindale proposed to navigate the Maputa river to the Lebombo Mountains and then establish an ox wagon road. He thought, by using the river to get over some eighty miles with ease and safety.

But the idea of a railway was much favoured. As early as 1870 a concession was granted to Moodie for the purpose. This concession was renewed in 1873. But in 1875 Nellmapius is found making, after all, a wagon road. The seventies were passed before the rail was actually in use.

THROUGH THE FEVER AND FLY COUNTRY.

1.

BUT TO RETURN to the pilgrim arriving in the early seventies on his way to the fields He was equipped with picks and shovels, (long and short handled). He had Boer meal at £4. a bog, condensed milk at half a crown a tin, butter in two pound tins, at seven shillings a tin. Among his gear he had probably some fever medicine too, for several kinds were then on the market. More effective than pleasant must have been the specific known as "Dr. Livingstone's". These were the ingredients : jalap 8 grs., Calomel 8 grs., rhubarb 6 grs. quinine 6 grs. The dose was ten grains on the first attack. If the fever was not got under in the first twenty-four hours the patient's life was considered to be in danger.

And so he rolled up all his stuff, his tent and his blankets, in a bundle and was ready

He was more than weary of wandering around in the sand of the Bay, viewing the cocoanut palms and the mud. He was eager to be off on his journey which would be, to Pilgrims Rest, one hundred and seventy-three and three-quarter miles.

2.

Having, with difficulty, obtained carriers, he would, very likely, join a party of twenty or less and walk with them, accompanied by a similar number of kaffirs. But there was always the chance that the carriers would desert in the sand before they had gone very far, unless the price of their labour were raised. Or, they might be discovered, hopelessly drunk when but a short way out, for the Kaffir could buy a small bottle of fiery brandy for sixpence, and there was also to be obtained a terrible drink called "Hurricane Gin" which could "blow your head off". Freight was not cheap. Luggage by wagon cost £3. per hundredweight; £60 a ton.

The lion was there and every ravenous beast, including the tsetse fly; it was surely found there. So the unregenerate walked, their Kaffirs beside them obtaining continual and everlasting curses on their heads; for the heat was intolerable, and the flies not to be borne.

3.

After sixteen miles the pilgrim would begin to cross the Lebombo ranges, and, after fifty, the boundary of Portuguese territory would be reached. At about sixtytwo miles from the sea he would be upon the Komati river - it was then a swift flowing stream twenty-four yards wide and three feet deep. In a bad rainy season it would be impossible to cross either the Komati or the Crocodile, at which river he would arrive some sixteen miles further.

The Crocodile was ninety yards across and four feet deep; it was full of nodules of rock, sand and stones. Here was the first clean water on the trip. So far it had varied between light and dark brown. Recourse to gin and brandy under the circumstances hurried on very many deaths. A bottle of brandy cost 1/6d. at the coast in 1878. At this point an unsuccessful attempt was made to establish a stopping place, but no one would stop. A traveller of 1874 reports that only one or two Kaffirs were to be found there, and, along with them, six empty bottles and a tin dish. There were a few empty huts about - that was all. Every inducement was held out to persuade white men to stay at the stations between Pretorius Kop and the sea and arrange for transport by Kaffirs. But they all deserted, died, or were murdered. One man only stayed. This man, Hart, lived in a little log cabin some fifteen miles from Pretorius Kop. He was a great favourite both with whites and blacks. He kept all sorts of tame animals, buck, parrots, jays, monkeys and snakes.

One day a party of Natives came to his little station and said that some white men had robbed them of a gun and demanded that Hart should give up his own. Hart stepped out of his door to argue with them and, as he did so he was shot dead from behind. His little station was burned together with all his animals and their huts and cages. Sandeman describes the devastated little place in his book "Eight Months in an Ox Wagon".

No. No one would stop. The great thing was to get on. To get on along the track which led through a beautiful, parklike panorama, full of trees and long, waving grass,

At night the pilgrim would light his fires; big fires, for there was plenty of wood all the way, and, also, plenty of lions. As close as he could get beside the fire, the pilgrim lay, and on the highest ground, furthest from the swamp. These expedients, together with personal cleanliness, were then, the only ways known of avoiding the fever. It was thought to come from the miasma arising from the rotting vegetation of the marshes. In this ignorance was death.

The day of Ronald Ross was not yet. Not yet had the real cause, the Anopheles mosquito been nailed down as the real criminal. Ridiculed, discouraged, downhearted, Ross and his men went on. With but small help from the Government, pressed on all sides, the search was maintained by the indomitable scientist. And the day came. The day when he wrote in his diary:-

This day relenting God
Hath placed within my hand
A wondrous thing, and God
Be praised. At His Command
Seeking His secret deeds,
With tears and toiling breath,
I find thy cunning seeds,
O million murdering death

4.

Meanwhile the pioneer of the seventies, huddled by his fire, slept by the Komati, and the Crocodile. And he would be uneasy. For his oxen, should he own them, he would not mind Anyhow an ox could go on for six weeks after being bitten by tsetse.... But the fever.... People were talking so.... There was Gray in 1873. His mate went back to the Bay for help. He took all the money and got drunk on it. Gray was left to die alone. Scully, a year later, found the grave. Some pitiful Christian had, he says, tied two sticks together and put them as a cross in the sand to mark the place. Here is part of a

letter, written by a Mr. Mansfield at the time of the great rush to Pilgrims Rest:-

".... Your Kaffir, Jim, met Mr. Sankey Kennedy and myself at the point of death with forty-three Kaffirs. I have been prostrated and reduced to a skeleton. Sankey also has been in a fearful state; in fact our sufferings on the road have been such as I cannot tell you on this scrap of paper. Poor Rockencamp died at some Kaffir houses. Wilkinson drowned himself in a delirium of fever. Dr. Graham's Cape Town boy and his little protege are dead. A Mr. Jenkins is stopped at some Kaffir kraals by fever .. his life is despaired of.... Pray don't blame Jim; he has saved my life by his attentions to me whilst raving with fever by the roadside. We have reached Rockencamp's wagon...."

5.

This was the sight that met the Government expedition, under Major MacDonald, which went to bring arms and ammunition from the Bay in 1874. (This expedition took with them 200 oxen. Very few of them returned to the fields).

Between the Komati and the Crocodile a deserted tent wagon was found. Around it lay the rotting carcasses of oxen. Nearby were some low mounds. Under the wagon lay four men in the delirium of fever. Scully, who was there, says:-

"The unhappy creatures mowed and raved at us in French. We gave them water which they greedily drank. The stench was frightful; the mounds we had noticed were human graves. But no excavations had been made, the sand being simply heaped over the bodies. At length a gigantic, bearded man emerged from the bush and approached, carrying a small demijohn of water in each hand". This man, Isadore Alexandre, a Frenchman, had gone each day to fetch water. It was ten miles off. The lions at night would attack the graves; one of the bodies they had rooted out."

The survivors of the party, which had been originally eight, were taken in to Delagoa Bay. Among the men who went with the expedition were the diggers, MacPherson, Garry, Dick Giles, Mockett, Collins, Brother Bill, Gilbert and Artful Joe.

6.

At length, after some 120 miles of fever and fly country, the great rocky slopes of the Drakensberg would begin to stand out boldly. Up there, above the green gulleys and deep kloofs, were clean air and cool breezes. Sand River would be passed and the pilgrim stood, 2,500 feet about the sea. At Pretorius Kop the climb began in earnest. Spitzkop with its quaint dome-shaped top would now beckon and on its shoulder men were already working. It is interesting to note that Atcherley and a friend climbed this kopje in 1879. He found not only wonderful ferns and orchids but a bee's nest in nearly every fissure. More interesting still, he discovered traces of old workings..... "Half way down... some ancient workings they were, without doubt, very old and, in places the arch of the tunnel was built up with stone which still bore the mark of a steel tool". He reckoned these workings were of Portuguese origin, but imagined they were possibly even older.

By Beacon Kopje, on the farm Ophir, the tired Pilgrims would ascend. Like a sentinel this sharp, stony point surveys the Low Country on three sides and looks out over the worn and washed out wagon tracks of long ago. A stop on the spruit north of Spitzkop, another at Sabie Falls, (3,600 ft), and the way was easy going to Mac Mac 5,050 ft. above the sea.

MAC MAC.

1.

THE TREK from Lourenço Marques took, as a rule, nine days. This period gave the fever just the right time to show itself and, not seldome, the pilgrim would collapse on the high ground at Mac Mac. Here many a man had reason to be grateful to Mrs. Tom MacLachlan and the ladies of that homestead, amongst whom were her three daughters and also, in those early days, a Miss Wilson and a Miss Espach (later Mrs. Austin).

This lady, who died in Lydenburg in 1928 at the age of 77, was one of the two recipients of the "Burger Cross" which was awarded to her on

the 25th. August 1874, in recognition of her nursing service in the Kaffir Wars. The cross, which is almost certainly made of Pilgrims Rest gold is massive and has two bars bearing the inscriptions - "Burger Cross" and "Presented to Mrs. D. Austin".

More than one man, through the kindness shown him here, was able to take up his tools and pursue the fortune, the vision of which had kept him going over the long trail. When, later on, the President of the Transvaal, came to Mac Mac, he presented Mrs. Maclachlan with a gold cross, inset with a diamond, in recognition of her kindness to the pioneers.

The Maclachlan family had arrived in 1872 from Lydenburg. They came over the Pilgrims Hill and through the valley. Although there was no road but only a track, they were probably wiser than others who took the direct route through Hell's Gates.

The farm was called Geelhoutboom, taking its name from a tall yellow-wood tree which grew nearby. Later purchasers of the property even took the stones of the building away with them.

It was here then, to Geelhoutboom, that the first diggers came. Some are still alive, and two, Messrs. Davies and Spinner, live on the spot. The former arrived in December and the latter in June of 1873.

Among the very earliest arrivals was a party of Australians; it was with them that Spinner came. They made their way from Kimberley - fifteen of them and, for the wagon trip, each man paid £6. When Lydenburg was reached the contractor, a Britisher, refused to go any further. The road, he said, was impossible..... However an Afrikaner volunteered to have a shot at it. They came direct over the Devil's Knuckles and through Hell's Gates with the wagon wheels lashed up, and bounding from rock to rock. Spinner, who had been a sailor, was given the job of remaining on the wagon and holding on to the "swag".

The Afrikaner, once he had arrived, swore that he would never make the trip again. He would rather, he said, stay at home for the rest of his life making veldskoene. Nor was the Afrikaner exaggerating ... Sandeman, who made that trip some four years later and took some sixty hours to do the twenty-five miles between Lydenburg and Spitzkop, says:-

"Our second trek took us over the most dreaded part of the road, called the Devil's Knuckles. These infernal knuckles consist of four steep hills standing boldly out by themselves, and joining each other; and the ~~track~~, of necessity, leads over and down each of their almost vertical summits. The sides are too steep and stony for any amount of cutting to make a safe road. When on the top of one of these points the wagon looked as if it were stuck on the point of a sugar loaf, and that any attempt at descent must result in a headlong roll down many hundred feet over the rocky precipice on either side. The ascents were so steep that we had to use both spans to each wagon many oxen and wagons have been lost at this part of the road.

Atcherley, who made the trip in 1879, went clean overboard, wagon and all. Everything breakable was smashed. A rifle was bent double, and pots and pans were squashed into cocked hats. His disselboom broke and a young tree had to be used to make a new one. Most of the wagons at this time had two disselbome.

3.

It has to be remembered that no road through Pilgrims Rest existed then. The place itself did not exist. That was to come into being in the years following. It was then that the diggings were to extend for some four miles and the number of men at the height of the excitement was probably about fourteen hundred.

At Mac Mac in 1873, the average amount of gold a digger took out daily was from 5 dwts up to as much as 8 ounces. But there was much concealment in the matter. The Australians were accused of trying to get the place the name of a "Poor Man's Diggings" and of being dissatisfied if they could not make £8.10.0d. a day.

In September 1874, President Burgers visited the fields at Geelhoutboom. He gave permission for the township of Mc Mc - the earliest spelling of the name, to be formed, and the diggings were named the New Caledonia Goldfields.

Burgers was popular with the diggers. This exclergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church was a man of progressive instincts and ideas much in advance of his day. He won a curious and pleasant reputation by relieving

a murderer... The man was said to be an expert in laying out rose gardens. Burgers, to whom roses made no small appeal, thought the man would be far better occupied in laying out a rose garden for him in Pretoria than in retiring to eternal rest by way of the hangman's rope.

But there were those who thought Burgers theatrical, somewhat of a show-man and an unpractical idealist. Trollope did... "Mr Burgers rushed at once to the fruition of all the good things which a country could possess, without stopping to see whether they were there to be enjoyed. Such was his temperament. Nothing declares more plainly the excessive wealth of France and England than plenty of gold coinage. Therefore let us have some gold pieces in the Transvaal; How proud are the citizens of the United States of their Stars and Stripes; Therefore let us have a flag! He wished" said Trollope, "to provide the Transvaal with frills when it was a shirt and other of the simplest garments that the people of the Transvaal then wanted.."

However, the diggers were delighted to see the President.

Whilst on his visit to the fields, Burgers bought two nuggets, the Emma, of sixteen, and the Adeliza of over twenty-two ounces. He also purchased 300 ounces of gold and had 1,000 coins struck with his effigy upon them; of these he sent a specimen to every self Governing country. But, alas, these coins, which set out under such good auspices, were to be discovered, in after years, enjoying an ignoble retirement; they hung, as curiosities, upon the ends of watch chains.

But Burgers was keen; he wished to do all in his power; and it was at this time that he managed to pass a grant of £1,000 for making a road to Delagoa. His visit was marked by great rejoicings. At Geelhoutboom there was a public meeting followed by a picnic and a ball and everyone was in the highest spirits.

4.

Of those old days a few traces still remain. A mile or two from the house of Messrs. Hore and Evans, upon a knoll on the left side of the road to Pilgrims Rest, is the grave of William Napier, the son of William John, Lord Napier. Having trekked up from the Low Country in the thick of the fever season, he died at Mac Mac of fever on January 15th. 1876. He lies with his feet towards the old diggings, the site of which is plain from the upheavals of tons of red earth. The great gaping wounds in the hillsides, and the fifty-year old water furrows, hidden in the grass, tell too of bygone activity.

But no trace of the two stores, one kept by Percy Hope, Swain & Co., and the other by R.T.M. James & Co., can be found, nor is the site of the Canteen to be discovered. That was a venture of Cecil Rhodes' elder brother Herbert. He came up to the Fields with a party of twelve (including the billiard marker from the Victoria Club, Maritzburg) and with a wagon load of liquor. He established a famous hostelry which was named the "Spotted Dog". But not a bone of it remains.

However, the scenery is still there to enchant the traveller. As he goes through Mac Mac his eye takes in the numerous wild flowers which, especially in the summer, grow here in great abundance. By the roadside are to be found the white arum, the yellow iris and the red Montbretia, whilst at no great distance, are the rocky hills with their green kloofs. And always, in long low clouds, the white mist, creeping over the Berg, seems gently to be washing away all sign of the rough work of the past.

EARLY DAYS IN PILGRIMS REST.

1.

SCULLY HAS a clear picture of Pilgrims Rest as he saw it shortly after digging had begun. Out of work and with but seven shillings in his pocket, he walked in over the Pilgrims Hill. From its heights he saw the little white tents of the diggers dotted along the creek.

With the highest hopes he scrambled down over the quartz and through the patches of forest, till, after wading through the Blyde River drift, he came into camp. He tells how the diggers, lounging outside the canteens, looked curiously at him with the interest that naturally attached itself to

a new chum. Before long he made friends with a party of Australians who gave him work handling pick and shovel. For this he received the standard European wage of an ounce of gold a week. (Value £3.12.6d.) He came in with two companions but, on arrival, cut loose from them. One, Artful Joe, was among the diggers who went on MacDonald's Delagoa expedition.

His first job was on "The Reef" which was later to be called the Jubilee Mine. Later he worked for Wolff and McGrath. Of the latter he tells a curious snake story. McGrath, whilst working on Jubilee, was bitten by a mamba on the instep. So virulent was the poison that he became a physical wreck. Many of his muscular movements were seriously affected and for months he had to use his hands to open and shut his eyes.

Scully managed to live well on his pay although prices were very high. All labour was done by whites.

Money was also to be made by the manufacture of the small calico tents then used. The price of these was about thirty-five shillings. Scully eked out a living in this way and his expenses for board and lodging only amounted to two shillings a day.

2.

On Sundays he would walk up to the "Divide" which means, evidently, the top of Graskop. From here "far and faint" glimpses of the Low Country could be obtained, shrouded in a mysterious and tantalising haze. That country, he says, was unmapped and largely unknown. It is doubtful whether he was aware of the Voortrekkers' wanderings through it.

The scenery fascinated him, as did also, the game. At times "an odd lion would lead his mate and her brood up one of the dizzy clefts in the precipice to prey on the cattle, which, in seasons of drought, the Lydenburg farmers sent here for the sake of the rich pasturage".

On the Lydenburg road in the early seventies the lion was occasionally to be met. Rous, the first Editor and proprietor of the "Volkstem", when riding from Pilgrims Rest to Pretoria, had a curious experience. In the words of his son, Mr. Cole Rous:- "...He off-saddled in some old cattle kraals which may still be seen near Kruger's Post; they were overgrown with Tambookie grass. He chose this spot to shelter from the high wind blowing at the time. He had not been resting long when he heard something moving, and, getting up to investigate, he found that the kraal was a lion's den and two small cubs were cowering about, awaiting the return of their mother. My father did not await this event as he was unarmed. (The rifles of those days took some carrying, and the horse was already heavily loaded..) He thought, however, he might as well take one of the cubs along to Lydenburg. He clambered on the horse with the little animal and started off. After he had been travelling for some distance, he looked back and found that the lioness was following him. He pushed on but eventually found the mother lion uncomfortably near. And so, at one of the many water courses, he dropped the cub in the road when the lioness was only fifty yards behind him and dashed through the water. The lioness came up to the cub, fondled it for a little while, then took it up in her mouth and returned back along the road".

3.

The scenery of Pilgrims Rest was different then. There were no trees and very few buildings. Along the creek grew low bush. There were three camps. The Lower was between the culvert and the Berea Hill. The Middle went on from the Berea to the Stanley Bush path. The Upper was above the Desire battery site. The best gold was found in the Lower. Further up it was scarcer and coarser. The great find of Barrington and Osborne was made in a crevice, or recess, of the creek where the dyke crosses it below Jack Hjul's. The spot will be clear to present day dwellers if the late Jack Hjul's house is indicated. The find was made in the creek below the house, and was just above Nellmapius' claims....

Osborne was the first to strike the gold. He pulled out a nugget of some seven pounds. Barrington soon struck another lump. It was three or four pounds weight. "Mind my crab", Osborne shouted, indicating his nugget. The men went on and in the course of that day's work gathered over thirteen pounds weight of nugget gold. Barrington afterwards took the stuff to Kimberley and other places for exhibition, accompanied by an official letter guaranteeing

the genuinness of his find.

4.

One of the historic mysteries of Pilgrims Rest is the peach tree. It has puzzled everyone, ever since the first diggers, to know how it came here. The Pilgrims were grateful for it, only, sometimes to be disappointed as, when growing over "pay dirt", it was uprooted.

The presence of the peach tree is one of the facts which supports the idea that the Voortrekkers halted here. The theory gets some confirmation from the very early finding mentioned by Baines (1877) of broken down human dwellings at "Peach Tree Rush", as it was first called.

5.

It is well known that the quantity of water in the creek is today very much less than it was in the old days and the following weird story of what happened in 1875 is taken from the account of Dr. Atcherley who wrote in 1879. "A very heavy rainfall had taken place accompanied by one of those fearful thunderstorms so frequent in these latitudes during the summer. The quiet creek was converted into a roaring torrent which was rolling the boulders along like wisps of straw. The terrified inhabitants of the camp stood by horror stricken.... watching the destruction....when, by some marvel, and without sign of warning, the boiling flood suddenly ceased, and where a moment before an enormous volume had been rushing by, an insignificant rivulet now trickled lazily along". The diggers went to investigate this peculiar affair and found the whole body of the flood precipitating itself into a vast black chasm, which yawned across the creek bed. "Fearful sounds, resembling thunder, and others like sharp explosions issued from this mysterious opening into the nether region". People moved their goods and possessions from the river bank fearing a great collapse.

Later on an inspection was made. A channel was cut skirting the chasm and the stream brought back to its original course. Beams were placed across the opening and a man with a torch lowered into the pit. At ninety feet down he could see nothing but could hear the sounds of rushing water in the distance and the crashing of rocks. He was pulled up again and refused to make another descent; nor could anyone else be found to venture. A weight was then attached to a line and lowered, when the depth of the cave was found to be over two-hundred feet, with, curiously enough, a dry, rocky bottom. The opening evidently connected with an underground river and a series of caves of which this district is full. By the time of Atcherley's visit the mouth of the chasm had been closed up with stonework.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DIGGER.

1.

"PILGRIMS REST", says Scully, "during the first few years after gold had been discovered, was an interesting and delightful place. Those", he continues, "whose experience of mining camps is limited to those in which the syndicate or company holds sway, can form no idea of the life of a community where the individual digger is dominant. I am prepared", he says, "to affirm that life was healthier, saner, and, on the whole, more generally satisfactory at Pilgrims Rest in the seventies than it is in any South African community today".(1913).

And with this introduction we shall now take a fairly close view of the digger himself....

Evidence goes to show that, whatever else he was, the pilgrim of the seventies was a hard working man of strong personality, fierce passions, generous disposition and great vitality. He was, through and through, a wanderer and an adventurer. Throwing off the ways of civilisation, along with his jacket, forgetful of father and mother, oblivious of caste, yet still conscious of country, he joined a pack of hunters. And, nearly always, he was given by them a new name, a nick-name, which often he would carry to his grave.

Bret Harte shows how this occurred so often, for the same thing happened on the mines of Sonora in 1854. In a moment, from some peculiarity of speech, dress or habit, a man would shed his name, as a snake its skin, and be known afresh for ever afterwards. "Tennessee's Partner" was never known by any other name. "Dungaree Jack" was clearly so called on account of his taste in

trousers. But it needed explanation to be aware that the mild, inoffensive looking man, known as "Iron Pirate" was so called from his mispronunciation of iron pyrites. In "Tennessee's Partner" the process can be seen at work...

"Call yourself Clifford", said Boston addressing a newcomer, "hell is full of such Cliffords!"

The unfortunate man was then and there given a new name and was, for the rest of his time "Jaybird Charlie". Twenty years later they were doing the same thing at Pilgrims Rest.....

The names of the first pilgrims do not recall pious godparents and their owners would have been considerably embarrassed by the second question in the Catechism. The names rather savour of the Boxing Ring, or the Police Gazette. There were: "The Bosun", "Frenchy", "Scorcher Hare", "German George", "French Bob", "Californian Wilson", "Yankie Dan", "Northern Territory Jack", "Old Pipes", "Rocky Mountain Wilson", "Spanish Joe", "Charlie the Tinker", "Harry the Sailor", "Charlie the Reefer", and innumerable others of the same sort.

2.

Men with such names might be expected to have been a little rough in manner, a little crude in their tastes; and often they were. Hard workers, with a keen sense of justice and fair play, a real appreciation of courage and comradeship, they were not abstemious. They drank heartily. And it was an easy matter for at one time there were eleven canteens; the stores also stocked liquor. Among the best-known places of refreshment were - Ye Diggers' Bar, The Half Way House, (McCann's), Our House - a large tent by the drift kept by an old Yorkshireman called "Yorkie" - Tom Craddock's Bar, and Stent's Cathedral. The latter got its name from the number of human forms to be found there prostrated in the worship of Bacchus. Yes, there was drinking - and swearing not a little.

In the matter of this latter, a naive statement in an old Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Report must raise a smile. It says that one digger actually held classes on Sundays to teach the Kaffirs to swear ... Pious clergymen actually printed this in all solemnity.

Now the A.B.C. can be taught, but not the big D's and B's. The essence of swearing lies in its being a violent, spontaneous, and very personal anti-cosmic outburst. No surer way to reduce the art to harmless fatuity would there be than to teach it in class.

3.

The camp contained more than one man who had made some previous settlement too hot for him....

The quick pulling of a Colt, the firearm of that day, had caused many a man to travel. But it has been truly observed that Africa has been singularly free from "gun-play". It never had, in this country, the fascination that it held for the American.

4.

But if there were men who had had to make a sudden flight due private reasons, there has always been, in every pioneer settlement, an unwritten law which works for their redemption. It says: Thou shalt ask no questions. All things might be dug up but not a man's Past. A man could break all the commandments. He could worship any or no God. He could break the Sabbath. He could covet his neighbour's pick, his shovel, his claim, his water race and everything that was his. He could (and did) take the name of the Lord all day long ... but to ask a newcomer about old times No. The stranger was judged as he stood there in his corduroy pants - From Today. Now was the accepted time; now - at least he hoped so - was the day of salvation.

One other query it was well to omit. It was dangerous to ask any claim holder or party of diggers what luck they were having. That was for them to say if they wished, which was most unlikely.

But the past life of some of these diggers was far from discreditable; often it had been one of heroic endurance. In some reminiscences of the seventies a pilgrim describes a famous prospector... "He had footed it over a vast portion of Africa. The Zambesi he knew from the Kongoni mouth to its rise in the Kabompo. He had harpooned hippopotamus on the great inland African lakes. Long before Stanley... and while Livingstone was, comparatively speaking, only pottering about on the outside, he had penetrated deep into the dark interior and on one occasion had actually crossed singlehanded from the

Calabar country on the West, nearly 2,500 miles to the Quilimane on the East Coast ... a cheery, hearty, honest, jovial old fellow Yankee Dan!"

5.

The Australians seem, from the first, to have had all the initiative. It was at their suggestion that no work was done on the claims on Sundays. They were responsible, too, for the Diggers' Committee. This bench of judges held court on the Berea on the spot where now is the residence of the Manager of the Central Mines.

The blackest crimes in those days were tent and sluice robbing. Anyone convicted of such offenses was liable to twenty-five lashes, to say nothing of having his hair cut, half his beard shaved, and of being banished from the camp. But, on the whole, there was little serious crime and what there was was generally due to the inevitable loafers and hangers on of a camp of this kind.

But a story of the time hints at the origin of the cemetery:-

A robber was taken to the bounds of the camp and told that, if he were seen again, his life would be worth nothing. Some three days later he was found shot. He was buried on the hill where the cemetery later came to be. A few days later another man died and, for company, he was put in the plot next door. Two more men died before the month was up and they joined the first two. And so it became customary to bury on that hillside and the ground was fenced in in 1885.

The first prison was a bell tent fitted with stocks. (An unpleasant feature of imprisonment was the absence of Colour Bar). Later on a little wattle and daub gaol was erected. To prevent the crime of breaking gaol the simple plan was adopted of giving any white prisoner his freedom from sunrise to sunset.

THE DAY'S WORK.

1.

THE MEN in the creek, whose little white tents could be seen from afar, were very busy indeed getting out gold from the river bed.

At dawn a man would arise and, after a breakfast of meat, (if he could afford it), dampers and tea, would start work on the claim. At noon he would rest for an hour; then on until dark. His food at all meals of the day was the same, with a possible variant of stew. Men who were broke lived on mealie meal.

2.

"This is the work", says a digger named Alfred Baker, writing from Pilgrims Rest on February 25th. 1874.... "On taking up your claim you make a flood race, or trough, or sluit, to carry off the water from your sluice box. Then construct a dam to keep back the water not wanted for your sluice box, and turn it into your flood race. You then set your sluice box, which is eighteen to twenty feet long, with little obstructing ripples in it, at intervals of one or two feet, to catch the gold. The spaces between these ripples are filled with stones laid all along the bottom, leaving about nine inches of the height of the box as a passage for the water. You turn in a sluice head of water to carry off the dirt and small stones, and then throw in the stuff all day..."

"At night you take your dish and pan off all that remains in your box, and the result may be a penny-weight, worth 3/6d. or 3/9d., or it may be one, two or even eight ounces according to the quality of the ground.... Some, chiefly Australians, do well. Three men netted £300 - £400 each in six weeks."

3.

The Traveller of 1928 seldom observes the great boulders in the creek for no one walks along by it now. The little winding path among the claims has long since been washed away. These boulders, especially large at the foot of Jubilee, were a problem to the diggers of 1874. They had to be shifted as the gold was found in the bedrock, or under the heel of some great stone. Explosives were little used; the method was slow and expensive. Physical strength was employed, assisted by picks, crowbars, and 15-20foot poles cut from the bush and employed as levers.

A large hole was dug in the bedrock and the boulder undermined and underpinned. At the right moment, if calculations were good, the mass of rock would

fall into the pit. The moment of falling was sometimes calculated by the quiver of the rock felt by a digger who stood upon it barefoot. Sometimes, through bad timing, or the collapse of soft earth, the rock would fall too soon, and cause a nasty accident.

Another method in use with smaller rocks was this. A tripod of poles was erected and the rock hoisted and swung into a pendulum motion by a gang pulling on it with hook and chain. On the shout of "Let Go" the stone would fly over the wall into the worked ground.

In the event of accidents recourse was had to one of the doctors in the creek. (Every profession was represented on the diggings; but they were "side lines", gold being everyone's real business). One gentleman who was probably a useful member of the community was he who, upon a pole outside his tent, announced himself as "Surgeon, Barber and Tentmaker".

4.

At the start of things Native labour scarcely existed. But it arrived. In official records of 1881 Pilgrims Rest had 75 diggers and 400 Natives. Spitzkop had over 400, and Mac Mac well over 300 Kaffirs. The introduction of Kaffir labour is credited to Nellmapius. "The Count", as he was called, was truly modern in his dislike of manual work. A spade was a spade to him. The dignity of labour was all very well - for the black races.

Meanwhile, although an occasional pilgrim would have a Native to "sling tailings", most of the work was done by the men themselves. They stood and shovelled in the muck; up to the knees in it. Which so disgusted some of the Kimberley pilgrims that they went back home. (The Australians were no strangers to manual work but to some of the Kimberley men the sight of Whites handling pick and shovel was most unwelcome.)

There were no shifts. Work went on from dawn to dark. Work at night was penalised by a fine of five to ten pounds. But the law was sometimes broken as it paid to do so. A useful clean-up could often be accomplished after dark.

It was a hardy but healthy life.

THE GOLD.

1.

AS EARLY AS 1873, a Bank was opened in Pilgrims Rest. It stood upon the edge of the creek. The gold was brought straight up to it and was weighed in the back yard; the customers passed inside to receive cash or credit for it. At one time there were two Banks, the Cape Commercial and the Natal.

But it was a common practice also, long since forbidden by the Gold Law, to trade in the raw metal. For this purpose stores and Canteens kept scales handy for the purpose. The digger would bring his treasure along in a bottle, a tin or even a spill of paper. The storekeeper then had the right to "blow it", thus removing any dust that might falsify weight. The digger would pour upon the scales the necessary number of pennyweights. Three shillings and sixpence was the worth of each. A bottle of Brandy cost two pennyweights. The purchasing value of the ounce was thus £3.10.0. But, later, the trader would raise £4. on it. Which was only fair as he had to store, protect, and convey it.

But some nugget gold was worth much more. There were to be found nuggets of unusual size and shape. Often they were formed, by a beautiful natural design, to resemble fine filigree work. Sometimes they had a pretty, feathery appearance. Such were very popular when mounted as brooches, and gold of this kind was worth £10. an ounce. With such pieces of gold the diggers wives loved to adorn themselves, stringing the nuggets around their necks. Later on the fashion was abandoned.

2.

It is clear that enormous quantities of gold were taken from the creek and there were some huge nuggets. The first on record is a nugget weighing over twenty-five pounds. It was found under a very large boulder in the Middle Camp. Several diggers were working on the spot at the time and two of them decamped to Delagoa Bay with it. The next to be mentioned is that found by Mulchay on what was called the "Company's Reef". It was discovered on the hill at the top of the creek and was so near to the surface that the grass roots were sticking to it. The "Breda" is then heard of; it was obtained at Beach Tree. When exhibited at Durban it was found to weigh 214 ozs. of pure

gold. The "Lilley" was the next; it was dug out of the Middle Creek and turned the scale at 119 ozs. 2 dwts. A nugget purchased by the father of the present H.T. Glynn seems not to have been named. It was bought for £750. and its exact weight was 208 ozs. Troy.

3.

Diggers in many instances went off with fortunes. Scully says that four men, working three and a half shallow claims, gave authority to the Bank Manager on leaving the diggings to state that they had taken £35,000 worth of gold out of the creek.

Gold dust lay all about.

When Joe Barrett, who managed the store of R.T.M. James at Mac Mac, was going to renew the mud floor of the shop he proposed to James that he should put the old floor through a sluice box. This was done and over £40. of gold was cleaned up from the debris.

But at this period there was no proper registration of the quantity of gold - or of anything else for that matter. The Gold Commissioner, however, stated in 1874, that more gold had been taken out of the Pilgrims creek than from any creek in New Zealand. He spoke from a wide experience which included California and Australia. Other men with a thirty years experience of mining made similar statements.

LAW AND DISORDER.

1.

AS THE DIGGINGS filled up, the Government had to take a hand, for the number of diggers ran into many hundreds. Police were then appointed, but they did not like their job. The diggers held together and one man's trouble was likely to become the concern of the whole camp.

There was the case of Big Mac who had got into a fight with Big Q. The police, in the person of Corporal Sweeney, attempted ineffectively to arrest Big Mac. Sweeney called on Major MacDonald. The Gold Commissioner having failed to frighten the offender with a small pistol, called upon the spectators. Meanwhile Big Mac, having run and obtained a longhandled shoven from Fraser's store, across the road, jumped on a barrel and swinging his weapon, kept everyone at bay. The Saturday afternoon crowd of diggers stood around enjoying the fun. The arrest was called off.

2.

There was much more serious trouble in connection with Mr. Phelan of the "Goldfields Mercury" - a large sheet, successor to the "Goldfields News" - but happily the result was amusing. Phelan was very popular with the diggers. He backed their cause continually in all Gold Law disputes and quarrels with the Government. The first Gold Law in the country - that directly relating to the New Caledonian fields was published in his paper at Pilgrims Rest. However, it happened that Scoble, the then Mining Commissioner, had sentenced Phelan, for contempt of court, to a month in gaol.

The diggers took Phelan out of gaol. One man just put his shoulder to the door and the flimsy thing collapsed. The building was then quickly demolished with picks; not a difficult matter as it was only made of wattle and daub. About three hundred diggers had marched into camp and were assembled in the Market Square. The Editor was put on a stoep, songs were sung and a speech called for, but Phelan, meanwhile, strongly protested against the whole proceeding and begged to be allowed to return to prison; but the diggers would have none of that. The Mining Commissioner, being unable to effect an arrest, and hearing the words "rebellion", "Mutiny" and "riot" and realising that the diggers were quite out of hand, decided to call on the military.

As no post or telegraph services existed, Mr. C.K. White was despatched on horseback to Pretoria. Things then quietened down. Phelan went to his Press and the diggers to their claims.....

3.

It was ten days later Mr. R.T.M. James, locally known as "Trotting Jimmy" and his friend Mr. H.C. Robbins, whilst riding on the Lydenburg road

near Kruger's Post, met Captain Aylward of the Filibusters, with twenty-five men and a cannon. Aylward was on his way to quell the "Rebellion".

Aylward called James aside and asked him about the state of affairs. He was unwilling, he said, to take his cannon into camp and possibly cause a loss of life. As a result of the talk James went quickly back to Pilgrims Rest and conferred with the Diggers' Committee and a conference was arranged at the foot of the Pilgrims Hill. The diggers guaranteed the safety of the Captain - Aylward was really a surgeon but had been accorded the rank for raising certain irregular forces in the Kaffir wars - and invited him into camp. He was met by a party of horsemen and a band of pipers and played into Pilgrims Rest. He came to the "International Hotel". There, standing on a table, he called the diggers "jolly good fellows" and accepted lunch with sundry refreshments. Before long he was put quietly to bed and that was the end of the "Rebellion".

4.

Yes, the diggers were apt to enjoy curious visits from important people, and sometimes their ways of entertaining Government representatives were strange. At any rate there were mixed feelings in regard to the visit of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, which took place on September 3rd. 1879. Here is a description of this affair. At about 10 a.m. a mounted orderly rode in to camp to find a suitable spot for an outspan. The diggers, who had been very undecided as to whether to hoist the Transvaal Flag, entrench the camp and warn the Governor to advance at his peril, or to exercise their more usual and wild hospitality, decided upon the latter. The orderly had, in a very few minutes, some twelve or fourteen inches of French Brandy pumped into him. Half an hour later the cavalcade arrived. At the head of the procession was the Lieutenant Governor on horseback, accompanied by Captains Clarke and Browne. There followed an escort of Mounted Infantry (the Carington Horse) in scarlet tunics, followed by wagons and baggage and the Governor's own carriage drawn by fourteen mules. The procession halted and an address was read by an old digger. But the reception was not a success. The deputation of diggers asking for help in prospecting and developing the country were not well received. Shepstone poured scorn on the idea of the Delagoa railway saying that no man having common sense would think of scaling the steeps between the low country and the plateau in such a manner and that, moreover, the rail itself was not desirable.

In the evening grass fires broke out. Drunken rows, noise and trouble began. When the Governor, who had intended to stay the night, decided to move, the oxen had got lost, the horses had stampeded owing to the fire, and most of the soldiers were drunk. Shepstone however managed to collect sufficient escort, and having done so, departed.

5.

There were continual collisions between the authorities and the diggers. As for the police, they were only too glad if their man got away. It is related of one prisoner that, getting tired of his rations, he asked to be allowed to go and get a meal at the Hotel. This he was permitted to do. But, on returning to the gaol, the sentry it is said, in sulky tones declined to admit him. If that prison was not good enough for him, he said, he could go elsewhere!

Whether this tale is true or not does not matter. The fact that it was commonly told fifty years ago throws a light on the atmosphere of the period.

6.

A strange, mixed crowd they were, who scrambled around the four miles of claims in the seventies. With a mention of one of these eccentrics this section shall close ...

Of them all the prize must go to Mr. Scully's Fabayne. He was a university man and a scholar, the son, it was said, of a Dean. He lived in a cave not far up the creek. During appalling bouts, which used to coincide with the arrival of his "remittance", he would sit up all night quoting Greek Plays. On to the small hours he would roll out the choruses from Sophocles' "Electra" and "Antigone". Among his belongings was a Greek Testament.

THE LADIES - AND OTHERS.

1.

AS TIME WENT ON some of the men brought their wives and families to the diggings, and a sunbonnet or two could have been espied along the narrow path that went winding along by the little shanties at the creek's edge.

One of the first ladies on the spot was Mrs. Lilley who lived in the Upper Camp. She was, in those days, considered a somewhat eccentric person for she preferred male dress, and wore the working clothes of a digger. Then there was Miss Russel who, in that period of feminine refinement, made her mark by working a claim. Later she married Mr. Cameron who held the claim adjoining.

The coming of the white women was all to the good for, in their absence, a number of very different women had come up to the camp from Delagoa Bay. These the diggers, in many instances, took into their huts as cooks and house-keepers, and before long they found themselves the fathers of coloured children. Few men of that time escaped some such alliance. With some the union lasted for a long time and was marked by a curious faithfulness.

2.

A little picture of the day:-

One might have gone, one fine morning, long ago, into the hut of old M. He had had a bout of fever and one of the white ladies was visiting him. She urged him to give up the life he was leading and to go home.

Old M. lay on his mattress of sacks ; beside him, on a twin bunk, lay his spouse.

"Home?" said old M. "No, by I'm not going home. All these years I've been here..... all these years: and all for love of her! He pointed to the bunk beside him. There lay quite an old Kaffir woman, black as coal.

The next day his visitor came again. Fast asleep was the old woman. The invalid was asked how he had slept. "Sleep... O, I slept all right .., slept allright... till midnight when that ... (pointing to the bunk) came in drunk"!

3.

Or one might have stood in the Market Square of Lydenburg on an evening when an old digger named C. was in town, spending his money in getting drunk. He had plenty then. A span of oxen, gold in the Bank, cash in his pockets. He had, also, a Hottentot wife. And faithful to her he was. Where he went she came too. As Bessie was not approved of in the Bar he would come tottering out to her with refreshment. She sat on the wagon. Drink for drink they went at it. It was their way to get drunk together.

There was very little in the way of organised entertainment. There was at least one Christy Minstrel Show in the seventies, but a man had to make his own fun as a rule. And, sometimes, it lacked refinement.....

One Christmas time a number of men came into camp to celebrate the festive season. A number of their dusky ladies had the temerity to wander in too. But for this freedom they had to pay A large barrel stood in the middle of the street. It was half full of water. Into it the men dropped two shilling pieces for which the somen struggled. The awkward and inelegant posture taken up of necessity by each competitor in turn, furnished the diggers with their opportunity. The valley echoed with screams and laughter and the smack - smack - smack of hard and horny hands. In such ways did the digger amuse himself.

4.

But with all his faults it would be wrong to regard the pilgrim of the old days as miserly or avaricious. With many it was not so much the actual gold as the fun of finding it. He found it, lost it, spent it. He gave much of it away. So he would go on; finding, losing, spending. All too many of the men put thousands of pounds "back into the ground" by investing in the working of unpayable claims. Such men lived to a good old age. Some are with us now. Poor men, living, often, on little more than porridge. A little bowed now, a little deaf, still they wander over the veld with the far distant look of the prospector. With an ounce or two of gold beneath their heads, kept, (as the custom was), for their burying, they will die in their boots with the little prospecting pick beside them. So "Spanish Joe" passed on, with no one

to disturb him, no one to help. At the foot of Ross Hill, on the left hand, in a kloof just where the ascent begins was his little hut. The spot where the red hot pokers grow in Autumn and the little long-tailed birds (like quill pens) flutter in Spring. All alone he went. His hut was stocked with food, but he was too ill to get up and fetch it. Anyhow, that is what was said by those who found him.

oooooOooooo

THE CLERGYMEN

1.

"THERE WERE", says a digger of the old times, "several ministers of religion on the creek. But", he adds, "it is to be feared that they were rather an irreligious lot". Another authority states that there were three churches and "parsons of sorts". Perhaps the best of the early clergy was a Wesleyan minister called Blencowe. He came in a travelling wagon accompanied by his wife and was at work about 1874-1876.

The few survivors of that time all seem to recall Cawkhill Barker, a refined, affable man who, after a very unsteady career, finally landed in prison. After being turned out of Pretoria he wandered up to Pilgrims Rest. An untiring visitor around the tents of the diggers, he found, only too often, their hospitality so lavish that he was continually incapacitated. Both Blencowe and Barker started with canvas frame tents as Churches, and Barker, later, had a building of wattle and daub. It stood in the old Market Square which was situated near the present tennis courts. There is no trace of the Square now, but here there used to be a considerable amount of trade done. Wagons would come in with produce locally grown, and mining implements came in for sale from Natal.

In the Square meetings would be held, a wagon serving as a platform.

Later on a Church stood upon a knoll a few hundred yards above the middle camp where the stream takes a bend between precipitous rocks. A path ran up to it direct from the creek. It was here that a memorable wedding took place.

The diggers to the number of some forty, all came up to the function carrying each an old boot which was to be thrown after the happy pair. But one boot, thrown by a rejected suitor, caught the bride in the back. The matter was, at once, taken up by the bridegroom who proceeded to roll up his sleeves. A ring was made and the men went at it. The bridegroom emerged triumphant. The whole party then, in the highest spirits, adjourned to Tom Craddock's Bar where the officiating minister was made very drunk.

That the clergy of those days had their weaknesses seems to be only too painfully true. One hears of another cleric who had come over from Lydenburg and had, whilst staying at the Hotel, got hopelessly indisposed by Saturday night. As it was obvious that no ministrations were to be expected next day, a collection was taken up in the Bar. Some £15 was gathered in. The Sunday Services were taken by a layman.

2.

It is easy to be disgusted at such incidents as these. But the times were rough. And then, too, there is always, in primitive man, an unconscious rebellion against him who would preach or moralise, or who is, in any way, set above the common herd in a position of dignity or piety. The child in every man takes a rude joy in seeing Dignity put down, or Greatness fall. It argues no malice that we laugh to see a stout and pompous man slip on a banana skin. It testifies in a way to our insistence that man has not yet reached divinity, nor can, always, even be taken seriously.

This perhaps explains why another clergyman was given, skinned, a tasty looking "buck" for his dinner. But he maintained that it was not a buck at all - it was a tiger cat ...

3.

But things improved about 1879, the year after the founding of the Diocese. The diggers then found good men in Thorne, Adams, Dowling and Roberts, (the present Archdeacon). These men gained respect on all sides

and endured no little hardship. The Archdeacon has told the writer something of the situation in '79. The Sekukuni rebellion was in progress and the position was very dangerous to travellers and isolated diggers, particularly on the Lydenburg road. This condition of things lasted till the tribe was subdued by Sir Garnet Wolsey that year.

Roberts had some experience of this when he wished to go to Lydenburg to relieve Thorne. No one would lend him a horse. The point was that the animal was liable to be killed, (as well, of course, as the rider - a minor consideration...)

A week after Roberts' visit thirty natives invaded the Lydenburg district. Thorne's cows were swept off in broad daylight. Roberts, having a bathe at the time, was only a hundred yards from the cows but was fortunately hidden by the high banks of the stream. He was lucky as a sudden flight on his part would indeed have lowered the dignity of the cloth.

4.

A party of travellers to the fields passing through the broad, well-made streets of Pretoria in September 1877 and admiring, perhaps, the Square with its thatched public buildings, its banks and offices - to say nothing of the enormous Dutch Church, the centre of gigantic Nachtsmaals, - might have noticed some stray horses picking at the grass in the centre of the Square. They belonged to the great Anthony Trollope, who was touring about and writing his impressions.

The Dutch clergyman called on Trollope and invited him to see a Nachtsmaal. But Trollope was in no mood for that. He was wondering why the English Vicar had not bothered to look him up. But this gentleman "a University man... who if he continue to exercise his functions at Pretoria will become "the clergyman of the place", for such is the nature of Englishmen" did not trouble to visit the creator of the Barchester clerics. Possibly he was afraid of being put into yet another portrait gallery by the novelist.

Trollope was of a prophetic turn of mine. Although he thought Pretoria an untidy, ill-groomed town where "bottles and sardine boxes meet the eye everywhere, and..... paper, shirt collars, rags, and old boots and fragments of wooden cases accumulate at the corners", still, "in spite of the mud, in spite of the brandy bottles, in spite of the ubiquitous rags ... Pretoria is both picturesque and promising Balls will be given there. Judges will hold their courts there, and a Bishop will live in a Pretorian Bishopstowe".

6.

He was right.....

Even then the first Bishop of Pretoria was being measured for his gaiters. Bishop Bousfield was consecrated on February 2nd. 1878. He was not, however, to reach his little "village-city" till January 7th. 1879. His ox wagon trek from Durban was very trying. Half the oxen died from disease and lack of food and he and his party lived for two months in tents. In November 1881 he arrived in Pilgrims Rest.

Here he had very wisely appointed the good Dowling as Rector. Dowling had been Clerk to the Gold Commissioner and knew the mining folk and liked them, and they in their turn gave him good support. He was given the title of "Deacon in Charge of the Lydenburg Gold Fields. He saw the transition from the day of the independant digger to the period of Company control. It was in his day that the present little Church was built by the diggers for which purpose liberal gifts both of cash and nuggets were forthcoming. This Church was built in 1884.

With a little incident of Dowling's day this clerical section may end.

One day he went into the hut of a digger suffering from delirium tremens. No one else would venture for the man was flourishing a revolver, and in a very nasty mood. Sure enough, as Dowling entered, the man levelled his weapon. But the parson with a smile said; "Please put that thing down... I am very timid". The digger rolled on the bed roaring with laughter. It was too much for him.

ROSS HILL

1.

NEAR TO THE present Hendriksdal is a ruined Church. It lies in the veld, a hundred yards or so from the railway station. Only the outline remains, and that is hard to find.

The long grass waves above the outline of "green" brick. In the summer time purple wild flowers luxuriate above it and a hundred butterflies hover.

It was built in 1880 by Messrs. H.T. Glynn, I.W. Watts and their friends. No books, no records survive. There is now just an oblong of brick in the grass with a huge lump of red earth in the centre. This is the remains of an oven. The Church, after being used, later, as a store, then became a bakehouse and, finally, a digger's dwelling. This was the church of the Ross Hill diggers. Not only were there large camps at Mac Mac and Pilgrims Rest, but a third camp came into existence on Ross Hill about the same time as the camp at Mac Mac.

2.

Captain Warren, in a book of travels written in the seventies, mentions the Ross Hill diggers. On his way to Delagoa Bay from Lydenburg, he fell in with them. This was in 1877. There were, he says, about thirty then. He came suddenly upon their camp in the dark; he saw their lights and heard English being spoken. "We were delighted", he says, "to put our traps in the store and converse with the diggers". They were mostly Australians and were, says Warren, making only about 25/- a day. On the whole they were dissatisfied, firstly because gin was eight shillings a bottle and, secondly, because there was a difficulty with the water supply. The goldfields there, they said, would never be very productive as the quartz had either to be taken to the water or the water brought up to the quartz.

The township of Spitzkop consisted in those days of one iron store which paid £3.13.0. for gold, and some thirty or forty tents and mud huts. Later on another store or two seem to have existed.

3.

Here is a picture of Russell's store in 1878. It measured eight feet by five. The walls half way up consisted of mud and stones above which were the lids of packing cases. The door had been constructed of two lids of boxes nailed together. The window was a hole in the wall. Upon four uprights stuck in the ground a packing case lid was nailed and so made a table.... A box upon its side was both cupboard and sideboard. A cask of spirits took up much space and on a shelf above it were saddles, mining tools, potatoes, and all manner of goods. Upon the walls were pictures torn from "Punch", "The Graphic" and the "Illustrated London News". Under the table was a sack of oranges and, under it were the remains of many meals, orange skins, shavings, eggshells and corks. The place was full of dirty plates, tins, knives and forks. On the table also were two candles stuck into weights for the scales, a bottle of Worcester Sauce, a tin of milk, half a pot of marmalade and a box of Keatings Persian insect powder.

Although spirits and beer were stocked no spirits were sold in the evening. But if a man wanted a glass he could always take one for nothing. By this wise precaution there was never any drinking of a night and hence no serious quarrelling.

Here a man came to talk, such men as preferred the store to the canteen where they would probably be forced to drink.

The men formed a very mixed assemblage. Out of twenty of all grades of society a visitor of those days noted representatives from England, Ireland, and Scotland, as well as Americans, Australians, a Frenchman, a German, a Swede, a Jew and a Spaniard.

They were all dressed alike in moleskin trousers, thick woollen jerseys and stout, rough coats. They played Euchre and Monte but the highest stake was only a pair of hob-nailed boots. The counter served as their table. Swearing was of the fiercest kind. Most horrible oaths were used, not as opprobrious epithets but merely as endearing familiarities.

Among the men who tried to run stores in those days was Byerley. But he had great difficulties. One day a fierce storm raged around his "Spitzkop Hotel" which was only a tent. The whole thing fell upon himself, his wife and his three little children. Everything was ruined and he left the district.

4.

As the traveller coming in to Sabie halts at the top of Ross Hill he will see, on his left, a furrow running endlessly round the hills. This is "Swann's Race".

In those early days a digger named Swann found a rich strike of gold in the hills. This seemingly interminable furrow he dug in order to bring the water to the spot. From time to time he would appear with a good sized packet of the gold, proving beyond doubt that his find was genuine. He was evidently determined to work it on a large scale hence the endless furrow.... On and on he went. Where rocks balked him he would heat them and crack them with cold water.

The "Natal Mercury" in 1883 speaks of Swann (anonymously). He was, it appears, a man of sixty. He had then been working on the race for years and, states the newspaper, expected the work to take, altogether, eight years labour.

So well known was Swann's race that Lord Milner in after years, whilst riding through these parts suggested that he must be "quite near to the race". He was, as a matter of fact, right on the spot.

5.

In the end, however, the claims were bought by a company for a comparatively small amount. Then, for months, prospectors searched for the strike. But from that day to this no sign of it has been found. No one can say where the long winding furrow was intended to operate. Large offers of cash were from time to time offered to Swann. But his price was always colossal.

Ferguson, a storekeeper, his partner, always got regularly his half share of the gold. But he got no information. Swann would not speak. Not all the tots of "Square Face", the popular beverage of the day, would cause him to reveal his secret. Awake or asleep, sober or otherwise, the man held his peace. Yet the gold was ever forthcoming.....

Even when Swann, in a distant part of the country, lay dying, a friend attempted to get information. It was then that Swann spoke.

He said : "It's deep it's deep but it's good".

oooooOooooo

NOTE: The water races in these parts ran for great distances. The exact length of Swann's furrow is very hard to estimate. An old digger has estimated it at twenty miles. White's race was eight miles long but it was difficult to convey the water through it. Although twenty heads of water were turned into it not a drop went more than half way. It was then lined with puddled clay but a landslip occurred and spoilt it all. As the necessary timber cost 30/- for twenty feet some idea of the digger's troubles in constructing water races will be clear.

oooooOooooo

CURTAIN

1.

BUT THE DAY of the digger was drawing to a close. A few more years would roll and bridge, bioscopes, afternoon tea, would arrive. Blinman's catalogues, visiting cards and the monthly cheque for everyone were on the way. Soon all was to be Organised, and everyone to be Managed. This was how it happened.

Not long after the retrocession of the Transvaal to the Boers, a Mr. David Benjamin, financier, happened to see the Gold Return from Pilgrims Rest. He scratched his head; he would go and see Oom Paul about it

"To Kruger on his stoep," says Mrs. Millin, "came men hunting for concessions. The Government needed ready money and he gave them. To Kruger, with his straggling chin beard, and his little sore pouched eyes, and his thumbless hand, on which he had himself operated, and his snapped to mouth, came men wanting modern systems of Government, men talking, and thinking, and living gold...."

So good was the talk of Benjamin that an Act of Concession was passed by virtue of a resolution of the Volksraad of November 10th. 1881. Thereby Mr. Benjamin obtained "The full, free and absolute right to all gold reefs, and other mines, minerals and quartzes and precious stones on the farms Ponieskrantz, Ledovine, Waterhoutboom, Belvedere, Grootfontein and Driekop.

2.

Six days later a Bishop had come to anchor at Pilgrims Rest. The old order was changing....

3.

The diggers, of course, claimed compensation for the concession and Dr. Jorissen, the State Attorney, arrived as arbitrator. In the majority of instances things were satisfactorily settled. Some went to Kimberley; others to Mac Mac, Spitzkop, and Mt. Anderson.

By 1883 the diggers of the New Caledonia Gold Fields were quite broken up. Change proceeded apace. Primitive ways still held good but the community life and its manners were no more.

With the coming of Company control the curtain descends - the story of the first pilgrims closes. The old digger of Scully's day, "the hearty, independent man who took toll of the riches of the earth by the might of his own arm, and for his own proper benefit, without intermediary", has gone for ever.....

Never again would a digger stand upon a barrel and, amid the applause of his mates, hold off the world with a long miner's shovel....

FINIS.

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