

JOSEPH WARD

Desert Poet. Prospector. And a Manxman.
His Life and Adventures.

1879-1928.

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The memories of the High Range in July will always be with me. I love to linger in the shade and feast my eyes upon them, sore from the desert glare and at the end of August I used to camp at Graves Meadows, south-west of Dinkey Creek. The grass was pretty well eaten up, and all the cattle gone.

I hate to leave my beloved Sierras, with their noble yellow pines, and hills smooth with piano wood, so nice and springy to lie upon and gaze at the blue skies. Below lies the glistening floor of the San Joaquin, white and dark patches, vineyards, and, yes, Malvasia. How I braced myself for that. Grapes are ripening in the tropical sun, and I'd give my life for one good bunch of Rose of Perus, or good old Muscat. Often in the High Tamarac Meadows, with their rocky slides and boulders, it is very hard to find the trails even in mid-summer, and I usually crossed by Mineral King, the Kaweah Forks and Farewell Gap, 10,000 feet high, and once I was caught up there in a 90 mile an hour gale. I camped three days in a deserted miner's cabin and fed my mare with figs. I never saw so much water in my life. It took me two weeks to go 162 miles, and I finally came out just north of Little Lake east of the Inyo Road, and dropped down a steep canyon, where a bird could hardly go. No one had ever been over that trail before, but I managed to get my mare down safely.

I used to stop and rest with old man Nelson at his beautiful summer home under the yellow pines—a charming place.

There was plenty of deer about here, and they were almost invisible in the russet autumn colouring of the changing leaves.

During my years of travel, I lacked one thing necessary to success—knowledge. Painfully I had to learn by continuous defeats and heartaches, as camp after camp was found and proved rich in ore, and I had previously walked over them, and through sheer ignorance missed them.

I cried over Bullfrog, which I held in the hollow of my hand, and Tonopah and other camps, and worried myself sick, and became a nuisance to all I came in contact with, and I could talk over nothing only what I had missed, and how I had missed it. I'm not fully over it yet, and now I have another one—the big silver cripple my friend found near Johannesburg. Had I ever seen the ore and the black silver sulphates, she would have been mine. Perhaps the best thing for me was that I never did get one of the real big camps, for I surely would have reached Paris before President Wilson did, and got that, wine, and died ahead of him, fameless, but full, my life complete.

This article finishes the present manuscript, but we hope to continue the later years of Joseph Ward's life, at a later date.