

JOSEPH WARD

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

1879-1928.

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One of the strangest things about existence is the psychological fact that we take our own being as proper and normal—scarce a trace of wonder why we are here, or what we are doing here. Moreover, each of us thinks the world was made for him. I've often thought that when I die the world will stop, and it is with difficulty that I realize that even when others die, the old world still goes on. I wonder at this, but have a dim sneaking ideal that perhaps she'll run when I drop out, although it's an insult to me. But when was it that God didn't insult me? He's been doing it all this life! If the theory of electrons be true, it's enough to scare the devil out of me to look at doors and things, and to know that they are not doors and things at all. If I go on believing these things, I'll get in front of a streetcar and not be afraid at all! When an anvil drops and hits my toe there must be a — of a bunch of electrons in one spot and fighting like a lot of Congressmen over the pork barrel, to the neglect of all duty and the edification of a fool — myself.

Here again, same old egotism, for me only. I wonder whether all those girls at the theatre last night were for me only? I heard others laughing, and I was alone last night in melancholy madness and lascivious dreams. God not only insults me, he fools me with his girl-creating, beautiful tempting insults.

REMINISCENCE.

Last time I saw Gold Crater was in May 1912, when I was so affected by the memories of those glorious times. '04 and '01, that I cried like a child. Ever since I've been afraid even to cross the Goldfield Belt — go 90 miles wide, hallowed by such memories— that I dread the emotional depressions and recollections. Gone forever is that historic time. Old Jim is dead (Jim Butler, discoverer of Tonopah). Mrs. Butler is dead also. It was she who named the famous lodge, "The Mizpah," and now she's dead, and even the romance of Tonopah is long since dead. Now all has degenerated to a cruel, commercial, grafting proposition. But why regret? The Comstock days have passed, heart, soul, and spirit; the names remain; and what of the other days, and other times; other people of another age? Potosí, (Bolivia) with its 3,000 million of silver, and 3,000 million more to come? Could romance live there? Mexico's goldfield, where Indians had goat-coral walls built of rich gold rock, of course, promptly appropriated by good Spanish missionaries in Mexico. We have our own '49 romances of the north, Boise Basin, when to eastern imagination, Montana, and Idaho looked like dreams.

THE FORTYNINERS "

In the Spring of '83 I was six weeks in Shasta hospital, and there met many old '49ers, all complaining. I remember Dr. Briceland, good old man, telling one of these old

ex-sailor boys that old age could not lie cured. Another of them told me he wished to return to Pennsylvania for a last look. Alas! It would not be the Pennsylvania he left in the '40s, full of youth, hope and confidence; nor would he meet or see the people he had left, nor would they be the same or seem the same. All these brothers have long since passed, and I myself feel on the borderland—looking over. Well, when we get together with Omar as our chairman—no restrictions, no 18th amendment to the heavenly wine—only eternal happiness. In all the ages the grape was the symbol of peace, happiness, and eternal hope. Why not spiritual grapes?

So, here's looking!