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T. H. ESTABROOKS, ST. JOHN, N. B. WINNIPEG.  
TORONTO, & WELLINGTON ST., E.

## THE VALLEY OF REST.

Eastward a chain of lofty, snow-crowned mountain peaks, half a dozen rude frame dwelling houses grouped about a two-story hotel with glaring windows guileless of curtains and shutters, several saloons, a nondescript station with a length of gleaming steel railroad running north and south. This is Lebanon Junction, as it appeared to the shrinking eyes of Eleanor Greve on a rain-sodden afternoon in February.

"Erskine Greve?" repeated the station agent, meditatively, in answer to her timid inquiry. "Never heard the name before in my life. I guess he don't live hereabouts. I know the country like a book."

"He is a ranch owner in the Valley of Rest," said Eleanor, a shadow of vague alarm clouding her beautiful eyes. "I wrote him to meet me here. May I ask if the valley is very far away? I could hire a conveyance, perhaps."

The man looked at her pityingly. "The Valley of Rest lies high onto thirty miles away, in the heart of the roughest mining district. The stage leaves for there at 4 o'clock, but I couldn't advise you to go on in it. Best wait here for your father. He's sure to turn up soon if you wrote him, and you can get tolerable accommodations at the Eagle, yonder."

Eleanor dropped her hands in quick dismay as her glance followed his toward the unattractive hotel.

"I prefer to go on in the stage," she said firmly. "This is my first trip west. All my life has been passed at boarding school. I beg your pardon, but the place seems so rough."

"Yes," assented the agent, "it is like the majority of mining towns. Still, if you go in the Lebanon stage you may fall into rougher company. There's three hours to wait. Will you go over to the Eagle?"

There seemed nothing else to do, so Eleanor wearily picked her way across the muddy street and took refuge in the ugly hotel.

The proprietor gave up the sitting-room to her exclusive use and she spent the dreary interval of waiting in looking from the window upon a street where every other door seemed to open into a saloon. Burros and Mexican donkeys, heavily laden with tools and provisions for distant mining camps passed along urged on by swarthy riders in flannel suits and wide sombreros, with Winchester rifles slung across the saddle bows.

Finally the stage appeared at the door and Eleanor settled her bill and prepared to depart. Scores of eyes surveyed her curiously as she took her place within the lumbering old vehicle. She drew down her veil, shivering.

"I wish you a safe journey," said the landlord soberly. Seems like flying in her face of Providence howsoever, for Black Steve is on the rampage again."

"Black Steve," repeated Eleanor, mechanically. "Who is he?"

"A road agent, miss—the pest of the country. He don't dare to show his face in Lebanon, but that never prevents him from holding up the stage and robbing the mails. Better hide your watch and rings. He's vitriol and greased lightning let loose, is Steve."

Eleanor flashed an apprehensive look up the serpentine road.

"Am I the only passenger? she asked."

"No there's six besides—all men. They'll do their best to protect ye. Got our shooting iron, Bill?"

"O K," answered the driver briefly. As the passengers took their places he cracked his whip and the mules sprang down the road, turned a curve and disappeared among the hills.

Eleanor turned from the window and took a survey of her fellow-travelers. Miners all, save one, and armed to the teeth.

"Don't you be afeared, miss," said one of them, tapping her belt significantly as he met her glance. We'll give Black Steve a warm reception if he hits the road to-night."

"I hope it will not come to bloodshed," said the sixth passenger, a white-haired old man with a mild, benevolent-looking face.

Eleanor turned to him with a sign of relief and soon they were engaged in conversation. Something impelled her to tell this kind old man her history. To be sure it was not much to tell. Her mother had died at her birth, and her father, leaving his infant daughter in good hands had gone west to make his fortune. From California to Mexico and thence to Oregon he had wandered settling finally in the Valley of Rest. Only twice had Eleanor seen his face, when he had made flying visits back to his native town in the far east. Now she was through school and coming home for good.

Did her father send for her? the old man inquired; and she answered in the negative. She had written him when and where to meet her, but he must have failed to receive the letter. Now she would give him a thoroughly delightful surprise.

The road grew wilder with every mile traversed by the jaded mules. Soon the stage entered a thickly wooded strip where the breath of nightmares seemed to rest, so intense was the gloom.

On the seat the driver whistle a merry tune to keep his spirits up, and Eleanor, in her corner, was occupied with conjectures as how far they might be from the Valley of Rest and what would be her reception when she reached there, when of a sudden sounded the clatter of horses' hoofs in the road, the jungle of bridle and spurs, and a loud voice rang forth, clear and stern as a trumpet-call.

"Halt!" it cried. The stage stopped abruptly and an electric thrill, ran through the passengers. In a breath each hand held a six-shooter.

"Black Steve!" whispered the old man to Eleanor.

Even as he spoke the door flew open and a face looked into the interior.

"Hands up!" cried a voice strangely familiar to the girl.

A horrible fear clutched at her heart-strings; she leaned forward, striving to see more plainly that handsome, mocking face, outlined against the darkness like a silhouette.

So poorly was the stage furnished with light that the flickering yellow rays but dimly illuminated the face beneath the broad sombrero; yet surely—oh, pitiful heaven!—surely those were her father's eyes keenly

alert, glowing with evil fire! One hand held a revolver and the gleaming muzzle was pointed at the heart of the old man sitting beside her.

"Hands up!" repeated that familiar voice, sternly.

"Father!" cried Eleanor, springing toward him.

He heard her and gave a start of surprise. Unwittingly his fingers pressed the trigger as he made an involuntary step forward. There was a flash, a loud report, and, reeling aside, she fell face downward at his feet.

Stone dead! They knew it ere they lifted her; never yet had Black Steve missed fire.

The road agent flung his smoking revolver into the darkness. It was his last fight and he knew it. Where were his followers? He cared not as he took in his arms the limp form of the unhappy girl who had traveled so many miles only for this.

The miners stood around him in an awed but no breath fluttered threw those still lips, frozen so suddenly into the long long silence.

He lifted his huge eyes to the pitying faces around him can't any of you do something for her? He asked wistfully "she cannot be dead you know it is impossible she has only fainted."

The old man came and knelt beside him he unfastened Eleanor's raps and showed the bullet hole a gaping wound just over the heart from which the crimson blood pulsed slowly. She is passed help he said huskily but ten minutes ago she was wondering how near was the Valley of Rest to which she was bound she was nearer than she thought poor child.

The Valley of Rest repeated Greave as if dogged, did you say she had reached the Valley of Rest I—don't think I understand his glance dropped to the face on his breast and a light of sudden comprehension flashed into his despairing eyes. I did not dream she was coming," he said softly; this would have been my last raid I meant to reform when she came out of school well it is all over. Lay us together under the mounting pines in the Valley she never saw and say in Lebanon Black Steve has reformed.

He snatched a revolver from the belt of one of the miners and placed it to his temple, another moment and Erskine Graves lay lifeless beside his daughter.

The members of his band had disappeared and only the music of the pines broke the silence and the old man gently wiped the blood from the brow of Black Steve they made no attempt to take him prisoner perhaps they believed themselves covered by the pistols of the band outside.

"Eleanor" murmured Erskine Greve in an agony of remorse speak to me darling! you are not, you cannot be dead?

Who Has Bullfrogs for Sale?

The following letter is self-explanatory:—

New York, Aug. 5th, 1906.

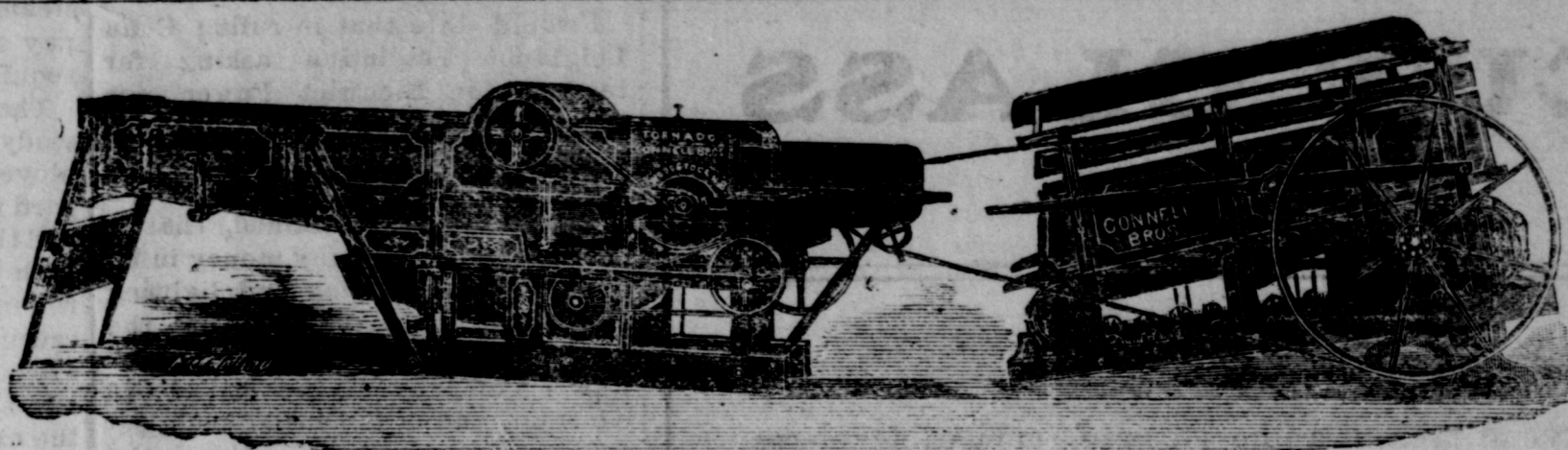
C. L. SMITH,  
Post master,  
Dear Sir:—

Would you kindly let me know by return mail if there are any large Bullfrogs up in your part of the country? I supply French Restaurants more or less, and would like to get any quantity. Would you kindly write me and let me know. I would like to get sizes that run 4 to 6 hind quarters to the lb and would contract for all you could get, F O B train, providing they are put up in proper shape.

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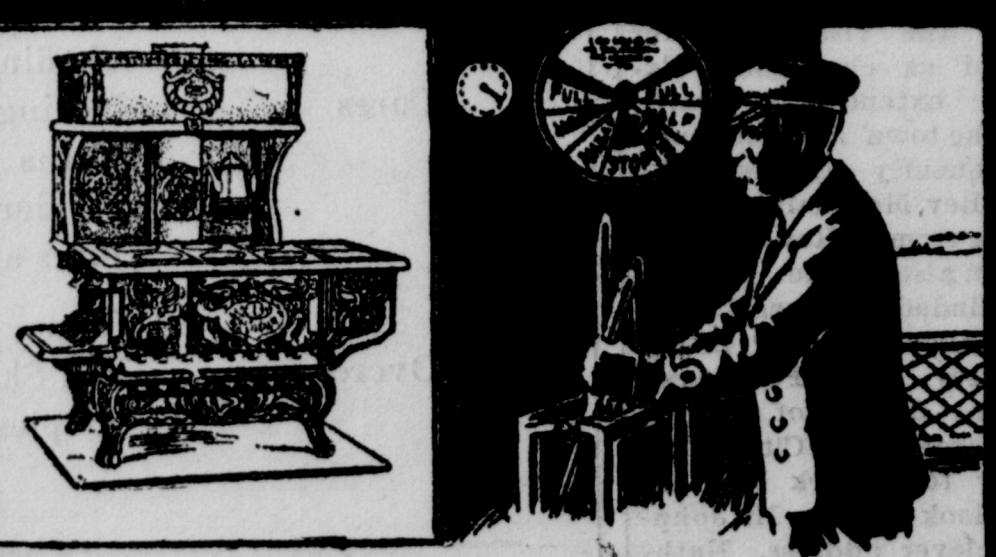
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