

**THE FIRE OF ROMANCE, AN IMAGINATIVE
PLAY IN ONE ACT. WRITTEN FOR THE
CACTUS CLUB OF DENVER, BY JAMES
GRAFTON ROGERS AND PERFORMED BY
THE CLUB IN ITS OUTDOOR THEATRE IN THE
ROCKY MOUNTAINS, SEPTEMBER 6, 1919**

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The Fire of Romance, an Imaginative Play in One Act. Written for the Cactus Club of Denver, by James Grafton Rogers and Performed by the Club in Its Outdoor Theatre in the Rocky Mountains, September 6, 1919 by James Grafton Rogers

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JAMES GRAFTON ROGERS

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THE FIRE *of* ROMANCE



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An Imaginative Play in One Act

Written for the Cactus Club of Denver, by
James Grafton Rogers and performed
by the Club in its outdoor theatre
in the Rocky Mountains,
September 6, 1919

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NOTE

THE fantastic text of this little play demands some explanation.

It was designed as the framework of an hour's performance to be given on a stream-bank in the open air. The text was embroidered with the sensations associated with the immense mountains surrounding the theater, a spruce forest, canyon echoes, and the trickle of tiny waterfalls across the stage. The site was entirely natural, the only structure on the stage being a low stone fire-place. With elaborate but inconspicuous lighting facilities, and a stage as wide and deep as the mountain side, it was possible to play upon the sensations with distant voices and torches in the woods, hidden music, water reflections, campfires scattered in the background to suggest an army bivouac, strange green flares among the evergreens, and bursts of red flame when the fire was fed by "understanding hands." These embellishments, brilliant costuming, and good amateur acting were the body of which this text was only a skeleton. It should be noted in connection with the closing lines that the lights of Denver,

twenty miles away and half a mile below, were visible almost from the auditorium.

The characters are those of local history. Coronado, the most romantic of the Spanish explorers, visited the southern Rocky Mountains about 1540. He left the Spanish settlements in Mexico guided by Friar Marcos de Niza, who was supposed to have seen the seven rich cities of Cibola, which the venturers hoped to sack. When these cities turned out to be mere Indian pueblos, Coronado penetrated further northeast into the prairie country, in search of another fabled metropolis, Quivira. He found only Indian wickiups, and the great herds of what his chroniclers called "hump-backed oxen."

Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike represents the romance of the American republic. He entered these same mountains in 1806. No explorer ever suffered physical and mental distress more intense. The reference in the lines to the Aaron Burr conspiracy is based on a much-discussed mystery surrounding Pike's mission. Many historians believe the accusation.

Dr. Edwin James, who typifies the drama of science, was the botanist of the government expedition to Colorado, led by Major Long, in

1820. The peaks bearing the names of Long and James are visible from the Club campsite. James may be considered the first scientist to study the Rocky Mountains, and his lines originated in the passages in his book which celebrate the discovery of the blue western columbine.

George Jackson, a prospector from Californian scenes, made the first substantial gold discovery in Colorado, near Idaho Springs, in the winter of 1858-1859, under the circumstances which the play recounts. His discovery launched the era of commercial development. Jackson's route in and out of the mountains must have passed near the spot which the Club uses as its theater.

The play is printed as the record of a September evening among great mountains, and of an amateur experiment in the outdoor theater. It has no other claims.

J. G. R.