

**PENNSYLVANIA
MOUNTAIN
STORIES, 1-86**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649394227

Pennsylvania Mountain Stories, 1-86 by Henry W. Shoemaker

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HENRY W. SHOEMAKER

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A GATEWAY TO THE PENNSYLVANIA MOUNTAINS

Pennsylvania Mountain Stories

BY
Henry W. Shoemaker
HENRY W. SHOEMAKER

Author of Pennsylvania Mountain Verses
and President of the Daily Times
Reading, Penn'a



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PUBLISHED BY
Reading Times Publishing Company
READING, PENNSYLVANIA

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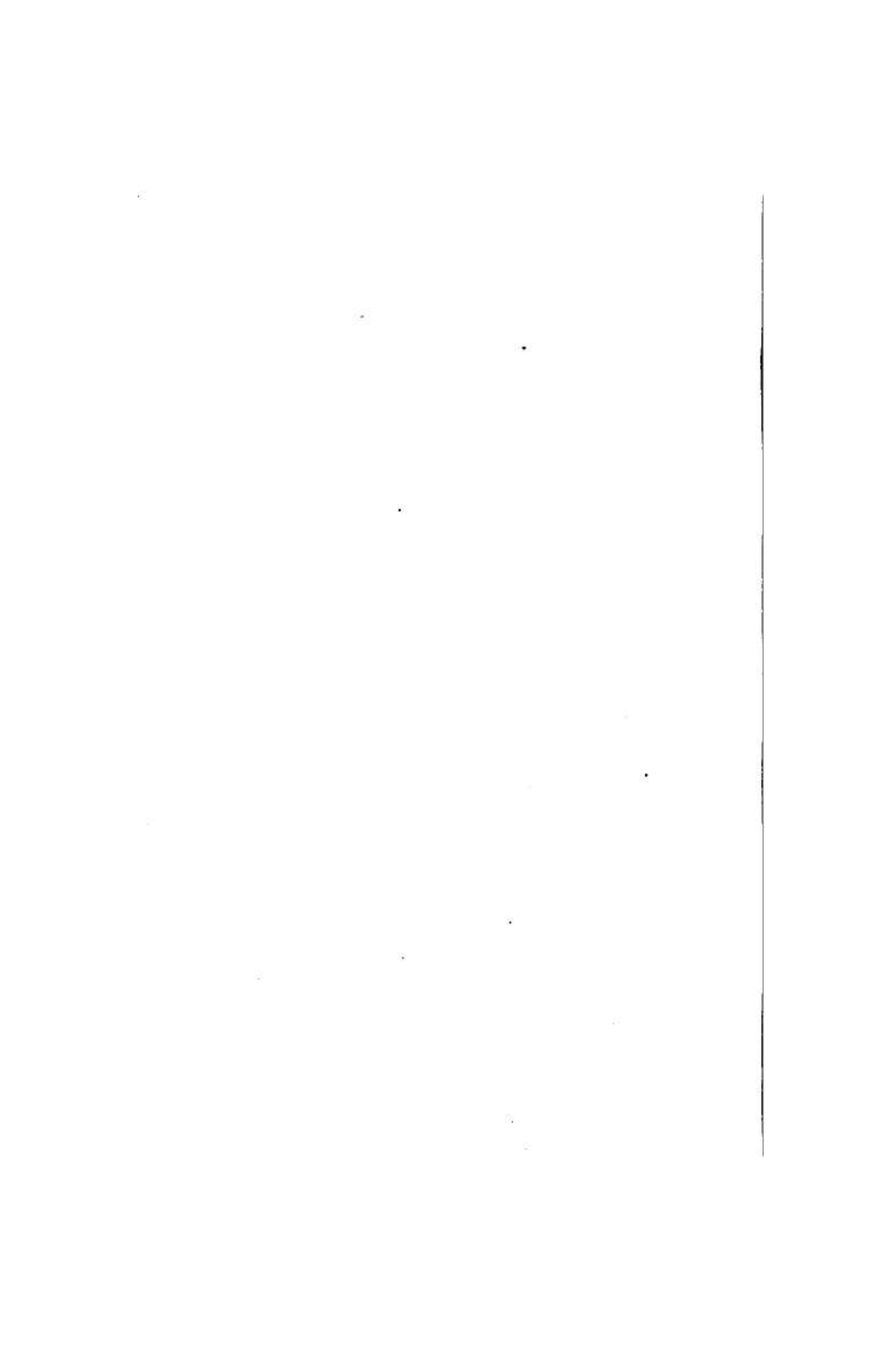
INTRODUCTION

FIVE years ago, in 1903, I published a small volume of stories and legends called "Wild Life in Western Pennsylvania," which ran through two small editions. After all the copies had been exhausted I continued to receive requests for the books, and these have by this time reached such a number that I feel justified in bringing out this new collection of stories. In this book will be found the majority of sketches contained in the earlier work, together with a number of new stories which appeared in the "Reporter" of Centre Hall, Pa., the "Herald" of Jersey Shore, Pa., the "Record" of Bradford, Pa., and the "Times" of Reading, Pa. I wish to thank the good friends who showed such interest in my previous book, and hope that this new volume will meet with the same kindly reception.

HENRY W. SHOEMAKER.

"Kresheim," Convent, N. J., December 18, 1908.

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WHY THE STEINER HOUSE PATIENT PULLED THROUGH

M'CARGO was a traveling man. He traveled out of Pittsburg for a hat and cap house, and therefore ought to know something of the world. His territory comprised mostly the small towns, and his easy manners and good looks made him welcome wherever he was on his rounds. He was unmarried, about 30 years of age, and in 1895, a year or two before the time of this story, he had shaved off his mustache to keep up with the new style.

It was evening when he got in the hack at the railroad station in Robertsburg to take the two and one-half mile ride over to Youngmanstown, which was a larger place, although not on a railroad. For a wonder he had not been feeling well, and the bumps with which the bad springs accentuated the rocky road made him feel decidedly uncomfortable. The lights were lit when the 'bus pulled up in front of the Steiner House, and the traveling man and two lumber jobbers got out.

The Steiner House, which was run by old Tommy Mertz, had been built during the golden age of Youngmanstown, 50 years before, when it was a stopping point for the stage lines that ran along the valley and across the mountains previous to the building of the railroad. It was still the headquarters for bark peelers on their way to and from the woods, farmers on their way to vendues, and, of course, the traveling men or "drummers."

The hotel was of a design well known at that time. It had a series of three porches,—one on a level with the street, the others above. Additions had been put on about every twenty years, with the result that there were rooms of all sizes, high ceilings and low ceilings and stairways and corridors innumerable.

McCargo, in response to the proprietor's query of "supper," said he had eaten, and asked to be shown to his room. A boy, with cataracts on his eyes, who was carrying his grip, groped the way up stairs and unlocked the door of room 18, in the oldest part of the house. Originally it had been an enormous room, running from the front to the back of the house, but it had been divided into two rooms by a partition made of a lot of door frames, fastened together with the knobs and locks still on them. The partition looked more like a hallway in a many-roomed apartment house in a big city than the dividing wall between two bed chambers in a country hotel. The furniture consisted of a wooden bed, which was painted green with red flower designs, and a wash stand and chair. There was blue paper, but not a picture on the walls. In one corner, driven in the woodwork, were a couple of iron hooks for clothing. The house had been so added to that there was only one window left in this room, and it looked out on the stable yard, now used as a storage ground for bark wagons.

McCargo felt pretty sick, and did not notice his surroundings, yet he could not get to sleep. He tossed about and by the feeble light from the window repeatedly looked at his watch. He laid on his face in a frantic effort to coax sleep, but it did not work. In the stillness he thought he heard someone moving in the room—he turned around and distinctly saw a figure. He called out, "Who's that?"

There was an answer, but too low to understand, so that he concluded it must be a woman. In another second he was sure it was, as the light of a candle suddenly flared up in the hand of a very pretty young girl dressed in black. Sick as he was, the visitant was not unwelcome to him, and he nodded that she could come nearer. This she did, and bent over him, caught his hand, felt his pulse, stroked his brow and readjusted the bed clothes. She continued her ministrations, but he was too sick to make any inquiries, until the faint streaks of dawn filtered in over the