

**THE MYSTERY OF WITCH-
FACE MOUNTAIN, AND
OTHER STORIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649122325

The mystery of Witch-Face Mountain, and other stories by Charles Egbert Craddock

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

CHARLES EGBERT CRADDOCK

**THE MYSTERY OF WITCH-
FACE MOUNTAIN, AND
OTHER STORIES**

THE MYSTERY OF WITCH-FACE
MOUNTAIN

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

(CHARLES EGBERT CRADDOCK, pseud.)

Murfree, Mary Noailles



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1895

PS 2454
M95

Copyright, 1895,
By MARY N. MURFREE.

All rights reserved.

The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.
Electrotyped and Printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
124 THE MYSTERY OF WITCH-FACE MOUNTAIN . . .	1
130 TAKING THE BLUE RIBBON AT THE COUNTY FAIR	165
140 THE CASTING VOTE	200

THE MYSTERY OF WITCH-FACE MOUNTAIN.

I.

THE beetling crags that hang here and there above the gorge hold in their rugged rock sculpture no facial similitudes, no suggestions. The jagged outlines of shelving bluffs delineate no gigantic profile against the sky beyond. One might seek far and near, and scan the vast slope with alert and expectant gaze, and view naught of the semblance that from time immemorial has given the mountain its name. Yet the imagination needs but scant aid when suddenly the elusive simulacrum is revealed to the eye. In a certain slant of the diurnal light, even on bright nights at the full of the moon, sometimes in the uncanny electric flicker smitten from a storm-cloud, a gigantic peaked sinister face is limned on the bare, sandy slope, so definite, with such fixity of lineament, that one is amazed that the perception of it came no earlier, and is startled when it disappears.

Disappearing as completely as a fancy, few there are who have ever seen it who have not

2 *The Mystery of Witch-Face Mountain.*

climbed from the herder's trail across the narrow wayside stream and up the rugged mountain slopes to the spot where it became visible. There disappointment awaits the explorer. One finds a bare and sterile space, from which the hardy chickweed can scarcely gain the sustenance for timorous sproutings; a few outcropping rocks; a series of transverse gullies here and there, washed down to deep indentations; above the whole a stretch of burnt, broken timber that goes by the name of "fire-scald," and is a relic of the fury of the fire which was "set out" in the woods with the mission to burn only the leaves and undergrowth, and which, in its undisciplined strength, transcended its instructions, as it were, and destroyed great trees. And this is all. But once more, at a coigne of vantage on the opposite side of the gorge, and the experience can be utilized in differentiating the elements that go to make up the weird presentment of a human countenance. It is the fire-scald that suggests the great peaked brown hood; the oblong sandy stretch forms the pallid face; the ledges outline the nose and chin and brow; the eyes look out from the deep indentations where the slope is washed by the currents of the winter rains; and here and there the gullies draw heavy lines and wrinkles. And when the wind is fresh and the clouds scud

before it, in the motion of their shadows the face will seem to mow at the observer, until the belief comes very readily that it is the exact counterpart of a witch's face.

Always the likeness is pointed out and insisted on by the denizens of Witch-Face Mountain, as if they had had long and intimate acquaintance with that sort of unhallowed gentry, and were especially qualified to pronounce upon the resemblance.

"Ain't it jes' like 'em, now? Ain't it the very moral of a witch?" Constant Hite demanded, one gusty day, when the shadows were a-flicker in the sun, and the face seemed animated by the malice of mockery or mirth, as he pointed it out to his companion with a sort of triumph in its splenetic contortions.

He was a big, bluff fellow, to whose pride all that befell him seemed to minister. He was proud of his length of limb, and his hundred and eighty pounds of weight, and yet his slim appearance. "Ye would n't believe it now, would ye?" he was wont to say when he stepped off the scales at the store of the hamlet down in the Cove. "It's solid meat an' bone an' muscle, my boy. Keep on the friendly side of one hunderd an' eighty," with a challenging wink. He was proud of his bright brown eyes, and his dark hair and mustache, and smiling,