

**YELLOW PINE
BASIN: THE STORY
OF A PROSPECTOR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649373697

Yellow Pine Basin: the story of a prospector by Henry G. Catlin

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

HENRY G. CATLIN

**YELLOW PINE
BASIN: THE STORY
OF A PROSPECTOR**

YELLOW PINE BASIN

THE STORY OF A PROSPECTOR

BY
HENRY G. CATLIN

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. RICHMOND & CO.
1897

PS
1274
C 28y
NOTE

Of this now fast closing century a picturesque and distinctively American character has been the prospector.

The discovery of gold in California awoke in their descendants something of that old ardor which two hundred and more years ago animated the early comers to North America.

From Maine to Florida sturdy, adventurous spirits felt the thrill of an inherited tendency which, for so long dormant, reasserted itself, and flocked to the new Golconda. The indolent, the timid, the conservative did not go; but when considerations of convenience, propriety, and duty allowed, the ambitious, assertive young men crossed the plains or took shipping for California.

On that distant Pacific coast assembled a community of young men, an aggregation of energy, physical strength, and enthusiasm never before equalled.

The wild spirits of youth, the absence of all restraint, the force of early education, the democratic temper mixed with the exhilaration of adventure and the intoxication of the gold thirst. Out of this medley of influences came a class marked and distinctive within the limits of an individualism pertaining to its component parts.

2072382

California was the rude school; the wider experiences of the great wilds completed the education.

The man who remained in California became provincial; it is not of him I speak.

The man who went out into the wilderness, his horse and pack mule, arms, provisions, and tools all he could call his own; led by an impulse stronger than love of ease, comfort, or life; his one all-absorbing idea the finding of the precious metals, which when found but urged him to further quest; that man whom neither cold nor heat, thirst nor blood could stop; broadened by diversified experiences, tinted with the coloring of varied climates, forged into a type by blows from opposing forces; the mountain wanderer, the tireless seeker,—of him I tell. Much as I regret that no better artist limns him, for he is worthy a master's pencil, I make no apology for my rude sketching. My acquaintance has been long and intimate with him, and while, perhaps, something of kindred feeling assures me that I know him well, it is only because he is a passing, vanishing figure in our American life that I am prompted to do my little to preserve his memory.

With such change of time, place, and sequence of incident as has seemed fitting to me, the story is a true one.

There may be those who, putting this and that together, may now know more of a simple secret long kept by a simple man; if so, old comradeship will, I know, keep their lips closed.

YELLOW PINE BASIN

CHAPTER I

"THAT ain't no bed-rock, Bud."

"It is all there seems to be."

"Well, pan her out and let's see how she prospects; I don't think ye'll raise a color."

Moving down the creek, Bud selects a still spot in the water, in the lee of a big boulder, and with a hand on each side of the iron gold-pan, holds it under the water and gives it that oscillating motion, the first movement in the process for determining the richness of the gravel in bright grains of gold, which among gold miners is termed panning. He stops, and with the fingers of one hand rakes off the coarser particles of the gravel with which the pan is filled, and begins again.

Bending over him, one foot in the water of the little stream, the other on its bank, and resting an elbow on his elevated knee, old Zeb awaits the result.

"You hain't give her no chance, Bud; this Salmon River gold is mostly on the bed-rock, and ye didn't have no bed-rock."

"I can see black sand and iron rocks and rubies, anyway; I think there will be gold. I don't know much about it, but it looks to me favorable for a prospect."

The gyratory oscillations stopped, and a new shaking movement brought to the surface the lighter sands, and, holding it on a slant, Bud dipped the pan in the water, lifting it again so that each receding of the water, like the ocean wave on some quiet shore, carried off its burden of sand, each wave reducing the volume in the pan; and after every dip came a shake, bringing to the surface other grains of sand, and other receding waves carried them away until only the heavier particles remained. Slowly went the final process of panning down. Under the covering of black sand lay the hidden probabilities, for Bud was too good a panner to show color yet.

"I tell ye, ye hain't give her no show, Bud. If she prospects at all, we'll go to bed-rock if we have to bale the water out the hole; but she won't, 'taint reason."

The end was coming; only a trifle of black sand remained in the angle made by the bottom and side of the pan. With a dexterous movement the black covering rolled away, and several bright grains of gold lay at the end of the sand, making a yellow tip to its sombre shade.

"What did I say? I said it would prospect."

"That's what ye did, Bud. I didn't think she would. Coarse gold it is too, and rattles in the pan," as he took up a grain and let it fall on the iron bottom.

"We'll go to bed-rock and we'll get her richer nor twenty-dollar pieces. I see the same lay in Californy in '50; no, 'twas in '51, on Dutchman Creek. Say, Bud, that gold's better nor eighteen dollars an ounce. That ain't no channel wash, nor no channel gold; the channel is yon by them porphry boulders. It ain't no

man's place to say signs is nothing. Ye mind that she-bear we saw on Sulphur Crik, with the two cubs, one black and one brown? I told ye then we'd have luck; no man never saw them signs that he didn't have luck. Why, there was my pardner Yank, God bless his old soul! 'Twas in '49, late, me and Yank had jined and was working a claim; grub give out. Yank took the sack and went to town; rode a mustang hellion I had, and packed a pinto we borry'd from a Portugee who owned the 'jining claim—sich English as that cuss talked! Well, as I tell ye, Yank he goes for the grub, and as he crossed the divide, he saw a she-bear and two cubs, one on 'em black and one brown. Yank was free and easy like, had a few drinks when he come to town, and run up agin a game and lost the sack; twenty-four ounces, I remember. Next morning he felt dang'd blue. There was I and there was he with no grub; but he says, 'I'll chance it,' and in he goes to Hawkins & Co., the store-keepers, and says he, 'I wants some grub for me and my pardner, and I hain't no dust; my name is Yank; I sailed from Saco, Maine, a-whaling, and when we put in at the Bay I thought I'd try the mines.' 'The devil ye did,' says Hawkins. 'Ye can have what ye want; no Maine man comes to me for grub but he gets it.' Yank was that honest he says, 'But my pardner Zeb, he's from Injiany.' 'Well,' says Hawkins, 'he's in good company if he does hail from that ornery State.' I never knew Yank to lie; Yank couldn't lie; but he had been up all night, must have punished a heap of whiskey, for I knew his gait; ennyway he said that old Hawkins said that. Yank never had no conceit of Injiany nor any other State that wan't on the sea;

said they was no 'count. Says he to me: 'Why there's Maine and here's Californy, and both on 'em on the sea;' and what could I say? I couldn't argy with Yank, nobody could; he was that sort.

"So soon as old Hawkins said what he did, that she-bear and them cubs jumped on him and he knew 'twas luck. When he come into the gulch with the grub, Yank told me the whole thing. He was telling the Portugee when he come in our cabin that night, and the Portugee says: 'No good, losa dora, no good.' He meant, ye know, he had lost the dust. Yank didn't say nothing then, but he says to me afterward: 'How ignorant them Portugees are! It's a natural thing for a man to lose at a game, but any dang'd fool knows it was luck to get that grub.' I see that p'int myself, for I had tried them games."

"There must be better ground than that higher up the creek, Zeb," broke in Bud.

"Of course there is; that ground above the swag is my fancy, over you beyond the p'int. Then I was going out to Hangtown once, and I see a she-bear and two cubs, one black and one brown; traded off an old ring-boned mare I had for the finest hoss ye ever see; not a blemish on him; run like a deer. I took real comfort with that hoss 'till a man come along in about three weeks and proved it was his hoss, stolen from him; I give the man five ounces rather than part with him."

"The fall looks pretty good here, and there is plenty of water, and if it's only good on bed-rock, Zeb."

"Good, man; I tell ye 'twill be good; them signs never fail. I mind another time Yank sees a she-bear