

# A PROPHETESS OF DOOM

BY ELSIE McCORMICK

THOSE members of the heavenly hierarchy who loose signs and wonders to herald the hatching of prophets were singularly negligent on the night of November 26, 1827, for there is no record that the village of Gorham, Maine, saw either shooting stars or balls of fire when the doctor drove over to the Harmon house and escorted the infant Ellen into mortality.

The extent to which these powers fell down on their job may be grasped only when one contemplates the magnitude of the little stranger's later reputation. For seventy-two years, first as Ellen Harmon and then as Mrs. Ellen G. White, she conversed daily with God, had visions that showed her everything from the horrors of the Day of Judgment to a traveling elder's peccadillos in Michigan, and ruled the Seventh Day Adventists of this great land with an authority absolute enough to wring envy from the puissant prisoner of the Vatican.

Rome's Vicar of Christ is regarded as infallible only when he speaks *ex cathedra*, with a ponderous backing of Cardinals and doctors of theology. Himself, he is simply a poor sinner like the best of us. But Mrs. White was considered infallible by her customers in everything she wrote and in practically everything she said. She herself described her words as "God speaking through clay" and even her personal letters were considered "precious rays of light shining from the Throne." An article which appeared in the *Seventh Day Adventist Review and Herald* on March 17, 1921, offered the following impressive official summary of her status:

Sister White filled the position of a great teacher in Israel, as did Samuel; of a great reformer, as did Elijah; of a special messenger of God, as did John the Baptist. In dreams and visions she was instructed in the mysteries of the Word. . . . Her work belonged to the prophetic order.

The nine volumes into which her "testimonies" have been gathered—and which retail for not less than twelve dollars a set—may be ignored by Seventh Day Adventists only at serious risk to their souls. According to another article in the *Review and Herald*, belief in them is a "test that cannot be disregarded except at the peril of eternal ruin." She is the Mrs. Eddy of the denomination. Those who flouted her while she lived will all go to Hell.

The early childhood of this inspired lady was only what might be expected in a family of New England hatters with strong Methodist inclinations. Ellen, in fact, showed no remarkable qualities until, at the age of nine, a playmate hit her on the head with a rock. For three weeks thereafter she lay in a helpless stupor, while Christian friends flocked around her bed and demanded of her harried mother if she were really prepared to die. But Ellen did not fulfil their neighborly hopes and expectations. Instead, she slowly struggled back to life, and when at last she was on her legs she faced the world with a bashed-in nose, a badly shattered nervous system, and a new-found talent for dreaming realistically of Heaven and its distinguished inhabitants.

Being too feeble to go to school, she had plenty of time to develop this gift. Her formal conversion to the Methodist revelation came at the age of thirteen, after more than the usual allotment of doubtings,

tremors, and despairs, but almost immediately she was swept into the Millerite movement, and began to long fervently for the destruction of the world. By carefully figuring out certain prophecies in the Book of Daniel, one William Miller, of Low Hampton, L. I., had come to the conclusion that "the sanctuary was to be cleansed by fire" in the year 1843. Salvation was to be limited to the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation, and no one would be included who did not accept the prophecy as accurate and make due preparations for the Second Coming. Excitement and exaltation rushed over the hardy Millerites, forerunners of the current Seventh Day Adventists, like a flowing tide. Sobs, shrieks, and catalepsies marked their meetings, crops were left unharvested as a sign of belief in the Lord's approach, and the strange beasts of Revelation became familiar household pets. The lid of Hell was lifting. It was time for the consecrated to be stirring.

Naturally, such lively prospects gave Ellen plenty to do. Sitting propped up in bed, she knitted socks for twenty-five cents a pair and spent the money on tracts to distribute to the unwarned. Asked in a Methodist class-meeting if it would not be more pleasant to live a long life of usefulness, doing good to others than to see Jesus come speedily and destroy all sinners, Ellen replied promptly that she was all for their immediate destruction. Shortly afterward Methodism terminated its connection with her.

But, alas, the day of doom prophesied by Pastor Miller came, and nothing at all happened, not even a modest little earthquake. Cows continued to graze in the fields; the wicked continued to mock. The disappointment of the sanctified was so keen that some of the weaker among them lost their faith entirely. Later, however, the matter was explained satisfactorily. A brother who had dropped down behind a shock of corn to pray heard a voice say to him very distinctly, "The sanctuary to be cleansed was in Heaven." So Pastor Miller's calculations were right, after all; he

had simply placed the uproar in the wrong location.

It was not long after this transient unpleasantness that Ellen had her first official vision. During a period of prayer in a private home she was carried off in a great sea of light. She saw a little company of Adventists walking to Heaven far above the heads of the wicked; she watched the arrival of Jesus with a trumpet in one hand and a sickle in the other; and she glimpsed the drawing up in parade formation of the sanctified 144,000 on a sea of glass.

Other visions followed rapidly within the next few weeks. Ellen reported to her enraptured circle that the angels hold golden cards which they must present at the gate of the Holy City to get in or out, that the saints live in silver houses, and that before going out to work in their gardens they remove their gleaming crowns and lay them on a golden shelf. Soon the homely and disfigured prophetess found herself the most popular member of the Adventist set. Old fathers in Israel drove forty miles to hear her preach, and leading elders solemnly declared that here at last was the prophet promised in Revelation to the final remnant of the saints. One night at prayer-meeting a ball of fire entered her heart and she was commanded to go out into the world and direct the brethren according to her instructions from Heaven.

## II

When Ellen set out on this public mission, a new type of revelation was added to her repertory. "God has been pleased to open to me the secrets of the hidden life of His people," she announced ominously. "The unpleasant duty has been laid upon me to reprove wrongs and reveal hidden sins." Always, after this message, God showed her less of Heaven and more of what the various brothers and sisters were doing with their evenings.

She plunged into her new work with a gusto surprising in one who found it, as

she said, distasteful. In looking over her long list of public condemnations, one is impressed with the fact that they were mainly directed, not against sinners in general, but against other Adventists who were claiming the gift of prophecy or a call to lead the faithful. No brother who boasted of his confidential relations with the Holy Spirit could hope to hide away from Sister White's inspired muck-raking. Her usual system, whenever she met such a pretender, was to point a finger at him and accuse him melodramatically of having recently committed adultery. Astounded and confused, the stricken brother would usually fall at her feet and confess that such, indeed, was the case. A considerable number of false prophets and self-appointed wizards were thus shown up and disposed of.

Lady preachers who ventured to work Sister Ellen's side of the street got even shorter shrift. At one meeting she was told of a sister in the congregation who felt inspired to exhort the people. Ellen shuddered, went into a vision, and delivered herself of the following: "That woman who sat down a short time since near the door claims that God has called upon her to preach. She is traveling with the young man who just sat down in front of the desk. God has shown me that she and this young man are guilty of violating the Seventh Commandment." Thus Zion was purged of another serpent. In the end the Adventists were quite rid of what Ellen called "fanatics"—so well rid of them that in all the remaining seventy years of her public mission, she reigned as the only authenticated Adventist prophet.

Whether she was seeing the Lord enthroned in awful majesty or merely an elder snapping a choir-singer's garter, her method of going into her visions must have been very impressive to the beholders. "In passing into this blessed state, she gives three enraptured shouts of 'Glory!' the second and especially the third being fainter and more thrilling than the first," wrote Elder John N. Loughborough.

"Sometimes she drops into a swoon; then, filled with superhuman strength, she rises to her feet and walks around the room. There are frequent movements of her hands and arms, all made in the most graceful manner. Her eyes are open, but she does not wink; her pulse beats regularly, but she does not breathe."

Sister Ellen never indulged in theological polemics. If a controversy arose she would simply go into a vision, stalk rigidly to her Bible, and point unerringly to a verse that settled the matter. Sometimes, according to her associates, she would hold at arm's length an eighteen-pound Bible which, in her normal condition, she could not even lift.

In August, 1846, she was married to Elder James White, an earnest believer and worker in the Adventist cause. Her otherwise detailed autobiography tells us nothing at all about their courtship and almost nothing about her husband's personality. But she settled his status quite definitely by a sentence in her "Testimonies for the Church." "I have never regarded his judgment as infallible," she wrote, "nor his words as inspired." Immediately after their marriage he and Ellen set out to visit the two hundred or so Adventists who were then scattered meagrely through New England and upper New York. They found groups of farmers meeting in barns to debate the difficult question whether the 144,000 sanctified mentioned in Revelation had been raised at Christ's resurrection or were only slated to be saved at the Last Judgment. Ellen went into conference with the Lord, denounced the errors arising in this debate, and stated the correct doctrine in a few inspired sentences.

At no time did she show any desire or willingness to coöperate with the other sects then in vogue. To her, the Adventists were the one and only genuine Biblical "remnant"; they alone had any real chance for salvation. The meeting-houses of other rites were denounced as "synagogues of Satan, the habitations of devils, and the cages of every unclean and hateful bird."

Even to this day Seventh Day Adventist missionaries are still as much interested in pillaging other Bible classes as they are in evangelizing the heathen.

Ellen's first Sabbath vision came shortly after her marriage. She and her consort had met Mr. Joseph Bates, a retired sea-captain, who was spending all his means in promoting the Adventist cause. He expressed a desire to coöperate with them, but was held back by the fact that they still observed Sunday as the Sabbath, whereas he recognized only Saturday. The matter was adjusted by a conveniently timed vision. After being shown such important museum pieces as the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the original ark, Ellen was allowed to see the stone tablets bearing the Commandments. "I was amazed," she reported, "as I saw the Fourth Commandment in the very center of the ten precepts with a soft halo of light encircling it. When the foundation of the earth was laid, then was also laid the foundation of the Sabbath. I was shown that if the true Sabbath had been kept, there never would have been an infidel nor an atheist." From that time onward Sister Ellen and her customers made Saturday their Sabbath, thus earning the approval of Heaven and the coöperation and contributions of the sea-going Mr. Bates.

But even such powerful support as his did not prevent them facing some very trying times. For several years their life was made up of one forlorn camp-meeting after another. There were spells of intermittent housekeeping with borrowed furniture, and interludes in which the sickly Elder White worked at hauling stone or chopping cordwood. Sister Ellen's spirit during these trying times was gloriously unflinching. Never did she hesitate to sacrifice her adoring husband when her career as a lady Elijah demanded it. When he came home from twelve hours of stone hauling he was obliged to spend another six hours writing copy for a religious paper which the Lord had commanded her to publish. Once, in-

deed, he made an ineffectual attempt to step from under this literary burden. In Sister Ellen's autobiography he is quoted as saying, "Wife, it is no use to struggle on any longer. These things are crushing me and will soon carry me to my grave. I have written a note for the paper, stating that I shall publish no more." But Ellen was not to be cheated out of her prophetic career as easily as that. She promptly swooned in the best fashion of the time, and then had a vision in which she saw that it was Satan himself who had driven her husband to suggest such a step. Naturally enough, the paper continued.

Even the sacred claims of motherhood did not drag the prophetess away from her Heaven-appointed work. Her elder son, Henry, spent the first five years of his earthly life boarding with friends while his mother made the rounds of the camp-meetings. Edson, her second little flower, was so sickly as a child that Beelzebub tried to use him as a means to keep Sister Ellen from carrying out her mission. Once, on a camp-meeting trip, he became so ill after a twenty-mile ride that he was unable to take any nourishment. A meeting was scheduled next morning in a town still farther away, and it was up to Sister Ellen to determine a course of action. "The next morning," she later reported, "we consulted together as to whether to return to Rochester or go on. The family who had entertained us said that if we went on, we would bury the child on the road; and to all appearances it would be so. But I dared not go back to Rochester. We believed the affliction of the child was the work of Satan to hinder us from traveling, and we dared not yield to him. I said to my husband, 'If we go back, I shall expect the child to die. He can but die if we go forward. Let us proceed on our journey, trusting in the Lord.'"

That this trust was justified is shown by the fact that Edson lived to follow a glorious career as a denouncer of heretics who kept Sunday as the Sabbath, and as an exponent of vegetarianism.

## III

Naturally, Sister Ellen's wanderings up and down the country gradually augmented the number of Adventists. Thousands of unhappy yokels were glad to join a sect that promised the picturesque destruction of all but a small group of themselves in the very near future. Nothing could be more effective in making them satisfied with their lot than the assurance that multitudes of smart city people, country gentry, and other Sunday-keeping heretics would soon be delivered publicly into taloned hands, while they themselves stood smirking around the Throne.

Ellen continued to prophesy the near coming of the Lord, but memories of the Millerites left waiting at the church prevented her from naming a definite date. She also learned from her own experience that it was well not to be too exact about other matters. Through some mix-up on her signal system with Heaven, she declared that England would enter the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy, that the North would fall, and that slavery would not be abolished. Though this *faux pas* did not stop her from foreseeing wars, famines, and earthquakes later on, she always predicted them in wholesale lots, as part of the "troubulous times" incident to the Third Angel's message. Thus any individual war or earthquake that happened to occur could be nailed triumphantly to the barn-door of the prophetess.

Every step in the organization of the new denomination, from establishing the pay of the pastors to determining the location of a publishing house, was ordered by a direct message from the Lord. Thanks to such a command, a tithing system was eventually instituted among the elect, and after that the Whites were able to carry on their holy work with much more comfort than was formerly possible. In 1863 Sister Ellen and her wheezy consort were patients at a rest cure at Dansville, N. Y. During her stay in the sanitarium, she became greatly interested in diet, massage,

and other such forms of treatment. That the Lord wanted her to become interested was indicated by the copious flow of medical visions that descended on her within the next few months. Instructions in the dangers of tobacco, the advantages of vegetarianism, and the drawbacks of tea and coffee rained down from Heaven in a steady flow of divine light. The Almighty even dictated to her the following description of a health reform garment which was ordered to be worn by the faithful:

The form should not be compressed in the least with corsets and whale-bones. The dress should reach somewhat below the top of the boot, but should be short enough to clear the filth of the sidewalk and street without being raised by the hand. . . . Whatever the length of the dress, women's limbs should be clothed as thoroughly as are men's. This may be done by wearing lined pants, gathered into a band and fastened around the ankle or made tapering around the bottom, and these should come down long enough to meet the shoe.

This statement of the Lord's preferences in the matter of ladies' wear, it will be observed, was hardly consistent with His choice for the Garden of Eden, but Sister Ellen herself never tried to explain the discrepancy. She gamely wore the new reform dress herself and sold paper patterns to the sisters at a dollar each. Those who hesitated were warned that they were "rejecting the light" and would be held "accountable to God." But even this threat of divine wrath was not enough to force the more timid girls to wear the pants on the street. Later Sister Ellen declared that "long undersuits and knitted leggings were in perfect harmony with the testimony." Some eight years after that, she herself laid aside the Heaven-commanded dress and no Seventh Day Adventist ventured to mention it again.

An important step in the denomination's growth was made when the prophetess received a revelation ordering the establishment of a moral sanitarium at Battle Creek, Mich. This consecrated institution opened its doors to the ailing in 1866. "The light communicated to the people is that the Lord would have many sanita-



riums, moderate in size and distributed over the world": this revelation was vouchsafed after the Battle Creek institution had become popular and profitable. Indeed, if Sister Ellen's sanitarium programme had not been divinely inspired, it would have stood as one of the greatest tributes to her judgment. As one sanitarium followed another, and health food factories began to be opened, the Adventists found themselves enjoying large revenues and enormous publicity. Moreover, every new establishment provided a conspicuous place where windows could be washed on Sunday for the edification of the damned.

Meanwhile, the prophetess's method of receiving heavenly instruction had undergone an interesting change. The public trances that occurred during her girlhood were replaced by what were known among fanciers as "night visions." Instead of enduring the fatigue and publicity of conversing with the Lord in open meeting, she merely went comfortably to sleep and let Him chat with her in the still watches of the night. Next day she would appear with her testimony all neatly written out and ready to be presented to the faithful. From the fact that her publishers often had to correct little errors of spelling and grammar in these revelations, one infers that the testimonies were dictated by the Lord, but not read.

For term after term He had called Elder White to serve as president of the General Conference of the Adventists. In 1880, however, the mouthpiece of Heaven received an important piece of news for her husband. She was instructed to tell him that he should lay down his responsibilities, put them into younger hands, and "prepare for his last change." Always obedient to her visions, Elder White hastened to fall mortally ill. When his inspired spouse asked him if he had any desire to live on, the long-driven elder replied with a prompt No. Within a few hours he had drifted away into rest, safe at last from the unending chores commanded by his gifted wife.

Testimonies were raining down through the ether too fast to give her any time for private grief. Within a short space she was busily reporting what the Lord had told her about the details of the nurses' training course in the Adventist sanitariums, the text-books to be used in the denomination's schools, and the royalties which the church publishing houses were to pay her. Preachers who ventured to doubt or disobey received a heavenly rebuke by the next mail, along with a command to read it from their pulpits; and those who continued to defy the Word as revealed by Sister Ellen were blasted out of the denomination with fire and brimstone. Once an irate person named in a testimony sued the voice of Providence for \$50,000. The case was settled out of court, but after that her published revelations limited personalities to a conservative use of initials.

For some years Sister Ellen had been having uneasy visions concerning the state of faith at Battle Creek, the Adventist Jerusalem. She had gone there many times as a patient—too many times, in fact, for the good of the cause. A careful study of her nervous and physical condition, aided by the machinations of the Devil, caused several of the medical men of the staff to conclude that her visions were simply the product of hysteria. In a long interview with the elders of the church, one of these medical men, Dr. J. H. Kellogg, actually presumed to doubt her prophetic ability. She swung into action by declaring that the heretic must be crushed and damned at once, but this time her magic failed, and with it her authority. Though pronouncements launched against other doubters had always sent them sprawling at her feet, Dr. Kellogg proved as uncrushable as a carload of steel. He refused to resign, even when Sister Ellen branded him "a tool of the Devil." The argument was cut short by a mysterious fire that gutted the Battle Creek publishing house and sanitarium—a fire which, according to the trumpet of Jehovah, was a direct admonition from the Most High. But Dr. Kellogg still refused

to be moved, and the rebuilt sanitarium followed him out of the church.

Losing the denomination's most eminent doctor and most profitable institution was undoubtedly a blow to Sister Ellen, but she had the good sense to see that if any compromise had been made her prophetic standing wouldn't have been worth Clarence Darrow's chances in a Fundamentalist Heaven. She rallied gamely by declaring that the Lord had wanted to move out of Battle Creek anyway, and that He favored centering the holy work nearer the Atlantic seaboard. "Time and again the Lord has presented Washington to me as a place that has been strangely neglected," she declared in a testimony. Thus she scampered away to the national capital, found fifty acres that the Almighty had previously shown her in a vision, and ordered the erection of a new publishing house and sanitarium.

#### IV

The Adventist great headquarters remain there to this day, very close to the fount of legislative wisdom, but the brethren have not made themselves conspicuous in the lobbies of Congress. This is partly because of their inferior numbers, but mainly because their faith keeps them from coöperating with the lost hordes of the other denominations. Perhaps these circumstances should be regarded as very fortunate by the unholy, for beside being ardent enemies of tobacco and alcohol, the Adventists include among the Devil's snares such things as coffee, tea, cocoa, pork, and beef. At present the brethren are heard in the congressional halls only when the District of Columbia is threatened with a stricter Sunday law. Then they cheerfully join hands with the managers of cabarets, burlesque houses, and other sinks of iniquity to fight the horrendous works of the Lord's Day Alliance.

After these Washington headquarters had been satisfactorily established, the tireless instrument of God felt an urge to

enlarge the work in California. A vision that "delineated the liberal ways of the California people" caused her to board a train headed for that great State. Once arrived, she immediately embarked on the planting of sanitariums, and an interested Providence helped her to find favorable locations for them. "In the visions of the night," she reported, "the Lord has shown me unoccupied properties in the country, suitable for sanitarium purposes, and for sale at a price far below the original cost." Sometimes, however, it took quite a while to find the real estate described in her visions. Once, for example, Heaven gave her a view of some bargain acreage near Redlands, but it was fully two years before she was able to discover the property.

The fact that the California earthquake of 1906 occurred without any forewarning from the prophetess caused murmurs to arise among the brethren. Sister Ellen hastened to explain that she had really received a warning two whole days in advance. On the night of April 16th, she had had a startling view of houses being shaken, walls falling down, and injured men and women writhing amid heaps of débris. Indeed, she was shown so much during that memorable night that it took her two days to write it all down. Before she had time to send it out to the brethren, the earthquake actually occurred. Thus, unfortunately, neither the sanitariums nor the Adventists living in private homes had a chance to profit by the advance notice given to their gifted leader.

Sister Ellen's grasp on the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Adventists never slackened until the very end of her life. Despite increasing feebleness, she continued to write books, to make record of God's remarks, and to hurl thunderbolts at any of the brethren who ventured to cross her will. At the age of eighty-seven she had a whole church disfellowshipped for daring to reject the light of her prophecies. She remained a Fundamentalist of Fundamentalists, thus being in the peculiar position of one who sponsored sani-

tariums and yet prohibited the doctors in them from believing in evolution.

On July 16, 1915, she passed from this vale without even one sky-rending burst of fireworks to dramatize her end, leaving an estate that was surprisingly meagre. Her enemies say that she dissipated her takings by keeping a large retinue of servants and making ill-advised business investments; her adherents declare that she poured forth hundreds of thousands in charity and in advancing the truth. There is no doubt that she received high royalties from the church publishers for a space of more than half a century, but what eventually became of all this money remains an enigma.

Although she would undoubtedly regard both ladies as sulphur-coated emissaries of Satan, Mrs. White is rightfully grouped by theological pathologists with those other talented organizers, Mary Baker G. Eddy and Aimée McPherson. In fact, the following of people that she gathered for herself was much larger than Aimée's, and the amount she received for her prophecies was more than Mrs. Eddy ever got for "Science and Health." Out of a little group of a hundred gawky farmers, she built up a sect that now claims 250,988 baptized members, conducts missionary work in 252 languages, and sends out \$5,000,000 worth of literature every year to convert the world to its own brand of Fundamentalism.

How sincere she was is something that can be determined only by special illumination from the Holy Ghost. At times she sounded as self-convinced as any fanatic who ever talked from behind a barred window; then again, she behaved like a

shrewdly competent old lady who was thoroughly conversant with her onions. Through most of her life these two tendencies seemed to run side by side. Even during her neurotic girlhood she showed signs of the clear-headed executive ability that was later to build up a strong and flourishing following. Once, in a confidential mood, she admitted that the rock she stopped with her head in early youth marked her life's most important turning-point, though she apparently saw no connection between the bump and the visions she began to see shortly afterward. It was her disfigurement, she declared, that drew her away from the follies of a gay social life and caused her to fix her thoughts upon eternity. "Naturally proud and ambitious, I might not have been inclined to give my heart to Jesus had it not been for the sore affliction that cut me off, in a manner, from the triumphs and vanities of this world." Well, a flattened nose is a small price to pay for the privilege of ranking with Elijah!

The Adventists heartily mourned the passing of their prophetess, and some of them even demanded that her nine volumes of testimonies be added to the Bible. But although their audible sorrow was thus great, it is not difficult to believe that a few sighs of relief were mingled with the official sobs. For the first time in seventy years the elders and other officers of the sect could walk without fear of being blasted by a curse from Heaven. All the ladies who claimed to have inherited Sister Ellen's mantle were promptly and firmly suppressed.



# THE GREAT ROAD

BY WALTER PRICHARD EATON

A CHARACTER in one of Oscar Wilde's plays says he has no desire to go to America, because in America there are no curiosities and no ruins.

"You forget," another answers, "their manners and their mothers."

Nor, indeed, would Oscar have been impressed with our many ruins, other than our mothers. Perhaps they are only impressive to a sentimentalist—like most ruins elsewhere. But, when it comes to ruins, I for one am unashamedly a sentimentalist, and like nothing better than to muse on the rotted door-sill of an abandoned house which marks some old extension of the American frontier from which the tide of settlement has receded, which is mute witness to our history. I have long been accused, indeed, of collecting cellar holes. Nor are such ruins confined by any means to New England, or the East. There is many a tragic clearing in the Oregon red pines on the edge of the desert, the cabin perhaps still standing, made by the sweat of some poor dupe in the days when there was much talk of dry farming, and homesteaders went out and ultimately raised nothing but a crop of debts and bitterness.

Once, close to the banks of the Rogue river, I came upon a cabin under enormous trees, roofed with split shakes of Douglas fir, and with smoke coming out of the chimney. No one answered my knock, so I entered. Food was on the camp stove, and I waited, looking around the single room. It was bare and dirty, but on one side was an open fireplace, framed by a rough mantel, and the stove-pipe let into the flue above, and at one side, so this

mantle could be displayed. It was somebody's crude attempt, with a saw and chisel, to reproduce Georgian or Colonial woodwork. Soon the owner came in, with a pail of water from the river. He was an old man, the last prospector on that stream. All the others had departed years ago. But he was still living on there, working a shaft into the volcanic soil with one wheelbarrow, hoping against hope to strike enough gold to get him "back East;" for he had been born in New Bedford! That was almost ten years ago. By now he must either be dead or too feeble to live there alone and work his shaft. The split shakes will keep what little rain the cañon knows for many years out of his cabin, which will stand a curious ruin, a reminder of a rush for gold, and some passerby, taking the back way in to Crater Lake, will glance at the crude mantel frame, and, if he has any knowledge of architecture, wonder how it got there, and not know that it was the tribute to his ancestors of a broken and a homesick man.

By the year 1720 settlers had pushed north up the Connecticut valley from New Haven, and up the Hudson from New York, but between lay the rocky and tumbled wilderness of the Berkshire Barrier. In the northwestern corner of Massachusetts, near the present Williams College, was Fort Massachusetts, to guard against the Mohawk Indians. In the southwestern corner was a fertile intervalle made by the Housatonic river, and inhabited by the friendly Stockbridge Indians. To this intervalle, in the 1720's, came settlers from the eastern part of the State, pushing through the rough wilderness, which began at