

## A CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK.

For The Public.

Sammy East (as people called him) was more or less in government service. He hunted, trapped, went with pack trains for surveyors and timber cruisers. He had carried the mail, in pioneer days and places, on snow-shoes, climbing up to the crest of the Sierras, sliding down to little mountain camps otherwise wholly cut off from communication with the outside world for weeks at a time. He had as many adventures with hunger, cold, wolves and grizzlies as did that more widely known "Snow-shoe Thompson," another of those hardy mountaineers, the fellow who carried the winter mails from Placerville to Genoa, Nevada, before the Southern Pacific was built.

Sammy East earned money enough to educate his only son, Paul, and then he died. It is with Paul that this tale has to do—Paul, a quiet young man just ready to practice medicine in a valley town, just married to one of his university classmates. He took her up in the forest, miles away, to see his father's grave, and there he told her: "The old man never knew what fear was, and never let go of anything he had begun till it was somehow finished. Once he was caught in the head of a gulch, by a snowslide, and lived there for days; his fight would make a book. I don't think I could have done it."

"Yes, you could," she replied. "You don't know yourself very well."

A couple of years passed, and the tragedy came into his life. There was a dear little baby girl by that time, and Dr. Paul took his wife and baby out for a drive. They went along a narrow hill-road, in a steep canyon. The bank above had caved with the spring rains. He tried to lead the horse around the break, but the animal "went plumb crazy," as old ranchers say, reared, plunged, rolled over the edge on the rocks far below, dragging him along. When people came later, they took out all that was left alive, this poor Dr. Paul; he was patched up in a San Francisco hospital, minus an arm and a leg, and at last resumed his practice in the town where he had started.

His oldest and best friends, looking at him, found it impossible to do more than shake hands, with tears in their eyes, and go off. Every morning when he got up he went to the little grave-yard, and put fresh flowers on the mound where his wife and baby were resting, but he never spoke an extra word to anyone; he simply threw himself into his work. One of his classmates who had been at the wedding and used to play with the baby, once came a good many miles to see Dr. Paul. He lived so much alone, she thought; maybe some one might persuade him to have more social life and to board with pleasant people, instead of eating at the hotel, and sleeping in his office. She had it all planned

out in her matter-of-fact mind—just as people will, you know. She took his hand, looked into his quiet face, and suddenly felt that they lived in different worlds and spoke in different languages. She could find no bi-lingual inscription by which to translate herself into his terms, or him into hers. She came away, and said to a friend: "The Doctor looks a million years old, and absolutely alone, as if he were buried in a snow-drift. And yet he seems as big as all out-doors."

More years passed—five, ten, twenty. Then one of the people who cared, and remembered, met Dr. Paul at a convention of medical men where he read a monograph of the sort that gives one "an inside reputation" among specialists. She was astonished, and almost ran home to tell her story. "I just happened to see that he was to read a paper, and I went there. Of course I didn't understand it, but it was plain the rest did. Dr. Paul looks transparent as glass. His eyes are shining with the light of peace. He sits still, for he is such a cripple, and everyone goes to him. It is beautiful to see him, and to hear him speak. His voice warms you clear through. He has ripened and mellowed, sweetened and brightened until now the mortal seems ready to put on immortality. When he shook hands with me he spoke of her (you know we went to school together). He said: 'Mary, you and she knew each other, and it is so pleasant to meet you again.' All I could answer was: 'O yes, Dr. Paul; yes.'"

At last Dr. Paul's work was done, his body was worn out; he rested, waiting for release. To one of his oldest friends he said: "My father, who was a rough mountain diamond of a man, once froze in the snow for a month or more. His companions were killed by an avalanche, and he was battered and crippled. He got a fire, drew threads from his clothes to make snares, and caught birds and small animals. He turned a saddle into a pair of snow shoes and slid on them 6,000 feet down into the valley among the homes of men. My father's only son . . . has had . . . to do . . . about . . . that sort of thing, you know."

His face lit up as if from within: "At last, I saw that it was all right, that my treasure was . . . laid away . . . where neither moth nor rust . . ." His voice failed, he closed his eyes and passed into the dreamless sleep. His friend, a dour Scotchman who had never shown emotion before, came out weeping, unashamed. "The best man o' this generation has gane to meet his ain folk."

CHARLES HOWARD SHINN.



When fewer shoemakers make more shoes for fewer farmers and fewer farmers raise more food for fewer shoemakers, why does the cost of living rise? Somebody has quit work and is living off the worker.—Grain Growers' Text Book.