

My Personal Recollections

The Unfinished Memoirs of Henry Bond Restarick

Bishop of Honolulu, 1902-1920

Author of

"Hawaii From the Viewpoint of a Bishop,"

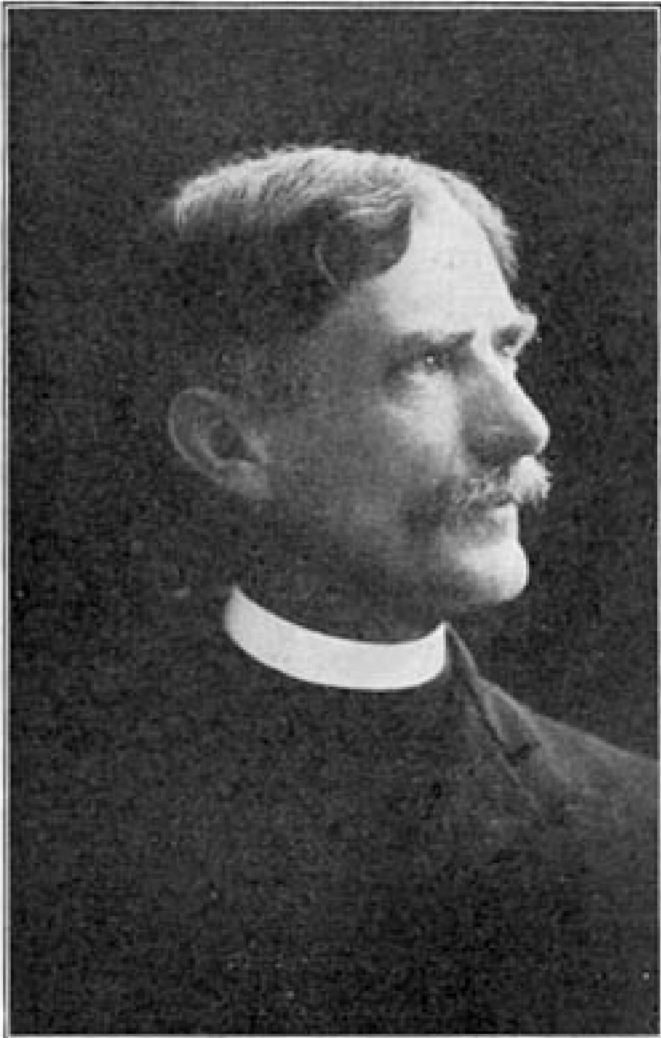
"Sun Yat Sen," Etc.

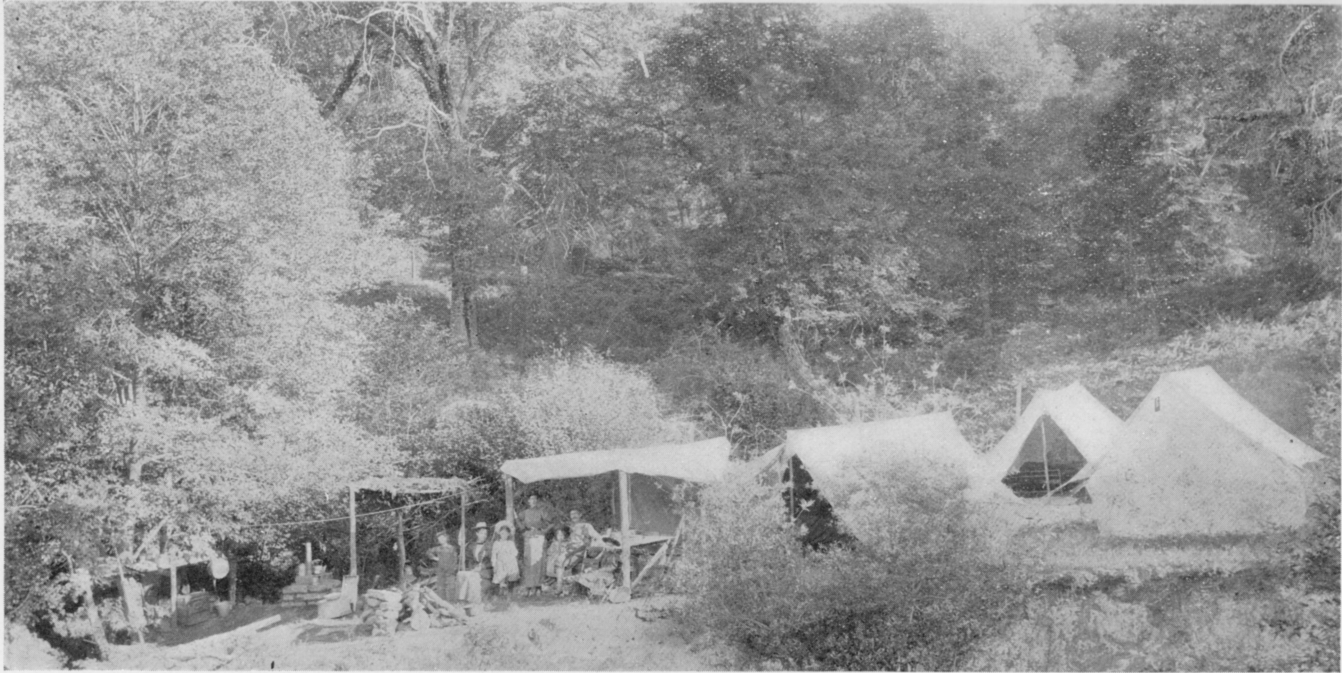


Edited by His Daughter
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The Restarick Camp on Palomar in 1899

CHAPTER XVIII

Camping in California

MY WIFE had been of the greatest assistance to me all these years, helping with the music and the church visiting and with her work as head of the Senior and Junior Altar Guilds. She had trained a corps of young women in the care of the altar and in making altar cloths, stoles and vestments for the choir and the clergy. These guilds had also raised enough money to buy two beautiful stained glass windows and a handsome brass communion rail with gates to the sanctuary. These duties, combined with the long illness and death of her mother in our home in 1895 and the care of three children, for our daughter, Margaret, had been born in 1894, impaired my wife's health and I was advised by our family physician to take her into the mountains back of San Diego for a complete rest and change of climate.

This was the beginning of our annual trek to Palomar Mountain. We were pioneer campers at Palomar, in fact, I have always flattered my-

self that I discovered the mountain and was in part responsible for its later popularity as a camping resort. It is one of the most beautiful mountains in California and will soon be widely known throughout the world as the site of the largest telescope, far from the glaring lights of towns and cities. It abounds in forests of fir, pine, spruce and oak, in springs of clear, cold, crystal water, in valleys of lush, green grass, and in ferns and wild flowers of endless varieties.

In 1896, it was a two or three days' journey from San Diego to Palomar by "stage," as the wagon, drawn by four or six horses, was called. It seems hardly possible that in the span of one short life, travel should be so speeded up that the trip can now be made in three or four hours. We always used to spend the first night at Escondido, often staying at the hospitable home of Mr. Sam Dickson, who had a large vineyard in that fertile valley. How Mrs. Dickson ever put up so many of us, I do not know, but she always managed. The first few years, we would spend the second night at Bear Valley, in order to rest the horses for the tremendous pull up the five mile grade which was so steep that we had to get out and walk as it was all six horses could

do to pull the 'wagon with our camping equipment and provisions for a three months' stay, up the almost precipitous ascent.

The grade was so formidable that few people were willing to negotiate it, with the result that once on top of the mountain, we were practically cut off from the rest of the world, our only means of communication being a mail, three times a week. The first year we lived in an old adobe house, long since demolished, at the Iron Spring. This spring comes to the surface between the roots of two trees with a tremendous flow and stains the rocks over which it runs with a rusty deposit. The house was so full of insects of every description that after the first year we lived in tents, which we learned to make quite luxurious in the way of conveniences and comforts.

The life in the open air was of the greatest benefit to my wife. I was only able to stay a week or two at a time but the family would stay the long summer through and we became so enthusiastic over the charms of Palomar that we induced many of our friends to join us. The Sam Ingles became regular summer settlers and also the Sam Dicksons, while many college boys, home for the summer, would come up for an outing and for

the shooting. The hunting was very good and we were able to vary the monotony of canned goods with pigeons, doves and squirrels. I remember the Dickson boys were particularly good shots and when they had supplied their own needs would generously give us the makings of a squirrel or pigeon pie.

We all took turns with the cooking, even making our own bread. My wife would mix the dough, put the loaves in a dutch oven and I would bake them in what the Hawaiians would call an "imu." One day, as I was baking, an old man with his daughter and her husband came to camp near us. The old man said to me: "I ain't seen baking that way since I saw my mother do it in Pennsylvania when I was a boy. Say, mister, will you give me a taste of the loaf?" He then inquired if there were any wild "criters" on the mountain. I told him there were but that I did not believe they would bother him.

The trio pitched their tents about 100 yards from us and in the middle of the night we were aroused by the shot from a gun. I threw on some clothes and hastening in the direction of the sound, found the new campers, in their night clothes, bending over something on the ground.

I expected at least to find a dead wild cat but all I saw was the shattered remains of a harness. During the night, the old man had awakened and seeing, as he thought, the two eyes of some wild creature staring at him from the crotch of a tree, he had taken his gun and fired, taking pains to aim between the eyes. What he saw was the moonlight shining on the brass blinders of a bridle, hanging on the tree.

The bears had all been killed off on Palomar before our time but there were still old bear traps in narrow gulches and at the crossroads of the Iron Spring-Mendenhall road was a platform which had been built in one of the huge live oak trees from which to shoot bears. One summer, Mary Hubbard was camping with us and rented a mare from old man Doane which had a colt running with her. Every night we turned our horses loose in the 160 acre pasture to graze and one morning when we went to catch our horses, the colt could not be found. A search resulted in our finding the partly eaten carcass, evidently the work of a mountain lion. Large doses of strychnine were placed in what was left of the colt and the next day we found, about twenty-five feet from its victim, a dead cougar, which

measured nine feet, six inches from the end of its tail to the tip of its nose.

One of the features of the Camp at Iron Spring was the camp fire. The nights are very cold on the mountain as the altitude is about five thousand feet. Every day huge logs would be hauled and at night everyone would gather around one central fire where impromptu programs would be put on, songs sung or games played. We gathered quite a bit of talent in our group and many were the rhymes composed with local hits, set to familiar tunes. I wonder how many of the old crowd remember the words of "Palomar," set to the chorus of "There is a Tavern in the Town."

"Palomar, oh, how I love thee,
Whether sunshine glows above thee
Or the stars look down upon
Thy sylvan slopes and dells.
Hurrah, hurrah, for Palomar, Palomar,
Whose campers come from near and far,
near and far,
We'll sing thy praises, loud and free
From mountain top down to the sea."

Palomar is thirty miles long and about ten miles wide and without ever going off the moun-

tain, days were an endless delight, spent exploring old trails, either on foot or horseback, picnicing in some shady glen, shooting game or driving about visiting the settlers. Those were the days of the Mendenhall-Bailey feud and one had to be very careful to maintain a strict neutrality. We drove cattle with the Mendenhalls and Mr. Doane and assisted at the round ups. Every year we would organize expeditions to the Doane Valley waterfalls and to the monument, which marked the highest point on the mountain. This last was a strenuous hike as there was no trail and we had to cut our own way through dense undergrowth of mesquite and sage.

It was cheaper to buy horses than to rent them. The first year we went to Palomar, I bought a pinto pony from an Indian for three dollars. He had a delightful gait and was thoroughly reliable for the children. Every year, at the end of the summer, we would turn him loose on the mountain and some one would pick him up and bring him to us the following season. One year I bought a really good horse for eight dollars but the Indian who sold him to me was honest and warned me that I should have to be careful for the pony had been trained to chase jack rabbits

and squirrels. Rabbit hunting on horseback was a favorite Indian sport. Mounted on horses and armed with clubs, the Indians would gather of a Sunday and scout the country for jack rabbits. When one was sighted, away they would all go, the object being to see which horse was fast enough to over-take a rabbit so that an Indian could kill it by a blow over the head with the club.

This eight dollar pony was as fleet as the wind and as easy riding as a rocking horse but at the sight of a squirrel or rabbit, he would leave any road or trail and dash away after the animal over stony ground or through underbrush. No amount of reining in would stop him and apparently there was no bit made which would hold him and at last when one of the children was brushed off as a result of one of his wild gallops through the mesquite, I had to sell him. California bred horses have wonderful endurance and I once drove a pair of mustangs to Palomar from San Diego and back, a distance of one hundred and twenty miles, between ten o'clock of a Monday morning and nine o'clock of the following Wednesday night, without causing them any distress.

A number of men had taken up homesteads and brought their families to live on Palomar. Among these was a man named Fraser who came from Indiana. He had been in the Union Army during the Civil War and was one of two men whom I knew, who was shot through the abdomen by an ounce Minie ball and lived to tell the tale.

Fraser told me he was on picket duty and standing behind a tree, when he spied a rebel on the opposite lines and stepped out to take a shot at him. The Confederate soldier was quicker than he, however, and before Fraser could fire, he was hit by a ball just above the navel. The Southerner came over to him and asked him if he would like to be carried over to the Confederate lines or if he preferred to wait for his own men. Fraser replied he would wait for his own boys and when they came, they carried him to a deserted farm house close by. A doctor looked him over and said he could do nothing for him as the ball had evidently gone through his intestines.

Soon after this, the forces on both sides left the neighborhood. Fraser thought he was being left alone to die when who should walk into the

house but the rebel who had shot him. He had been wounded in the arm which he carried in a sling. He expressed great regret for having wounded Fraser and said he would stay and take care of him and that if he were left a permanent invalid, he would see that he did not want, as his father was a wealthy man. There was no food in the house but a jug of corn whiskey was found and the Confederate soldier mixed this with water and gave it to the wounded Yankee to drink every so often.

About four days later, the Union forces returned and the doctor who had seen Fraser before said to him: "What, you here yet? You ought to be dead!" The surgeon said the ball must have passed through him without severing the intestines and that it was fortunate that he had eaten no food. Fraser said he suffered considerably with his back but was otherwise strong enough.

The other man I knew who was shot through with a Minie ball was the Rev. W. F. Hubbard, a retired chaplain of the U. S. Army. In the Civil War, he was a private in a New York regiment and, at the battle of Gettysburg, was on picket duty, lying down behind a heap of dirt.