

were worked chiefly by men from the Southern and Western States, who possessed and practiced many of the noblest traits of our race. As an illustration of their innate integrity of character, it is perhaps only necessary to state, that locks and keys were unknown in the country; and all places of abode were always left unfastened, and open to the reception of all, who received a cordial welcome, and a free invitation to partake of every hospitality the dug-out or shanty afforded. Upon the return of the lone miner to his "hole in the ground," after a hard day's work, he would frequently be cheered with the sight of some weary prospector, who had, in his absence, there taken up his lodgings for the night. Having passed a pleasant night, they would separate in the morning, perhaps never to meet again. Mining tools, and every thing of this description, were left out, and nothing ever stolen or disturbed.

Debts were contracted without reserve, at the first interview with a newcomer, and he seldom ever failed to meet his promises of payment. The mode of doing business was something like this: A young man would enter a store, or go to a smelter, who usually kept miners' supplies, and would say: "Sir, I have just arrived in the mines, am out of money, and wish to go to mining; if you will let me have some tools and provisions, I will pay you as soon as I strike mineral, which I hope will be in a few days, or weeks at the most." The prompt and friendly reply would be—"Yes, Sir, you can have them;" and the pay, sooner or later, was almost sure to come. This custom was so universally prevalent, and men were so prompt to pay their debts, that I have often heard business men of that day declare, that they never knew debts so promptly paid, even in States where they had stringent laws to enforce their collection.

I did not remain long at New Diggings, but soon moved out to Pecatonica, and kept a tavern, which was, for a considerable time, the only house between Gratiot's and the Blue Mounds. I was myself strongly impressed with the idea that no collection laws were preferable; travellers would often make bills with me