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THIRD INTERVIEW.

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Elizabeth Ross,
Investigator,
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AN Interview with Mr. G. W. McGregor,
Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

Near the border of a prairie in Hulbert township rises the Bald Hill, which is of considerable height. This hill is covered with grass and is rugged. Stones are near the surface and there is peculiarity in connection with the loose stones and those which have been unearthed. Upon being struck with metal, such as pick, drill, or shovel, a ringing sound is produced. Because of this circumstance many persons have believed that the stones contain valuable metal, silver in particular. Some of the old citizens in long past years are said to have related interesting stories to the effect that silver had been found at several places outlying from the Bald Hill. It was probably the result of the old stories which caused several men to undertake to find silver near the summit of the hill nearly fifty years ago.

The men who engaged in digging for a brief period lived in Tahlequah. After deciding where to begin digging

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the small party established a camp near the base of the hill. Tahlequah was about twelve miles distant and some time was required in which to drive to the camp. Jerry Springsted, for many years a carpenter and house builder of Tahlequah, was in charge of the party.

After establishing their camp the prospectors, with their picks and shovels, began digging into the rocky earth and removing quantities of rock. Progress was rather slow but the prospectors hoped that at no great depth silver ore would be found. But about that time several full blood Cherokees arrived. Without saying anything to the prospectors, the visitors sat down and intently watched operations. When the workmen ceased late in the day the Indians rode away on their horses. They returned the following day and resumed their watching in absolute silence. The prospectors began to feel uneasy and nervous. At the time the prospectors labored the laws of the Cherokee Nation were yet in full force and effect. One of such laws strictly forbade

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prospecting for gold, silver, copper and lead. Mr. Springsted's wife was a Cherokee, which gave him certain rights of citizenship, but did not confer on him any right to prospect for valuable minerals or metals.

It is probable that the prospectors recalled having heard stories of men in long past years who had been summarily disposed of for having violated one of the stringent laws. So, as the silent visitors watched the digging operations very closely, the prospectors grew more and more uneasy. Finally they could endure being watched no longer and upon quitting work one day they loaded their implements into a wagon and drove away to the town of Tahlequah. Prospecting operations at the Bald Hill were abandoned permanently.

Although the Cherokee laws became obsolete no one has yet found silver in vicinity of the Bald Hill. There are numbers of persons who have noted the "ringing sound" which emanates from the Bald Hill stones, but the main "vein of silver", if any, remains undiscovered in these days of 1938.