



MAGNA EST VERITAS, ETC.

LADY VISITOR (to small child)—"What lesson was Papa teaching you this morning?"

SMALL CHILD—"Always to speak the truth."

LADY VISITOR—"And what did he say when he was told I was here?"

SMALL CHILD—"Confound that woman!"

TWO VENTURES.

BY HURKARU.

CHAPTER VII.—THE COLORADO TUNNEL CATASTROPHE.

The next day our friend started for Denver, by way of Chicago, where he had to meet one of the syndicate (Mr. Osman), but had no time to see much of that wonderful city which has sprung up within the memory of man to such large proportions.

It cannot be expected, in an unpretentious tale like this, that we can enter into details of the construction of the Colorado Tunnel. It will be enough to state that the objects of the tunnel were twofold; namely to open up some rich mines, and to shorten and thus cheapen the transit of the products of those mines.

The difficulties in the way of engineering the project arose from the different formations of the ground to be bored (which consisted at some places of sand, at others of rock or gravel) and also to provide for ventilation, so necessary as the tunnel both lengthened and deepened, for we have all heard how gasses lurking in the bowels of earth often explode or ignite, causing terrible destruction to life and property. The grant and title of the Colorado Tunnel Company by the Government were indisputable as to the

length and breadth of the property, and, as there was plenty of room for deviation, in a lateral direction, Dugdale determined after a careful examination of the ground, which occupied him the best part of a fortnight, to alter the plan somewhat in order to carry the tunnel in a direct line from east to west, striking a rich lode at pretty nearly the deepest part. He accordingly drew up his new plan and specifications, and forwarded them to New York for approval. In four days he received a telegram from Van Higgin to "go ahead as he proposed," whereupon he gave instructions to the contractor and the work commenced at once.

Dugdale's orders were to spare no expense, with regard either to pushing forward the tunnel or opening up the mines, which the company had acquired, and he therefore not only put on a gang of men at both the east and west ends of the tunnel, but also began to probe the mine in the mountain about where the centre of the tunnel would be.

Everything proceeded satisfactorily for a couple of months, when a small cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, rose in the horizon. Dugdale had conceived an ingenious drilling machine which saved an enormous amount of manual labor, and, as might be expected, the invention was regarded unfavorably by the unskilled workmen.

Murmurs began, at first slight, but gradually increasing, until Dugdale, who had been so long accustomed to deal with large masses of laborers, foresaw trouble ahead. He had forwarded the plan of the machine to Van Higgin for the necessary steps to be taken to have it patented, meanwhile affairs arrived at a crisis, and one morning all the gangs struck and the work on the tunnel was entirely suspended, a very serious matter in an undertaking of such magnitude.

The affair could doubtless have been settled by the removal of the obnoxious machine, but Dugdale was not a man to back down from a position he had taken up without a struggle, and he telegraphed the situation to New York asking for a supply of Italian laborers to be sent on immediately, after which he paid off the strikers, and in another twenty-four hours the works of the great Colorado Tunnel were almost deserted.

But in a week the scene was again as lively as ever, the strikers having been replaced by gangs of swarthy men, with black beards and black eyes, who showed no antipathy to the new machine, and Dugdale was congratulating himself that the trouble was over when he began to notice a few of the old hands hanging round the second shaft from the east end mouth of the tunnel. He asked them what