

THE MORNING BONANZA.

The true name of this mine was the Golden Amulet, and Mr. King was exceedingly annoyed at the new title it had acquired among the miners.

"It sounds bad," he said, "and will kill the sale of it, no matter how much gold you take out.

Mr. King was a very respectable gentleman, although Jerry Benton had called him a "promoter," and had flashed his eyes significantly as he said it, which circumstance put suspicions into the minds of the New York capitalists who were negotiating for the purchase of the mine. There is still no absolute proof that Mr. King is not a respectable gentleman, but the Morning Bonanza was never sold according to his hopes, for reasons which will presently appear.

A tunnel had been driven into the mountain-side, following the course of a vein claimed by Mr. King and his friends to be very rich in gold. The ore had been frequently assayed, and showed fifty dollars worth of the precious metal in a ton.

Induced by this, many poor "prospectors," starving in barren gulches, had come to Indian Hollow, built cabins anew, and gone to burrowing like rabbits, hoping to realize here their old dreams of fortune. In the end they served Mr. King very well as day laborers, while piles of worthless rock lay baking in the sun at the mouths of their abandoned workings like glaring monuments to their folly.

Now the time had come to test the Golden Amulet, Eastern men, anxious as the poor "prospectors" had been to acquire sudden wealth, had cast longing eyes toward the one successful mine of Indian Hollow, which now was to be thoroughly investigated. A mining engineer had come all the way from New York, riding across miles of dusty prairie in stage-coaches, and with him had come the big fat president of the new mining company, and the little lean secretary with spectacles on his nose, and as they walked down Indian Hollow wearing their silk hats, several of the "boys" cast eyes at each other, burning with desire to spoil this eastern finery.

The Golden Amulet was not yet a full-fledged mine, for you must know that that is a very dignified term, not to be

given hastily to any hole in the ground that a visionary miner may dig.

Speaking strictly, as the lawyers did when they drew up the necessary papers between Mr. King and the big fat president, the Golden Amulet was only a "mining claim," fifteen hundred feet long by six hundred wide. On this claim was tunnel running two hundred feet into the hill, at which point it turned at right angles to the left, in which direction it continued fifty feet, where it again touched a vein. Here a large chamber had been "stoped," or hollowed out, yielding the "pay-rock" which had interested the eastern capitalists.

The trio entered the tunnel, the sturdy mining engineer taking the lead, the others following with much unnecessary caution. Indian Hollow was represented by groups of mines somewhat dispersed, but all within visual range of the Golden Amulet, and when the trio re-appeared in the daylight with hats much battered and with brown and yellow signs of inexperience spotted over the black suits of the president and secretary, a faithful photograph would have caught all Indian Hollow with a smile on its face.

That day and the next there was much business in progress centreing around the Golden Amulet, and then the mining engineer helped the unwieldy president to adjust himself on a buck-board, and, taking the seat beside him, they left the secretary with a portfolio full of instructions under his arm, staring through his gold-rimmed spectacles after them, while they bumped along the rough road and twisted out of sight among the pines.

Jerry Benton now became the spirit of animation in the camp, for he had been appointed to conduct the work in accordance with instructions left in the secretary's portfolio. Mr. King, although still owner of the claim, was supposed to be at home quietly whetting his appetite for the full enjoyment of the fifty thousand dollars to be paid him if the mine should equal all anticipations. Jerry Benton accordingly employed his force of miners, and the "dump," where all rock taken from the mine was thrown, grew from day to day, and new cabins were built for fresh arrivals; a store was opened, and there was talk of running regular stages to connect with the outer world. The little secretary, who was somewhat of a