

MINING BY ASTROLOGY.

An Unexpected Windfall for the Owners of a Cripple Creek Property.

"We meet some very peculiar people out our way," said the man from Cripple Creek. "Any one who lives in a mining town has a chance to see human nature in all its phases. There is no place where the superstition and the passions of men are so fully revealed."

"You have probably never heard of the Epsilon Gold Mining Company, Limited: indeed, there is no particular reason why you should. Up to a few weeks ago the Epsilon Gold Mining Company, consisted almost entirely of John Robinson as President and of myself as Secretary and Treasurer. There were 200,000 shares of stock equally divided between us two, for which up to that time we had been unable to find a purchaser at any price. The assets of the company consisted entirely of a barren tract of land several miles from the gold-producing mines of Cripple Creek. We had bought the property for practically nothing and had incorporated our company according to law. Up to that time its stock was worth nothing a share. There was a small amount of money in the treasury, but we had not felt ourselves sufficiently encouraged to work the mine; had long ago given it up as a bad job and turned our attention to more profitable fields of investment. In fact, I had almost forgotten the existence of the Epsilon mine, when one morning a tall, lank funeral person marched into my office unannounced and planked himself in a chair directly opposite me. I had never seen him before, but he was well dressed and from all appearances well provided with this world's goods."

"Pardon me," he said, by way of introduction, "but I have seen your name mentioned in connection with the Epsilon mine. I believe you are the Secretary and Treasurer of the company."

"I thought for a moment and then suddenly remembering my abandoned claim, nodded a polite acquiescence."

"I wonder where I can buy any of the stock of that mine?" inquired my visitor.

"As a matter of fact there are 200,000 shares of stock gracefully reposing in our safe awaiting a purchaser. However I thought it best to be just a little bit wary, so I informed him that there was so far as I knew no stock for sale; that it had already been taken up, and was in safe hands: but that if he was anxious to buy I would look around and see if I couldn't pick up a few shares here and there."

"Oh, yes; I would like to buy quite a good block," he said; "that is, if I could get it at a moderate price. I would buy as much as 100,000 shares if everything was satisfactory."

"I asked him to call around in the afternoon, as I might be able to accommodate him by that time. He agreed to that proposition and retired. Of course, I began at once to smell a rat. I called in my partner and informed him that an apparently sane man wished to buy 100,000 shares of the Epsilon. He at once grew suspicious. Of course, we thought that this man had some inside information concerning the property which we did not possess, and we at once began a rigid investigation. We had not finished by the time my friend punctually returned in the afternoon, so I asked him if he could not come back the first thing in the morning, when I thought I would be prepared to deliver the stock. He at once agreed and we continued our investigation. So far as we could learn there was absolutely nothing new about the Epsilon. No strike had been made on that or any claim within several miles of it. It was just as barren a tract as it had ever been. My partner, however, was not satisfied and did not want to sell. I thought it was the chance of our lives and I finally persuaded him to dispose of fifty thousand of his



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shares at five cents a share, I agreeing to dispose of the same amount for the like sum. It was just like picking up money in the street, for there was no stock broker in Colorado who would have accepted the Epsilon as a gift. My friend turned up promptly the next morning.

"I have succeeded in raising the hundred thousand shares," I said, "but I find that I cannot get it for less than five cents a share. Would you be willing to give that much?"

"Certainly," he replied promptly, pulling out his check book. He at once wrote out a check on a responsible bank in Colorado Springs for \$5,000, and handed it over to me. I made an excuse to retire to the next room and while there I called up the bank. They replied that the check was all right; that it only represented a small amount of the stranger's deposit. More mystified than ever, I made out the stock certificates and handed them over to him, he accepting them apparently with relish.

"I suppose I have no right to ask the question," I said at the conclusion of the transaction, "but I would really like to know why you have bought this stock and paid \$5,000 for it. You must have information which we do not possess."

"Yes, I suppose you think I am very foolish to take up this apparently worthless mine," replied my visitor. "I know the whole history of it and am perfectly well acquainted with its rating on the Stock Exchange. Nevertheless I am bound to take it up. The reason why is this: I am an astrologer and direct all my life and all my business transactions by the stars. Some days ago I was looking over a list of the Cripple Creek mines, and that peculiar name of Epsilon at once attracted my attention. I procured a map of it, took its horoscope, and made other astronomical calculations. As a result I know just where to sink a shaft and strike the richest bed of ore in this region. There is no doubt of it. There is more gold in your discarded mine than in Cripple Creek and the Klondike combined."

"I felt like reaching over and pulling back my stock, but of course it was too late. I therefore suggested to him that we develop the mine, sink a shaft, and see if we could find that gold. He agreed, and we began operations at once. There was a little money in the treasury, and with the aid of that we carried the shaft down fifty feet. We struck nothing but sand and mud. Our obliging friend put up a sufficient sum to carry down the shaft fifty feet further. Again we were doomed to disappointment. My partner and I who were now thoroughly in the spirit of the astrologer, furnished the money for another fifty feet. Still no gold. We therefore gave the thing up, and let our friend continue the work. He has spent a large fortune sinking shafts in every available spot on the Epsilon mine, but he hasn't struck color yet. When I left town a few weeks ago he was planning another shaft, but whether he will succeed in finding anything I don't know. I firmly believe that he will not."

"I suppose," the narrator's friend put in, "that the astrologer feels pretty sore against you at the present time and thinks that he has been taken in by the Epsilon?"

"Not a bit of it. He still thinks he has got a bonanza. He has absolute faith in the gold-producing qualities of the Epsilon and you could not buy his stock for ten times the amount he paid for it. He has absolute faith in astrology. The stars tell him that there is gold in the Epsilon mine, and he says that he will bore through to China if necessary, in order to find it. Meanwhile, if you know of any one who wants to buy that other 100,000 shares of Epsilon, kindly send him around to my office. I will sell them for less than five cents a share."

[Making It Worth While.]

An Irishman walking over some planking in counting his money, accidentally dropped a penny, which rolled down a crack between the boards. He was much put

out by his loss, trifling though it was. Early the next day a friend, while walking by the spot, discovered the man dropping a shilling down the same crack. "It was this way," explained Pat: "I reasoned that it wouldn't pay to pull up that planking for the sake of a penny, so I'm just dropping down a shilling to make it worth me while."

THE MAN OF MODERATE MEANS.

One of the Things he is Going to do When his Ship Comes In.

"If ever I get rich," said the man of moderate means, "one of the things that I shall do is to travel. I do love to travel. I should poke about not only on the highways, but the byways. New York is getting to be a centre of world travel, but it's nothing like London and Liverpool. If I had the money, I should go to those towns and read the advertisements in the papers, and look up the shipping guides, and pick out my trips. From either of those ports ships go literally all over the world; not alone along great routes of travel, to familiar though distant lands and cities, but to many strange and curious and interesting places that ordinarily one would never even dream of."

"The trip across the Atlantic in a fast steamer, among a lot of people, is like a brief journey in a floating hotel. I'd like to take a long journey in a fine ship. The very finest steamers in the world come to this port; but there are many fine ships running out of the Thames and the Mersey that we never hear of at all, running, not on our familiar Atlantic ferry, but going half round the world and back at every trip; and I would like to travel on them all. And then there are long-distance coastwise trips along strange lands, and trips to distant points to connect with other boats that go further still to places yet more remote, where the passenger travel is small and the boats infrequent and sailing when they get ready. Think of losing under such circumstances."

"Then back to London or to Liverpool after a while, and off again. I should travel all the lines. I should like to know all the ships, and the officers, if they wanted to know me, and all the seaport towns the world over; that means I'd like to know the world. No exploration business, no hard work anywhere; some discomfort, perhaps, but mighty little and comfort always in sight, and just having a feast of loafing with a sauce of strange sights; and a familiar knowledge, finally of the earth's strange place."

"And I want to go more or less on tramp steamers on long voyages. I imagine that that's the place for rest. I want to be the only passenger on a tramp. I've dreamed a-many times of swinging up and down the swells of the ocean, and of sitting on deck under an awning in port, the only passenger, and of seeing the passenger boats go by; and then, when our turn had come, loading off to the next port or loading home."

"And I shall have a look around my own country, too, when I have the means. I shall travel on all the river lines of boats of which they are not so many as there were, because the railroads are carrying the people more and more, but of which there are many after all. There are within the boundaries of this tremendous country scores, I suppose hundreds, of rivers and other waterways traversed by steamboats; rivers and boats that a man living in one locality never hears of at all. I'd like to travel on 'em all, but I don't suppose one would quite have time for that. But I'd like to travel 'em all if I could; and I should travel all the main lines, and that would include many rivers scattered in all parts of the country. And when I read among the steamboat advertisements in the local papers in some Southern or Western city in which I might be the notice of a line of boats running up some stream whose name I had never even heard of since I had learned it in the geography, in the days of youth and romance, why, I should go right straight and take passage on that boat and stay there till she got back; and brush along against the banks and go ashore when she landed, and so just wander along this watery street through the country."

"I love to ride on the cars. I never get tired of it. I have never found a journey on the cars too long. Every individual car and every locomotive wherever I may see it interests me. I like to read the names on the sleepers; I like everything about the railroad."

"There's nothing in the papers that I like to read more than I do the railroad and steamship advertisements. I never get tired of them. As a matter of fact I suppose I read them a dozen times a year; though I read the advertisements of the limited and the other long distance trains, and the advertisements of ships to many ports; I love to read 'em; and I am going to all of those places, some day."

Too sharp.

Here is a story from Sussex. There was to be a local agricultural show, and two farmers intended to send in a beast each, of a kind for which there were only their own entries. About a fortnight before the show one of the farmers, whom we will call A., went to B. and proposed that each



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should withdraw his beast on condition of receiving half the prize money. Making many difficulties, B. at last agreed. A friend went and told him he was foolish, adding that, to his knowledge, A.'s ox was very ill. "Perhaps so," replied B., quite unconcerned; "but, man, my ox has been dead over a week."

TERRIBLE PEST OF FLIES.

Played Havoc on a Sugar-laden Ship Until Sea-Birds Attacked Them.

The British steamer Kensington, sugar-laden, which recently reached Philadelphia, from Sourabaya, a port in Java, while in the Indian Ocean, ran into a vast field of seaweed. These weeds were the home of a large and voracious species of the dragon-fly.

Attracted by the fumes of the sugar the flies swarmed upon the decks in millions. Thousands of them penetrated the hole and feasted upon the sugar. Thousands were upon the decks seeking to get below. Big enough to do mischief, they got savage and attacked the crew. Captain Langwell had thirty-two men and they had the battle of their lives. The flies could not be driven off.

There bites were something awful, Captain Langwell said, and it was not long before the body of each man of the crew was a mass of blood.

The terrible pest of flies lasted for five days. Then far up in the sky the desperate sailors saw a flock of birds circling. They were a mighty army of boatwain's birds, the deadly foe of the dragon-fly of the Indian ocean. Upon the pest these birds chiefly subsist. They had scented their ancient enemy, and just as the steamer was directly under them they swooped down. These birds of the sea resemble a dove, but are many times larger. They have long tails and sharp beaks.

Against the crew's timely rescuers the flies had no chance. They were eaten by boatwains as quickly as a flock of barnyard fowls dispose of their daily meal of corn, and soon there are enough of the flies to cause further trouble.

From skipper down to cabin boy all bear trace of their terrible experience with the vicious dragon-fly.

Couldn't Catch Mrs. Turveytop.

Mr. Turveytop has, up to very recent times, considered himself quite clever, and nothing so pleases him as to get the best of some unsuspecting person. For a long time his wife had been in need of a new muff; and after hinting to her lord that her happiness would never be complete till she owned one, he at last decided to gratify her desire. So he went into a shop and picked out a couple, one of which was

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cheap and the other very expensive. Upon these he changed the price tickets, putting the cheap price-mark on the expensive muff, and vice versa, and then took them home. For a long time his wife pondered, and at last said: "Now, dear, the expensive muff is a beauty, and it is really very good of you to allow me my choice. Some women would take it without a word, but really I don't think we can afford the more costly one; and, besides I think the cheap one is more stylish too. Why, dear, what is the matter? Are you ill?" But "dear" had fled into the night, where, unseen, he could abuse himself to his heart's content.

Floody of Them on Board.

He had just returned from a trans-Atlantic voyage, and he let all the tram-car know it.

"Yes," he said pompously to the old gentleman with the silk hat and the grey whiskers who sat opposite, "we had a most eventful trip; there was a marriage on board, two deaths, and—"

"Any births?" interrogated the old gentleman, with a twinkle in his eye.

"No—no births," answered the other, in a manner which implied they could have had one or two if they so desired.

"Dear me! that's very strange!" exclaimed he of the grey side whiskers, rising as the tram car slowed up.

"What is strange?"

"Why no births. I have crossed forty-three times, and there have always been births on board."

The pompous note in the new-fangled traveller's voice gave place to a tinge of reverence as the other mentioned the figures, but he asked:—

"Well, what do you call a number of births? Two, three, four, or—"

"No indeed. Why, the last time I crossed there were over five hundred, and—"

"What, babies?"

"Babies? No, births, sleeping births. Here's my street. Good-bye."

A titter ran round the tramcar as the silk hat got off, and the young man became suddenly interested in the morning paper.

Advice.

The editor of a country newspaper had the misfortune to offend a subscriber by allowing something to appear in his columns which the latter gentleman considered derogatory to him. The offended man wrote an angry letter to the editor, in which he stated his intention of calling at the office at his earliest convenience in order to horsewhip him; and added that he afterwards proposed throwing him out of the window. This epistle somewhat alarming the editor, he showed it to a friend and asked his advice on the subject. "Ah!" said the friend, after having read the letters and thought a moment, "this fellow is a dangerous man and means what he says. If you take my advice you will at once have that cucumber-frame removed from underneath the window."

The events of this tale have been told by Robert Adam Lerry to take place in February. Mary Fletcher years had passed which had passed and featured. Whistling fast—strange expression of one who gasps.