

HOW I SECURED A BONANZA.

(A Story of the Nova Scotia Gold Fields.)

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

OFF TO EAST CHEZZETCOOK.

On landing from the ferry, Popsy, our favorite driver, gave us a hearty greeting, and seating ourselves in his comfortable two-seated wagon, we were driven through the town of Dartmouth, out past the charming chain of lakes, and then, turning Eastward, we entered the decidedly monotonous country through which our road lay for sixteen miles to Porter's Lake.

Lighting our pipes, we amused ourselves in quizzing our driver, who was a great character in his way.

In season, or out, he always knew just the lake where he could guarantee a basket of fish. Myriads of water fowl, partridge, or snipe, were tempting baits unsparingly offered to wile the sportman to his doom. From him it might be truly said "that truth was stranger than fiction." He was a thin, wiry, little man, with an inexhaustible fund of sporting anecdotes, and if his horse could have travelled with only a quarter of the speed of his tongue, we should have been happy. Here, however, we had a grievance, as our progress was provokingly slow.

Leaving out a few eccentricities more amusing than disagreeable, Popsy was an invaluable man. He knew every lake and road in the county, was welcomed at every inn and farm house, and last, but not least, he was a total abstainer.

"Are there plenty of ducks at Chezzetcook?" asked Ralph.

"Yes, sir, any amount of them. I was down with a party last week and we shot dozens. Partridge! don't talk, the woods are full of them, and as for snipe, you have only to cross the road from Brown's to get all you want."

"How are the mines turning out?"

"Splendidly. They are the richest in the Province. I drove two speculators in last night, and you should have seen the specimens they had! They were just wild to buy, but no one wants to sell."

"Good day, Uncle John," and he nodded pleasantly to the driver of an ox-cart we passed on the road. It was loaded with darkies on the way home to Preston; the whole family, from the old grandfather on the front seat to the little pickinniny with his chubby, bare legs sticking out behind, being on board. A chorus of voices greeted us as we passed on, and the happy family grinned from ear to ear, and rolled their eyeballs in delight as Ralph pitched them a bag of biscuits.

"Popsy, they tell me that you used to be a great drinker at one time."

"Yes, Mr. Spendall, I was the worst drunkard in Dartmouth, but I fell in love with my present wife, and she refused to marry me unless I would swear off. For a long time I refused, but as she remained firm, I finally took the pledge, and we were married, and from that day to this, over ten years, not a drop has passed my lips. Gentleman, if there ever was an angel on earth, it is my Amy, and I would die sooner than go back on my pledge to her."

It was not long before Popsy was put to the test and proved that his words were not mere idle assertions.

Seven miles out we reached Walker's, a famous resort on the Salmon River, where our driver fed his horse, while we regaled ourselves on broiled partridge, washed down with bottled beer. An hour was lost before we were again under way, but the horse made fair time, and we soon passed through the fragrant spruce and hemlock woods between us and Preston, and half an hour before sundown reached a favorite wood-cock cover near Porter's lake.

Leaving the wagon we proceeded to beat the cover and bagged two birds, before the fading light warned us on our journey. The mantle of night hid the most picturesque part of our road from sight, and it was nine o'clock when we drove up to our stopping place in East Chezzetcook.

II.

WE MEET THE MINERS.

Popsy shouted lustily and the door of the comfortable farm house was soon opened.

"Is that you, Popsy?" called a tall, raw-boned man, as he hurried towards us.

"Yes, Mr. Brown, can you put us up for the night?"

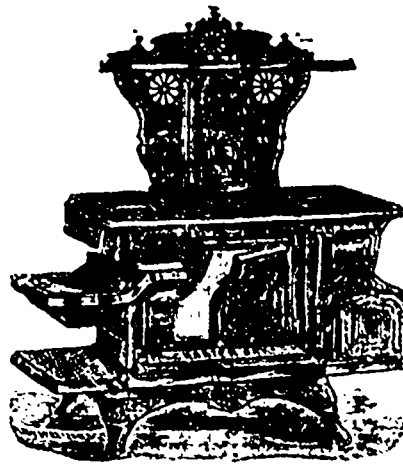
"Certainly. Glad to see you gentleman, git right out and go in. Popsy and I will look after the traps," and without more ado we were ushered into the house. Several men smoking before the open fire place greeted us warmly as we came in; while Mrs. Brown, a jolly little French woman, bustled about, making numerous excuses for the meagre bill of fare she had to offer.

"Since the mining excitement broke out," she explained, "all the houses in the settlement have been full of boarders. Had you arrived last night, we could not have accommodated you. As it is, we are out of meat, and you will have to put up with fresh eggs."

"Capital, capital!" exclaimed Ralph, "nothing could suit us better." Then turning to the men he asked, "Boys, won't you take something?"

"Don't mind if we do," was the unanimous response, and Ralph handed his flask to one of the men. In a few minutes it was returned empty, while a general smacking of lips and murmurs of "that's the pure stuff," amply rewarded him for his generosity.

(To be continued.)



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To the Electors of Ward 5.

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