

AN ENCHANTED MINE.

ONE OF THE STRANGE OLD STORIES
THAT ARE TOLD ON THE LOWER
PACIFIC COAST.

About sixty miles from the Pacific coast in Sinaloa is a mountain known as "Cerro de Oro," or of Gold. It rises in majestic grandeur from the midst of clustering hills, grand in themselves, but insignificant in the presence of this silent, gloomy, rugged old mine. To the casual observer there is nothing remarkable about this magnificent mountain, whose sides are covered with vegetation, and apparently as smooth as the grassy slopes of California, seen from the deck of a passing steamer. Its immensity is not realized until the ascent is undertaken. Its sides, apparently so smooth, are found to be traversed by deep gorges and by fissures, shaded by giant trees, whose interlacing branches cast a sombre gloom over the entrances to the deep cañons.

There is a strange tradition handed down that long ago this hill was the scene of active mining; that the mountain side, now so gloomy and silent, echoed the click of the hammer and the voice of the muleteer urging the patient animals as they toiled around the arduous, and the sleighing of the happy miners rushing down the mountain side, their day's task done—thinking of the bright eyes watching for them, and the hot tortillas and frijoles waiting for them at their humble little homes.

But in an evil day all was changed. A band of robbers, lured by the glitter of the abundant gold, swept down the mountain side like a blast of fire, shot down the men like dogs, not leaving a soul alive to tell the tale. The treasure they secured was immense. They loaded all the mules with treasure and left the place, so lately full of life, a scene of grim death and desolation. Then it was that the "Duendes" (fairies) of the mountain by enchantment closed up the entrances of the mines, and it is said that the spirits of the murdered miners still dwell in the mines.

Nothing but war in its cruellest form, says a correspondent of the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, could induce a Mexican to leave his home and seek shelter in the gloomy caves of old Cerro del Oro. For it is the abode of spirits and demons. No one cares to venture alone into its depths. Many queer tales are told of the strange sights seen by venturesome persons. That it is under a spell of enchantment is well known by the old and firmly believed by the young.

That extensive mining has been done in this mountain no one can doubt, as numerous patios where ore was assayed, and ruins of astras where the gold was extracted, prove that beyond a doubt; and by digging into the piles of waste specimens of free gold ore are obtained. Occasionally, in the neighboring villages, while excavating foundations of houses, bars of gold have been discovered, and ornaments of gold, crudely hammered out, have been unearthed. But there are no gold mines known to exist within leagues of this mountain.

Once every year the portals of the mines are opened. On the eve of St. John toward evening an old man appears at the mouth of the tunnel and later the mountain side is peopled as of old, the ghostly actors going through the work as in life, the men with their hammers, the muleteers at their arrastras, all busily at work, but silent as the grave. A young man who was belated while looking for cattle came unexpectedly upon the scene. He was fixed without power of motion, and was forced against his will to see the ghostly crew at work over the glittering golden treasures. At 12 o'clock the ghostly captain gave the signal, and all hands quit work, and seizing their napkins, containing the midday lunch, lit the fires to heat their tortillas and coffee. The fire was an unearthly blue and burned with a flickering, uncertain light. The eyes of each and every one were lit up with an uncanny look of phosphorescent light. At a word they all resumed work, until at the crowing of a cock at a distant hamlet, all vanished and the unwilling spectator found himself again capable of motion. In the gray morning he rushed frantically home, tearing his flesh and clothing in his mad rush through the thorny brush. Arriving at home, he was met by a horrified look from his wife, who fell fainting to the ground. His hair had turned snow white, and while only 25 years old, he appeared to be an old man of 60.

Years after this some little girls were out gathering wild fruit. They came upon a level place free of bushes, which they never remembered to have seen. Looking up they saw the entrance to a tunnel, and just inside was seated a venerable old man who was making motions for them to come closer, but they being frightened ran home. The next day a party of men visited the spot, but it was a tangled labyrinth of thorny brush interspersed with large trees.

The tradition further states that in only one way can the spell be broken. That a person of perfectly pure heart must walk boldly up to the mouth of the mine and boldly addressing this old man must ask who he is and what he wants. He will offer to the speaker the wealth of the mountain only on the promise that one-tenth of the wealth taken from the mine be devoted to masses for the souls of himself and his murdered companions.

TRAVELING IN MOROCCO.

CROSSING THE SHOU RIVER—ARAB STUPIDITY. PRAYING AND CURSING.

For ages this spot has been the crossing place of all the caravans which came from the desert, and yet all the means of getting over is upon an abominable cross between a raft and a floatboat, with sides built high to keep fractious animals from jumping out during the passage, as any animal of sense would be tempted to do. I should say the sides of these rafts were three feet high, and there is not now nor has there ever been any sort of plank or gangway upon which the animals could walk aboard. The men commenced to pray before they got in sight of the boats, and by the time they arrived alongside there was nothing to be heard above a fearful howl for Mooley Indress and Allah to come down from their high place and give the mules a boost into the boat.

The river, the praying and boats got the mules into a proper state of fright even before the time came to embark them, and the men had to change from prayers to oaths, which seemed to have a better effect. The mules were un-packed, led to the boats and invited to jump in, which, of course, on the slippery bank of the river, was impossible. Then all hands would step coaxing and swear a while, interlarding each remark with a shower of blows on the animal, until exhausted, after which they would turn upon each other, shake their fists, call bad names, and finally quiet down and go to praying again, until seeking a change, two of them would go down, lift the fore-legs of the mule into the boat, and then twist his tail until he kicked, when at the moment his heels were high in the air they would give him such a shove that he either would fall into the boat or into the mud on the bank, when they would have to start all over again.

It took just two hours to load ten mules into the boat, where they stood huddled together, with bruised legs and evil glances, watching for the moment to come when they could get even with the man who got them into the serape. Then came the fun of crossing, and as I contemplated the crowd of animals, looking as if at a moment's notice they might commence to kick and plunge at each other, I edged toward the bow and centered my affections on a pack saddle which contained charcoal, for the others had Mooley Indrees to give them a life preserver if necessary, while I felt more drawn to something tangible, and so seated myself on the charcoal with a firm clutch at the ropes. There was something charming and at the same time interestingly exciting about the trip across, for of course the current was too swift to admit of landing anywhere but where chance took us, as the sweeps in the boat were too clumsy to do more than keep headway on the raft. When we got almost across, the men would see some spot on the bank where they wished to land, and implore Mooley Indrees to land them there, and as soon as they saw they would be carried by, commence to curse him in a most outrageous manner, and turn their attentions to Allah, I forget whether it was Allah or Indrees who finally landed us, but in the course of time we grounded on the other bank, almost a mile below where we started.

Pure Air From a Coal Fire.

A discovery having an important bearing upon the arts and manufactures has recently been made by William A. Gibbs of Essex. The discovery is that perfectly pure air can be produced from the combustion of coal. The arrangement for effecting this result is very simple. It consists of a brick chamber about five feet long by two feet wide and two feet high, built upon the ground. At one end is a feed chamber and a fuel chamber, and at the other a powerful exhaust and blast fan. Placed immediately between the chamber and blast fan are baffle plates, splitting plates, a standing bridge with perforations at the back and a hanging bridge with perforations at the front. There are also several carefully proportioned inlets to supply the exact quantity of air requisite to perfect combustion. This exact apportionment of the air constitutes one of the main points of success, and it is the one which Mr. Gibbs found the most difficult to determine. Once known, however, the law of proportion between air and fire is, of course, easily maintained.

Another point having a very important bearing on the result is the exact relative proportion of the fuel chamber to the feed chamber, and of both to the volume of air drawn per minute by the fan. This also being ascertained, after many failures, is now a fixed instead of a doubtful quantity. Given these proportions and some others of minor importance, the result is distinctly curious.

Issuing from a fan mouth, twelve inches in diameter, comes rushing a column of hot air, marking on the pyrometer at its exit a steady uniform temperature of 500 degrees Fahrenheit. Not a trace of smoke or fume is visible to the eye; not a taint of any kind is perceptible to the taste or smell. Standing as we did in the range of this simoon, with the blast full in the face, the heat is of course excessive, but the stream of air is perfectly pure. Save in the matter of temperature it affects neither the eyes, the throat, nor the nostrils. As a proof of this purity, some choice tea, which had been satu-

rated with hot water, was placed in the hot air current, and when re-dried was pronounced by an expert to be wholly free from any imparted taint or taste.

In order to show the character of the products of combustion before being submitted to the fiery ordeal, the fan was stopped and a dense cloud of thick smoke rose up from the coal in the feed-chamber, charged with suffocating fumes. On restarting the fan it was quietly drawn in again, but not a sign of it appeared at the exit from the fan, and the air when inhaled was as pure as ever. It would be interesting to know the rationale of the process by means of which all the varied products from coal combustion are thus so completely destroyed. Mr. Gibbs suggests that the water contained in the coal is decomposed into oxygen and hydrogen, and that the hydrogen in burning adds to the heat of the resultant air, while the oxygen, reinforced as it is by that obtained from the large volumes of fresh air admitted at the various inlets, decomposes and purifies all these products. But whatever the theory may be, the fact remains that it is not only possible but easy and economical to obtain the utmost amount of heat from coal without any deterioration of the atmosphere.

The success attained by Mr. Gibbs naturally suggests the application of the principle in many important directions in connection with the industrial arts as well as for steam-raising purposes and for domestic use by the suppression of open fires in stoves.—*London Times*.

BANANAS A BLESSING THERE.

SALVADOR MAKES PRETTY NEARLY EVERYTHING OUT OF THE FIBERS OF THE TREE.

A young Salvadorian, with the dark eyes and inky hair of his country, talked to a reporter the other day about the Central America banana tree. The tree is two and a half to three feet in circumference at its base. Its tapering fibrous body, without a branch, is from ten to fifteen feet in height. The fibers, separated by a thin pith, are as long as the body of the tree. These fibers are used in Salvador, just as they are taken from the tree, as shoe-strings and as cords for all purposes. The natives use them largely for bridle reins and lariats. The raw material costs only transportation to the repe-

Each banana tree bears in the twelve months of its existence only one bunch of fruit, but from two to ten trees spring from the roots of the one that has fallen. In Salvador, the bunch of bananas is worth fifteen cents, and the dead tree nothing. A cordage factory or paper mill or coffee sack maker, were not the dead trees numberless, would give for each tree ten times the value of the fruit it has produced. Split, dried and packed, the bodies of the banana trees might be shipped profitably to the United States; but there is no reason why some enterprising American would not take them in hand and ship to Salvador the proper machinery for their manufacture, as labor is fully two-thirds cheaper there than in New York.

In Salvador, ropewalks are found in unfrequented streets and suburban roads. The native machinery consists of a crank attached to an upright board, with which a native boy twists the fibers of the banana and cactus. A man skilled in the ropewalker's art, splices the fibers together, adding to the length and thickness of the revolving cord. The stem of each banana leaf consists of the toughest and finest threads, and these leaves, two and a half and three feet wide, and ten to fifteen feet long, resting on two heads of native women, are umbrellas in the rainy season in roofless market places and streets of Salvador. These are the carpets on which the people sit and the beds on which they sleep. "There is a fine opportunity," said the Salvadorian, "for some enterprising American with a small capital to do a thriving trade and make money by introducing western ideas and machinery to the people of Salvador."—*New York Mail and Express*.

THE BEASTS THAT PULL US.

THE STREET-CAR HORSE MUST BE SHREWDLY BOUGHT OR THE COMPANY LOSES.

One of the most important officials in a street car company is the horse-buyer, says the *New York Sun*. On his judgment depends the amount of one of the most valuable and costly items in the company's annual expenditure. Each of the big street-car companies needs several thousand horses to pull its cars or to stay in the hospitals. There are several teams to each driver, and on the cars that are in use all day there are two drivers, so the number of teams is from six to ten times the number of cars in all-day use. In the summer and in the icy weather of winter the maximum number of teams to each car is needed, while in the spring and fall, unless there is an epidemic among the horses, the company can get along with the minimum number.

There is a buyer in each company who looks after the purchase of these thousands of horses. He must be a man of good judgment, a quick judge of a horse, and a sharp man at a bargain. He does nothing but buy horses, and he becomes an expert at it that East 24th Street cannot excel. In the first place he must be a man who can

tell much more about a horse than an ordinary buyer. A street-car horse must be more than an ordinary horse, and he must be bought at less than an ordinary price. A thoroughbred would die of chagrin and fretting if put in a street-car, while a horse that has any defects will quickly develop them pounding on the streets. A street-car horse must not have too much spirit. A spirited horse would start off with excitement and zeal, but that would not do for street car work. He would scare at escaping steam, shy at red lamps on street obstructions, and he would try to run away and take the car with him when a fire engine or clanging ambulance would pass him.

To be good for street-car purposes a horse must be quiet, steady, easily contented, not amolitious, and he must have a good constitution. The monotony of street-car work tells on horses, and a horse that would work on a farm for ten years might not last two years at street-car work. A race horse would be unfit for street-cars, and a big truck horse would be almost as bad.

The best street-car horse is a stockily-built, middle-aged, healthy farm horse. Dark colors are preferred, bays and browns being the favorites. Few white and fewer black horses are selected. The buyers seem prejudiced against them from the results of their experience. Tail horses are seldom bought. A horse that would show up well in front of a dog cart is not wanted before a street-car. The street-car horses are driven with plain bits, and the drivers are forbidden to rig up any sort of an attachment that would act as a curb bit, and so, perhaps, make the work easier. The harness is also simple. The strain comes on the shoulders, and there is no pole with which the horse might hold back the car. The driver is expected to do that with his brake. The whole drawing apparatus is made as simple as can be, and an elaborate kind of harness would be out of place.

Usually the company pays a fixed price for its horses. On the Broadway line the price is about \$125. The buyer takes horses by the lot and pays the fixed price for them all. Necessarily some horses are worth more than others, but the values are averaged and the same price is paid for each. A \$250 horse may come up with a lot, and at times the officers of the road pick their family coach horses and occasionally a good trotter from the lots their buyer brings in. The buying is done much like the buying for the United States cavalry or for the mounted police of the city. The buyer inspects the horses, and, often rejecting all those that seem to him unfit, he takes the others at the company's average price. If the street-car company has a competent buyer and could spare the time to go into the horse business a good proportion of every lot of horses could be sold at a profit. As it is, they are put in the stables, and many a good carriage or saddle horse is ruined within a couple of years by the rough usage of a street car.

Bobtail cars take a better grade of horses than the other lines, and use them up quicker. A bobtail car weighs almost as much as an ordinary car, and one horse has to do the work of two. There are more full stops with a bobtail car, as there is no conductor to signal to go on the moment the passenger's foot touches the street. It is not so much the pulling as the starting that wears out the horses, and there is more of both for the bobtail-car horse.

The average life of usefulness of a team of street-car horses is two and a half years. The bobtail-car horses average a year less. Some horses last four times as long as others, and the more valuable a horse is, and the more he would bring in the open market, the shorter is his life ahead of a street-car likely to be. He wants to do too much at first, and when he finds that a street-car runs on a schedule in the same hundred way every day he sickens of his job and tries to die. Many a horse that becomes disabled for street-car use can be fixed up as good as ever for other purposes, though he will not be as long-lived. The express and huckster businesses are the cemetery of most street-car horses when their first usefulness is gone.

A Cattle Ranch in Chihuahua.

The high price of land in the range districts of the United States has driven the wiser cattle men to Mexico. Land is obtained here, for grazing purposes only, for twenty-five cents to fifty cents per acre, which, if situated in Texas, would bring \$5 per acre, while land suitable for grazing and including large agricultural and timber areas, such as we have in this portion of the state, sells for seventy-five cents to \$1 an acre, and would bring readily \$10 per acre, did this country belong to the United States. Those who have come here have not regretted the move. The cheapness of labor—common cow hands getting \$12 per month as against \$30 or \$40 in the North—allows us to raise cattle cheaper than there. Englishmen have been quick to see the advantages of Chihuahua as a cattle state, and they rank among the owners of the largest estates of the state. They far outnumber the Americans in cattle and acreage.

A United States senator is the owner of 700,000 acres of the choicest grazing and farming lands here, in one vast body, thoroughly stocked and on a paying basis. Our markets for the sale of cattle are the City of Mexico and the United States. At present,

while low prices reign at the north, we ship to the city with best results. A duty of 20 per cent ad valorem is paid to ship to the United States on steers only.

Here we own the property we graze on. There is no purchasing of water-holes and then controlling the surrounding dry country, as in the states. Your range comprises what you have bought, and no outsiders can trespass on your property. This does away with overstocking and its subsequent losses, so fruitful in the north. Government titles are, as a rule, now given, as foreigners only purchase under that right, even buying from private parties. The elements of successful cattle raising are found here, i.e., grass, water and shelter, unaccompanied by droughts or blizzards. The fear of the instability of the Mexican government, and the inherent dislike that the Texan has always held toward the Mexican, prevented residents of Texas from occupying this country years ago. This is now overcome and a strong tide of emigration has set in.—*Chihuahua Cor. New York World*.

How to Avoid Sunstroke.

Sunstroke rarely occurs to those who take proper care of themselves, even when they are fully exposed to the direct heat of the sun. The victims are generally those who drink alcoholic liquors to excess, or who have overloaded the stomach with improper food. Still, cases of sunstroke do occur when the mode of life has not been at variance with the laws of health. It is well, therefore, for every one to take proper precautions against all risks.

The clothing should be light, and that worn next the body should be of some material capable of readily absorbing the perspiration. Wool is probably to be preferred, and it should be pure—that is, unmixed with cotton. For the head during very warm weather nothing is better than a straw hat, for not only is it of light weight, but, if properly made, free passage of air round the head takes place. The so-called Panama hats, which are so closely woven that they will hold water, are the worst possible coverings for the head in summer.

It is a remarkable fact that sunstrokes are very seldom met with among persons who expose themselves to the full heat of the sun in the country or outside of the limits of large cities. They were very infrequent in the army during the late civil war, although the men were often subjected for many days at a time to the most intense solar heat, and this, too, while engaged in fighting, or in making long marches, or in field work of various kinds. Although often serving before the war with troops on the plains, where the rays of the sun fall upon the body unobstructed by even a tree or a bush, I do not recollect to have seen a single case of sunstroke.—*New York World*.

FICTION TO SUIT.—"Give me a ten-cent-love story with a blond heroine and Indians in it. Don't give me a detective story," she said.

We were both in a newsdealer's store on Hudson Avenue. I looked up and saw the really intelligent face of a lady perhaps thirty-five years old. She was handsomely dressed. She scanned all the yellow-covered literature, but threw them aside, saying she had read them all.

"Here's just what you want," the dealer said, as he then threw down a ten-cent book, entitled: "Snaky Snodgrass, the Scout and Lover of Blind Man's Gulch." She hadn't read that, and off she went with it.

"Do you sell many of such books?" I asked.

"Oh! yes," he said, "and I have sold no less than fifty of them to the married lady you saw leave the store just now. But she hangs on pretty well."

"What do you mean by hanging on?"

"Well, after married women read about twenty-five of such books there is generally a row in the family, and the wife leaves the husband to look for the kind of hero she has often read about in books, and, of course, these separations hurt my business. I estimate that twenty-five of such books will make a romantic woman leave her husband and go hero searching. The married woman who has just bought 'Snaky Snodgrass' hangs on pretty well. Perhaps she hasn't struck the right book yet. These books break up more families than anything I know of."—*Albany Argus*.

A CURIOUS FREAK OF NATURE.—There is at Lone Pine, Inyo County, a rock that might be easily passed off for a petrified elephant. A photograph of the rock shows as like as possible to the photograph of an elephant. The trunk, the eyes, the head and body are all as well formed in the photograph as if the camera had been turned to a living animal. The wrinkles and folds in the skin of an elephant and the color are all repeated in the rock. The symmetry and proportions of the living animal are reproduced in this remarkable freak of nature.—*Independence (Cal.) Independent*.

Policeman—Hello! What's this?
One of the crowd—Case of prostration.

Policeman—What from—heat?
Crowd—No! Banana peel.