



"PYRITES SAM"

We all thought Pyrites Sam was a fool the very day he struck the camp, but were not absolutely certain until the night he came in with his pockets full of pyrites of iron, and taking each man aside privately informed him, with many injunctions as to secrecy, that he had discovered and located a brass mine. As a rule we had grown very tired of initiating every tenderfoot that came along into the mysteries of quartz mining; showing them the difference between gold-bearing quartz and country rock; between a true fissure and contact vein; between granite, porphyry, schist, spar, serpentine, quartzite, etc.; of trends, dips, spurs, angles, etc.; of shafts, tunnels, stopes, winzes, and drifts; of the manipulation of the horn spoon or gold pan; how to distinguish the resultant sediment, if gold, from mica, pyrites or sulphur; in a word, teaching them in an hour or two all we had learned after years of toil and privation. We had reached this stage of the "tired feeling" when Sam brought in his "brass" specimens, and not a man of us would tell him what it was. "Uh-huh," we said, as he carefully exhibited his deceptive-looking find. What did we think of it? Why, it was a great find and very high-grade ore—if it was brass. "If"—why, of course it was brass; look at it; anybody could see what it was. We admitted that they could; yes, anybody that knew anything at all. So we permitted Sam to work away in ignorance on his claim for two weeks—until he received returns from the sample sent to Los Angeles for assay. Then the "Brass Monkey," as Sam called it, shut down, and he went to prospecting again. We

of the impression that he "didn't have any more sense than the law allowed." Therefore, it was accepted as a matter of course, when a tenderfoot struck camp one day in the first stages of desert fever, that Sam should take entire charge of him and dose him with wild sage and "squaw" tea and concoct appetizing dishes from bacon, beans, rice and flour. Some of us dropped in occasionally on our way to or from work to learn the patient's condition and to offer suggestions, but Sam was considered head nurse.

As a "stayer," malarial or Chagres fever is not to be compared to desert fever. The latter drags along and hangs on day after day, week after week, and although the patient may be able to crawl about he is weak, debilitated and nerveless and "don't care a rattle out of the box" whether he lives or dies. This was the condition of that tenderfoot. During the middle of the day he dragged himself about the camp in the sun, but the remainder of the time he spent in his bunk in his tent. One night, when most of the boys were assembled in the "Bedrock," Sam came in, and, going up to the bar, drank alone, contrary to his usual custom, then turned his back on the crowd, leaned his elbow on the bar and gazed out into the darkness, at the same time twisting his mustache fiercely, as if worried over something.

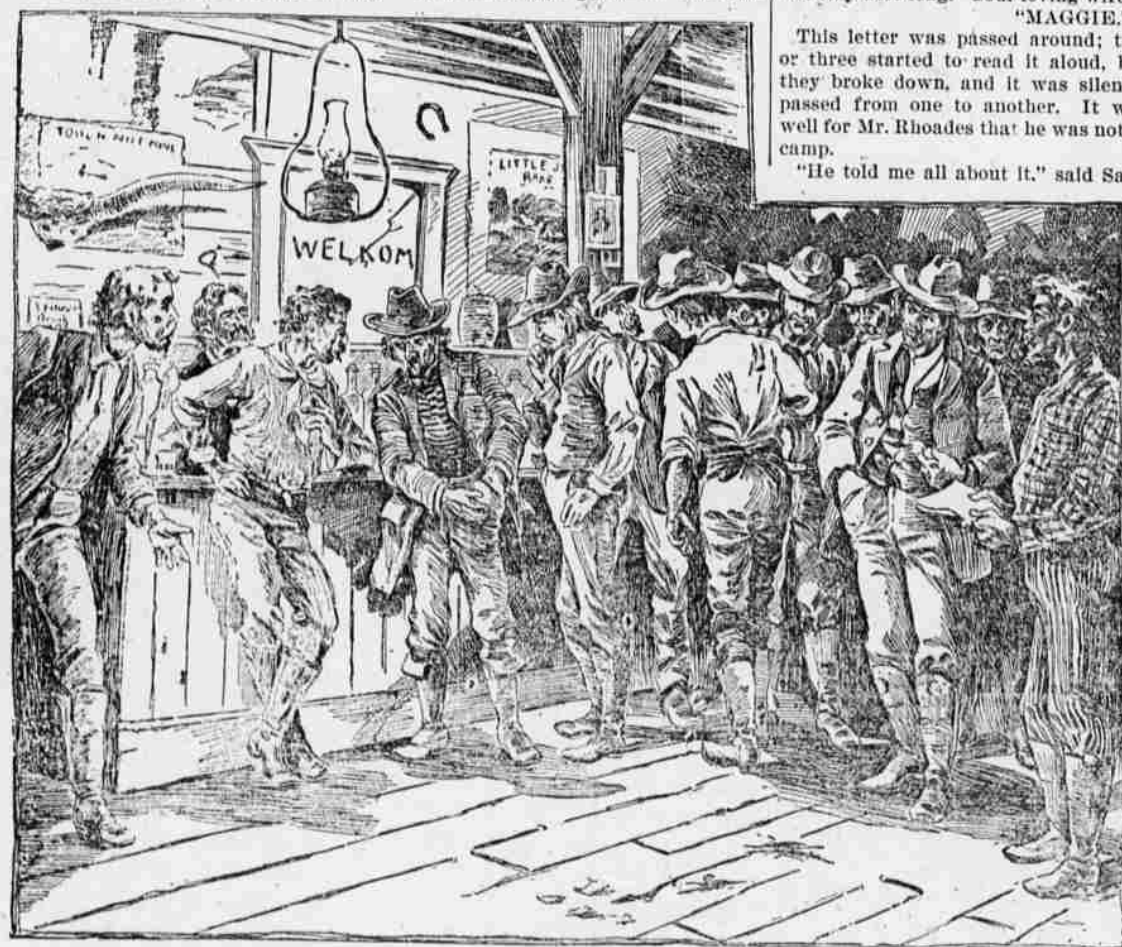
"What's wrong, Sam? Patient dead?" some one asked.

"No," said Sam, "but he's a-layin' up there wishin' he was. I tell you, partners," he continued, turning to the crowd, "I've been in hard luck myself—so've all of us, I guess—an' seen oth-

mortgage was due I sold the cow and took some of the money you left me to live on and paid the six months' back interest. Now he says, as the mortgage is due, he must have his money and will foreclose. I tried all the companies and banks to borrow the money to pay him, but they all say that \$2,000 is too big a loan on the place; they won't loan over \$1,500, and he won't take a second mortgage to secure the other \$500. Yet it does seem hard, when the place ought to be worth three times \$1,500. I've tried every way to sell it, but I can't get no one to give anything above the mortgage. Everybody knows it is mortgaged and are waiting to buy it at Sheriff's sale. Rhoades knows this, too, and now he says it will save us lots of trouble and costs if we will give him a quitclaim deed and surrender peaceable possession. I begged him to wait a while, but after he had learned you had gone out to the mines he said he would not wait a day; that you were on a wild-goose chase, and, dear husband, he even intimated that he believed you were never coming back to us. That made me angry, and I may have said things to him that I should not, but I could not help it. Now, dear husband, I can not stay here after having sold the bow; there is nothing to do here, you know, except washing and ironing and house-cleaning, and I am not strong enough for that. Mrs. Simmons will take Bessie and let her help with the housework and go to school, and I will sell the chickens, pigs and furniture and take little Charlie and go to Cleveland to try to get sewing or something. It will be, oh, so hard, but it can not be helped. Now, dear husband, do not worry; we will get along some way. Remember the words of the prophet: 'Once I was young, but now I am old, but never have I seen the righteous forsaken or their seed begging bread.' Now, dear husband, take care of your health, and if you do not find anything out there soon, come back to us, we miss you, oh, so much. Every night Bessie prays for her papa, 'way out in the mines,' and that he may find something rich. You may be sure that I echo her prayers. Write as soon as you get this, dear husband, for I can not stay here long. Your loving wife, "MAGGIE."

This letter was passed around; two or three started to read it aloud, but they broke down, and it was silently passed from one to another. It was well for Mr. Rhoades that he was not in camp.

"He told me all about it," said Sam.



"LOOK HERE, PARTNERS; LET'S ANSWER BESSIE'S PRAYER."

never asked him any questions, but he volunteered the information that it was of good ore, but at that distance from a railroad it could not be handled at a profit. One day one of the boys found his certificate blowing about the camp. It contained no figures, only a statement of what his find consisted, and that hereafter to insure an answer he had better inclose a stamp, as the office could not afford to lose the postage in replying to the queries of alfalfa miners. The finder tracked this on to the postoffice door, but Sam only grinned, and said "we all got to learn."

He was so persistent and industrious in his determination to "strike it rich" that we finally began to have a fellow-feeling for him and to appreciate his pluck; sympathy he did not need. He was jolly and good-natured, did not drink to excess and was never known to turn a card for money. In a friendly game in his tent the suggestion of "draw" at only a dollar limit was always met by his quiet statement that he never played for money, that he was raised different, and, besides, his money "came so hard" that he knew he would be a bad loser. He was always ready with his sympathy when another's ledge "pinched," "petered" or "broke off," and encouraged him all he could; always had a song or a story for a bad night; and in the event of sickness or injury had some simple remedy in the way of poultices that his mother "used to use." In fact, he was one of those happy-go-lucky, light-hearted fellows, handy about camp and a friend to everybody, but one could not get rid

of the impression that he "didn't have any more sense than the law allowed."

"That's nothin', Sam; we've all been there many a time. What's the matter—out of grub?"

"Now, he ain't out o' grub, an' won't be as long as Sam's got any; but it's somebody else. I got a letter for him to-day on the stage an' took it down to him. After he read it he jest turned over with his back to me an' laid quiet, but purty soon I shifted to where I could see his face, an' I'll be derned if he wasn't cryin'—yes, sir, cryin' like a baby, he's that weak, you know. I says to him easy like, 'What's the matter, pard?'"

"'Nothin',' he says, 'only more hard luck.'"

"'Girl gone back on you?' I said, thinkin' to be cheerful an' makin' up my mind to josh him."

"'No,' he says; 'it 'ud a-been better for her if she had long 'go. Read that,' he says, an' handed me this," concluded Sam, as he drew a letter from his pocket. It was dated from an Ohio village and read as follows:

"My Own Dear Husband—Your loving letter received yesterday, but it found us, oh, so down-hearted and wishing for papa. Dear husband, it seems that our troubles will never end. Mr. Rhoades has changed his mind and will foreclose the mortgage. You know he said before you went away that if we paid the interest up he would let it stand a while longer. Well, when the

"They was five acres in the home place that he got from his father's estate close to town, an' he bought five more joinin', mortgagin' the ten to make up the balance of the money. He'd a-made it all right, but times got hard, an' first one, then another of them got sick an' he had to keep on a-mortgagin'. He see he could never pay out, so he come out here to see if he couldn't strike it, leavin' nearly all the money they had with his wife, an' this cuss Rhoades sayin' 'that he'd let the mortgage stan' another year, now—dern him. See that stain there? That's from a bunch of apple blossoms that was in the letter; he 'lowed they must a-been from the yellow harvest tree back of the garden, poor cuss. 'Take keer o' yeh health, dear husband,' an' 'him a-layin' flat of his back up there in his tent, without money enough for a month's grub. 'Come back soon to us'—hum-m. Look here, partners, let's answer Bessie's prayer, an' show this feller Rhoades whether minin' is chasin' wild geese or not. Mebbe Sam's a dern fool, an' I know he ain't got much money, but he can rustle. I'll go purty nigh my pile on it—there's fifty; who's all in on it?" and he slammed two twenties and a ten on the bar. It was just like Sam, and whoever heard an appeal like go unanswered in a mining camp? There were fifty men in the room, and every man saw Sam's ante, and those that did not have that amount borrowed it from their friends. In a few moments \$2,550 in gold lay piled on the bar. Sam's eyes glistened as he counted the money. "Everybody's in on the game," he

said; "won't one of you come down and see what he has to say?"

"No nonsense, Sam; you take it down, an' tell us what he says to-morrow."

"No, I'll be derned if I do. Some of you fellows got to come along. I ain't a-goin' to play this 'band alone any longer." So three or four of us went with him. Well, there is no use going into details. What would you or any other man say under the circumstances? Finally he wanted to give us a note or send a mortgage back as security, but we laughed at him, and all of us crawled into our blankets that night conscious of having done something that might balance something else on the debit side of the recording angel's ledger. He was too ill to travel alone, and at last, after repeated urgings, Sam was induced to accompany him.

Not long after that my partner and I left the gulch and drifted into Cripple Creek. One day when court was in session we dropped in to see how a court organized under the code operated.

"Well, I'll be d—," muttered my partner as he pointed to the prisoner's dock. There were two men in it, Pyrites Sam and the tenderfoot. The air seemed to grow suddenly close in the court room, and we went out.

"Them fellows?" said an officer in answer to our inquiry; "why, they're two of the slickest all-round con men in the West. They're on trial now for saltin' a mine an' doin' a tenderfoot up for about ten thousand. Miners? Why, man, they're experts; raised in the mines; show 'em a piece of ore from anywhere between British Columbia and Mexico, an' they'll tell you what district it's from. The officers been a-lookin' for 'em for months, but they've been hidin' out some place down in Southern California. I guess they thought their last trick had been forgot, so they come out."

At noon we went down to the jail, and were allowed to see the prisoners.

"Hello, Sam; how's Rhoades?"

"Hello, hello; how's the boys down at Tough Nut?" and Sam and his partner grinned.

"Look here, Sam, you done the camp up in good shape, and you know we won't squeal, but tell us about it."

"Sure; but then they ain't nothin' to tell; this is my pardner, an' there was no fever, no Rhoades, no Maggie, no Bessie, no Charlie, no mortgage, no form, no cow, no—no apple blossoms, no nothin', but jest me an' him."

"An' fifty d—n fools," said my partner as we went out. He made a brief mental calculation, then said: "Sam was there three months an' his pardner one, an' they cleaned up twelve hundred an' fifty each; not bad, 'specially when they was hidin' out from another trick they'd turned." Across the street I saw a building with swinging doors and red windows. I pointed to it and asked, "What'll you 'ake, Jack?"

"I 'low it'll take about four fingers of hot Scotch to settle my stummick"—and he took it.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

FASCINATING PAWN SHOP.

Few Persons Can Go By Without a Look In at Its Window.

Few persons can pass a pawnbroker's window without stopping to look in, says the New York Evening Sun. It contains so much suggestive interest, so much that speaks of association and history. No parvenu products or things of mushroom growth, such as stare at one from the windows of shops that preach the gospel of the brand-new. Each article of the pawnbroker's stock-in-trade has its reason for being there, its own little tragic significance. The eloquence of the inanimate object is never greater than when in a pawnbroker's window.

Wedding rings, love tokens, medals and badges, how they set one to speculating upon their past, and the why and wherefore for their present! Often one is tempted to himself settle their future. Class pins and fraternity badges in the pawnbroking plight are especially suggestive, and more especially if one be a member of the class or the fraternity. Unconsciously one soon forms the habit of never passing a loan shop in any part of the town without stopping to see if any of his class pins are being held as hostage.

There is a conscious pride in the discovery that more pins of some other fraternity are in disgrace. The redemption of the pins follows as a matter of course. As many of them are marked with the name of the owner, it is often possible to return them, in which case the finder has all the righteous glow of the good Samaritan.

But whatever the result, this sort of rescue work is always interesting. If impossible to trace the owner the pins make a significant collection on their own account; when unhampered by any stubborn facts the imagination can invent their histories to suit itself. It is worth noting how few badges of women's societies one ever finds at the pawnbrokers'.

The times are replete with clubs and classes and fraternities of women, both in college and out, but their insignia, it would appear, are rarely pawned. The contrast with the number of men's badges that are so fated is remarkable. Any one who makes a study of the pawnshop windows and the pawnbrokers themselves, indeed, will assure you of this. The unexpected happens when the badge of a woman finds its way into a loan shop.

WEEKLY MARKET LETTER.

(Office of Downing, Hopkins & Co., Chicago Board of Trade Brokers, 711-714 Chamber of Commerce Building, Portland, Oregon.)

The interest in wheat has been anything but keen outside the December deal, prices holding comparatively narrow. Taking the May delivery, which is more nearly an index of market values than is December, the undertone has been one of comparative firmness, marked late last week by the good advance and a subsequent period of uncertainty.

The world's news affecting wheat values has been on the whole favorable to higher prices.

Public stocks in this country have not been increased as rapidly as formerly; while the world's shipment to Western Europe was liberal, they were made up in great part by clearances of flour from our own coasts, phenomenally large and highly encouraging. It is believed the Australian crop will show only a small exportable surplus, there are recent reports of purchases on the Pacific coast for South Africa, and the Liverpool Corn News has published further statements pointing to the important shortage in Russia's supply of breadstuffs and feedstuffs. The Argentine exportable surplus continues a matter of uncertainty, and the trade is less interested than formerly, but of course will closely watch the movement as soon as the new crop is ready, now a matter of only a few weeks. Receipts of spring wheat in the Northwest continue large, but it is the time of the year to expect such. The cash demand for wheat and flour is fairly good.

The corn market has been a sluggish affair most of the time for a fortnight past, prices narrow, interest at a minimum, the undertone one of easiness. Increased receipts are expected now that farmers are practically through husking and shelling, and in the absence of an urgent shipping demand, outside the large offerings, speculative support is lacking. Exports are fair, but ought to be much greater, and a large visible supply acts as something of a weight on values. It is worthy of note, however, that at existing low prices a good deal of corn in the aggregate is being shipped out of Chicago. With the close of lake navigation liberal quantities will be purchased by speculators, and stored in the hold of vessels at a low rate for shipment next spring. The market has continued to hold close to the 28 cent basis, with May hesitating between 29c and 30c. Low grades by sample 24 1/2 @ 25 1/2 c.

Portland Market.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 72c; Valley and Bluestem, 74 @ 75c per bushel. Four—Best grades, \$4.25; Graham, \$3.50; superfine, \$2.25 per barrel. Oats—Choice white, \$4 @ 35c; choice gray, 32 @ 33c per bushel. Barley—Feed barley, \$19 @ 20; brewing, \$20 per ton.

Millstuffs—Bran, \$16.50 per ton; middlings, \$21; shorts, \$16.50. Hay—Timothy, \$12.50 @ 13; clover, \$10 @ 11; California wheat, \$10; oat, \$11; Oregon wild hay, \$9 @ 10 per ton.

Eggs—18 1/2 @ 25c per dozen. Butter—Fancy creamery, 50 @ 55c; fair to good, 40 @ 45c; dairy, 30 @ 40c per roll.

Cheese—Oregon, 11 1/2 c; Young America, 12 1/2 c; California, 9 @ 10c per pound.

Poultry—Chickens, mixed, \$1.75 @ 2.50 per dozen; broilers, \$2.00 @ 2.30; geese, \$5.50 @ 6; ducks, \$3.00 @ 4.50 per dozen; turkeys, live, 10c per pound.

Potatoes—Oregon Burbanks, 35 @ 40c per sack; sweets, \$1.40 per cental.

Onions—Oregon, new, red, 90c; yellow, 80c per cental.

Hope—8 @ 14c per pound for new crop; 1896 crop, 4 @ 6c.

Wool—Valley, 14 @ 16c per pound; Eastern Oregon, 7 @ 12c; mohair, 20 @ 22c per pound.

Mutton—Gross, best sheep, wethers and ewes, \$3.00; dressed mutton, 5c; spring lambs, 5 1/2 c per pound.

Hogs—Gross, choice heavy, \$4.00; light and feeders, \$3.00 @ 4.00; dressed, \$4.50 @ 5.00 per 100 pounds.

Beef—Gross, top steers, \$2.75 @ 3.00; cows, \$2.25; dressed beef, 4 @ 5 1/2 c per pound.

Veal—Large, 4 1/2 @ 5c; small, 5 1/2 @ 6c per pound.

Seattle Market.

Butter—Fancy native creamery, brick, 28c; ranch, 16 @ 18c.

Cheese—Native Washington, 12 1/2 c; California, 9 1/2 c.

Eggs—Fresh ranch, 30 @ 32c. Poultry—Chickens, live, per pound, hens, 10c; spring chickens, \$2.50 @ 3.00; ducks, \$3.50 @ 3.75.

Wheat—Feed wheat, \$22 per ton. Oats—Choice, per ton, \$19 @ 20. Corn—Whole, \$22; cracked, per ton, \$22; feed meal, \$22 per ton.

Barley—Rolled or ground, per ton, \$22; whole, \$22.

Fresh Meats—Choice dressed beef, steers, 6c; cows, 5 1/2 c; mutton sheep, 7c; pork, 7c; veal, small, 7c.

Fresh Fish—Halibut, 4 @ 5c; salmon, 3 @ 4c; salmon trout, 7 @ 10c; flounders, 5c; sole, 3 @ 4c; ling cod, 4 @ 5c; rock cod, 5c; smelt, 2 1/2 @ 4c.

Fresh Fruit—Apples, 50c @ 1.25 per box; peaches, 75 @ 80c; prunes, 35 @ 40c; pears, 75c @ \$1 per box.