

TIPS TO PROSPECTORS.

Not a Bad Plan to Use Good Common Horse Sense.

In this mining business there is too much money and time wasted in driving tunnels on mineralized stringers to a point of "innocuous desuetude," and in sinking shafts down on small pockets of ore to depths of desperation. There are thousands of location notices posted on just such kind of mineral showings in the western Cascade mountains and, as a rule, they are poverty stricken—or rather poverty striking propositions. Mining is like gambling, in that it is alluring and exciting; and some men follow it with about the same lack of judgment and self-abandon that is manifested in bucking the tiger or taking a turn at the roulette wheel.

Mining is a trade, and so surrounded with hazardous and speculative conditions, compared to the ordinary branches of business, that in the absence of any direct knowledge of the mining business itself, or prospecting, it is a pretty good idea to just use good, common horse sense. For instance, if an expert or mining engineer tells you that the small stringer will widen out by going in on it, or that the pocket of ore will increase in bulk by going down on it, and that either or both of them will give higher values in the precious metals by going in or down, as the case may be, don't you believe him. In refusing doing so you will show your good horse sense, if you will pardon the expression; for no one can see any farther into the earth than you can.

Of course miners and prospectors will continue to work these small stringers and pockets in the hope that they will lead to something big, but the experience of all mining camps has been that the "strike" is never made once in hundreds of times. There is only one pardonable excuse for hanging onto small propositions of this kind, and that is in a case where free gold and other of the precious native metals are present. But where the ore is all base and rebellious there is not one chance in a thousand for the miner or prospector who whittles his time and money away on a stringer or a small pocket of ore.

Now, the mining capitalist isn't going to buy any of these stringers or small pockets of ore. He is looking for large or average bodies of mineral and not necessarily high grade; and when these men who sometimes buy mines send their experts to examine properties they (the experts) go instructed to report on how much ore there is in sight; to make an average sampling of the mineralized body as a whole; to report on timber, water power and accessibility of transportation; that's what the moneyed man wants to know, and that's about all. Of course, country rock, walls of the lode, dip of the vein and its trend, gouge, etc., may be of interest to him, but they are no longer matters of detail that enter into the purchase of mining properties, and especially average or big mines.

What I mean by ore in sight is any big body of mineral that may crop on the surface or where by development work the ore has been blocked out by a systematic drive of tunnels or shafts.

Two weeks ago, in the mining department of the Times, I gave to its many readers an article on "A Few Pointed Suggestions on Prospecting," and in this sketch I have been telling you what the man who buys mines want. I will admit that there is some money made out of stringers and small pockets of ore. It isn't much of a trick to "wildcat" them for a grubstake or a hundred dollars or so. But if you want to get out of the old rut and make big money in mining, discard the overalls and the long whiskers, quit monkeying with small mineralized freaks of nature and commence looking for average and big bodies of ore.—W. A. Hall in Seattle Times.

New Improved Cyanide Process.

Professor S. B. Christy, of the mining department of the University of California, has been granted an American patent for a process for the recovery of gold and silver from cyanide solutions by electrolysis. The new process has all the advantages of the Siemens & Halske process, so long in successful use in South Africa under Charles Butters, but avoids its chief difficulty, the necessity for cupelling an enormous weight of lead cathodes in order to recover the gold from them. As a contribution to the mining industry of California, wherever this new process seems adapted to existing conditions, and provided only that he has some guarantee that it will be properly installed and operated, Professor Christy offers to grant a free license for its use anywhere in California to any citizen of the state. Although the new process is very simple it requires good technical management for its success. Professor Christy does not recommend it for small plants, working irregularly; he considers the usual process better adapted for these. He recommends it only for use in large establishments in continuous operation and under good technical management. For these it has the great advantage over all processes yet proposed for the recovery of gold and silver from cyanide solutions, that it returns the gold and silver free from admixture with base metals, and in a pure state ready for the mint, without any auxiliary fire process.—Exchange.

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