

**ENTERTAINING**

**'HOT AIR' STORY**

**Gold Filing Led to Finding Rich Pay Streak.**

A number of prospectors were holding up the shady side of a Spokane hotel yesterday afternoon, talking over old times. The particular subject under discussion was to just what extent the element of luck enters into placer mining, and an old miner who had handled a pick and shovel up in the Northwest Territory told this story:

"Four years ago I was one of several thousand deluded mortals who attempted to push open the back door into Klondike. I was in Calgary at the time, working for the Canadian Pacific railroad, and when the rush over the Edmonton trail started I caught the fever, pulled up stakes and followed the crowd to Athabasca Landing, on the Athabasca river, 100 odd miles across the prairies north from Edmonton. There I paused to sort of take observations and incidentally take in \$5 a day turning out flat bottomed boats for gold hunters going down river to the Great Slave lake, and thence to the headwaters of the Mackenzie river.

"It was at the landing I fell in with three fellows who figure in this yarn. Two were young men from Prince Edward's island, husky, tireless and full of ambition to get there or bust, but who knew no more about gold mining than I do about the theory of least squares; the third was an Englishman who had worked in the mines at Rossland, and who knew gold from copper. We agreed to pool our prospects, and after considerable deliberation to go up the Athabasca, up the Lesser Slave lake, across to Pace River Landing and prospect along the upper waters of the Peace river. So the day we left the Athabasca we launched two twenty-one foot Peterboro canoes, loaded to the gunwales with grub and camp and mining necessities, and faced a turbulent six mile an hour current.

"Our trip up the Athabasca was uneventful. For ten hours each day we were waist deep in ice cold water, dragging at the end of seventy-five foot ropes the heavy canoes. As a rule we made camp early at night, so we might get in an hour or two panning, more for practice than from any expectation of a strike. We never failed to find colors, although not in quantity to warrant our making permanent camp. At the mouth of Lesser Slave lake stream we hired a Cree halfbreed to guide us down the lake, at the head of which other breeds and freetraders hauled our outfits across to the Hudson Bay post, on the banks of the Peace at Peace River Landing.

"Our journey up the Peace was a repetition of that up the Athabasca, only stronger waters and occasional rapids made progress more difficult. But persistence finally won the day, and after three weeks of the hardest sort of work we passed through the Dugarven gorges and floated in comparatively open though swift water, within hailing distance of the Findley branch of the Peace, our objective point. And right here is where my story begins.

"One of the P. E. I. men was an inveterate chewer of spruce gum, and, as you all know, such gum right from the tree is a mighty tenacious proposition. Well, one evening we were all seated about the campfire when our gum chewing friend, whom we will call Bill, because that is not his name, murmured something that smacked disagreeably of profanity, and stepping up to the fire he

took the gum from his mouth and in the gum was a large gold filling. He was about to hurl gold and gum into the fire, when I stopped him.

"Just below us on the river were camped a half dozen young fellows, who knew less about surface mining than we, and who had squatted for keeps at the mouth of a dry creek, convinced, in their ignorance, that a gold mine was somewhere beneath them. We, in our wisdom, knew better, but no amount of argument could move them, although they had dug up the shore for fifty yards without finding a solitary color. And more than that, they had never seen any gold in its free state. My brainy proposition was to plant that gold filling near the camp and let them dig it up, risking the chance that the stuff might send them clean daft. The plan was carried out to the letter.

"None of our party was at the camp when the nugget was found in the bottom of their pan, but of course we all rushed down when they began letting out a series of yells that would put to shame a war party of Comanches. They hugged the nugget, hugged each other and hugged the hole they were digging in their frenzy of delight. If they did not believe, way up to the handle, they were made millionaires right then and there, I don't want a cent. And really none of our crowd had the heart to deceive them. So after earnest congratulations and advice about staking out their claim, we left them and pushed on up river, chuckling at the cleverness of our joke, with not a mite of pity for the poor tenderfoots we had run up against an old clay bank.

"Three months later, richer in experience, but poorer in pocket, we arrived back in Edmonton, and the first thing we ran against was the story of the remarkable strike of six tenderfeet on the Peace, just below the Findley branch. Everybody knew about it. In four days they took out over \$700 in coarse gold, using pans alone, then they built a rude sluice, worked a month longer and cleaned up an even \$2000.

"It was the finest gold I ever saw," said one of our informants. "Only one coarse piece in the pile, a funny looking nugget they found near the surface and which led to their find, for they were just going to pull up stakes and move on when they hit that chunk. That settled them, however, and they plugged on and finally struck a rattling pay streak."

"Whatever we four might have thought or said among ourselves," concluded the prospector, "you can gamble that we did not tell anybody in Edmonton about the practical joke we played on those six tenderfeet."—Spokesman-Review.

Use Giant powder, fuse and caps.

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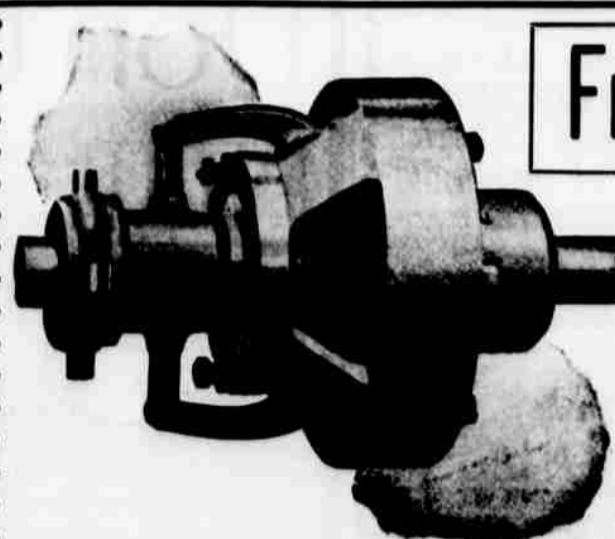
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