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THE MINER'S STORY.

I AM an old miner. Not one of the
now-a-days Washoe and Nevada
stripe, but an old forty-nine California
miner. I have been engaged in all de-
scriptions of mining transactions, ex-
cept the new-fangled one of mining in
companies—"feet" I believe they call it.
Among my varied undertakings was
one operation in a tunnel, in which I
and my partner engaged in the summer
of 1852.

One afternoon in that year, as I was
carrying up a bucket of water from the
river to our tent at the top of the bank,
my foot caught under a large stone and
my perpendicular was at once changed
to a horizontal posture, while the water
from the overturned bucket spread itself
in various directions. With a few ex-
pletives of a forcible character, quite
customary and common in that region
and period, I raised myself to my feet
again, and, picking up the bucket, was
about to retrace my steps to the river,
when my attention was attracted by a
folded paper, which had been placed
under the stone which caused my fall.
When my foot tripped, the stone was
overturned, and the paper folded in letter
form, lay exposed to view. Bending
over I picked it up and proceeded to
examine it. It was written in pencil,
in characters very irregular and stiffly
formed, as if made by a person with a
wounded hand. The contents were as
follows:

"If this letter should fall in the hands
of any person, I wish to inform him
that I have been attacked and mortally
wounded by my two partners, who
wished to discover my money. Falling
to find it, after wounding me they
fled, leaving me here to die. Whoever
gets this letter will find, buried in a
ravine at the foot of a 'blazed' tree,
twenty-five pieces due north of this,
a bag containing \$6,000 in gold dust. That
it may prove more fortunate to him
than it has to me is the wish of
ANDREW FOREST."

I stood for some moments after read-
ing the letter like one awakened from a
dream. I could not convince myself
that the letter in my hand was genuine,
and read it over and over again, think-
ing I might get some clue from the
handwriting to the real author. It
might be a trick got up by my partners
to raise a laugh at my expense. No;
the place where it was found, and the
purely accidental discovery, rendered
such a surmise very improbable. I sat
down on a log and turned the matter
over in my mind for some time. At
last I got up, and pacing off the required
distance in the direction mentioned in
the letter, I came to a large tree. Care-
fully examining it, I discovered a scar,
clearly indicating that the tree had been
"blazed" at some remote period. This
was "confirmation strong as Holy
Writ," and I immediately went to work
to discover the locality of the ravine.
Here I was at fault. Nothing of the
kind was to be seen. To all appearance
a stream of water had never passed in
the neighborhood of the tree. This was
not encouraging, and I sat down on the
ground and read the letter again, to see
if I had not mistaken some of its di-
rections. No; I was in the right place,
but where was the ravine?

A tap on the shoulder aroused me
from my meditation, and, looking up, I
saw my two partners, who loudly ab-
used me for having neglected the prepara-
tion for their supper. As an excuse, I
showed them the letter, and detailed the
manner of my finding it. To my sur-
prise, they were as much elated by its
perusal as I had been, and we all looked
around perseveringly for the ravine, but

without effect for some time. At last
Jack Nesbitt, who had been a miner
since '48, said:

"I think there has been a ravine
here, but it has been filled up by the
rains."

On close examination we decided that
his supposition was correct, and after
some consultation we determined to
commence digging early on the follow-
ing morning.

Morning came, and we repaired to the
spot with pick and shovel. Jack pro-
posed that we should follow the course
of the ravine, which appeared to run
into the body of the hill, rather than to
dig down; for, as he said, we would be
more likely to find the bag in the bed of
the ravine, by following it up, than by
digging down in any one place. The
result was that in a few days we had
formed quite a cave in the side of the
hill.

We worked at this tunnel for four
days without finding the bag. On the
fourth day Jack proposed that he and
my other partner, Bill Jennings, should
carry the dirt we excavated down to the
river and wash it, leaving me to dig in
the tunnel. In that way they thought
they might "make grub" while search-
ing for the hidden money. I thought the
idea foolish, but, as they entered so
eagerly into my views regarding the
buried bag of dust, I made no objections
to the plan, and dug away with re-
doubled energy. In fact, I had thought
so much about the object of our search
that I had become utterly regardless of
almost anything else. I had dreamed of
it when sleeping, mused on it when
waking, and it had obtained complete
control of my mind. Day after day we
worked, I digging and my companions
washing, yet, strange to say, I did not
become discouraged. They said nothing
about the bag of gold dust, and I asked
them nothing about the result of their
washing the excavated soil.

We had worked about three weeks
and had formed a tunnel extending
about fifteen feet into the hill, when,
one afternoon completely tired out, I sat
down to rest in the cave. I had only
intended to sit a little while, but five
minutes had not elapsed before I was
sound asleep. I was awakened by a
crash, and found my feet and legs com-
pletely covered by a mass of dirt and
stones. The front part of the tunnel
had fallen in, and, in a manner, buried
me alive. About ten feet of the tunnel
remained firm, and, from my observa-
tion of its structure prior to the accident
I was convinced that I had no reason to
apprehend any danger in that quarter.
My partners had carried dirt enough to
the river to keep them busy there for
the rest of the day, so I had nothing to
hope from their assistance. The ques-
tion that first presented itself to my
mind was, how long can life be sustained
in this confined state? I had read a
dozen times statistics in relation to the
amount of air consumed hourly by
human beings' lungs, but, like almost
everybody else had merely wondered at
the time and then forgot the figures.

How much would I have given then
to be able to recall them! The next
thought was, how can I proceed to ex-
tricate myself? The question was diffi-
cult of solution. If I went to work with
shovel and pick to clear away the dirt
that had fallen, it was very likely that
all I should be able to remove would be
immediately replaced by that which
had fallen in from above. This was
pleasant! I racked my poor brain to
devise some means of liberating myself,
but without effect.

Leaning against the wall in utter
despondency I was about to throw myself
down on the ground and await my fate,
when I observed that quite a stream of
water, on a small scale, was making its
way down the side of the cave. At first
I was alarmed, as I thought it might
loosen the earth above and bring another
mass down on my head. The next
moment the thought struck me that it
might be turned to my advantage. Why
should I not direct it so it would wash
away sufficient earth in its progress to
the outlet of the cave to make an open-
ing large enough to allow me to crawl
through it? Even if I only succeeded in
making an air-hole, it would enable
me at least to exist until my partners
could come to my rescue.

Carefully examining the course of the
water, I succeeded in finding the spot

where it entered the cave, and to my
great joy ascertained that I could easily
direct it by cutting a channel out of the
sides of my prison to the mass of earth
that blocked up the entrance to the
tunnel.

The air at that time was quite hot and
stifling, and I became aware that what-
ever was to be done must be done quick-
ly, or I would perish for want of oxy-
gen.

After cutting a channel for the water
to flow toward the entrance I enlarged
the opening by which the stream en-
tered the cave, and rejoiced to observe
that it flowed with redoubled force.
Taking my shovel I pushed it through
the moistened earth as far as I was able
and then awaited the further action of
the water. In a few minutes I could
push it further, till at last it was out of
my reach. Then, placing the pick
handle against it, I pushed both as far
as I could. With what eagerness did I
watch to see the first opening made by
the water! But I was soon gratified by
observing that it flowed in a steady
stream in the direction in which I
pushed the pick and shovel.

In a few minutes I discovered a faint
glimmering in the distance, which might
be an opening or the effect of an excited
imagination, I scarcely knew which.
But the doubt soon resolved itself into
certainty, and an opening some five
inches in diameter speedily disclosed
itself.

Larger and larger the opening grew;
lump after lump of the earth was wash-
ed away by the stream, till the channel
became large enough to place my head
in and call lustily for help.

Just as I was drawing my head back
I caught sight of a buckskin bag. Hasti-
ly seizing it, I found it was the one we
were in search of, and which but for the
accident, I would never have found.
Wishing to surprise my companions, I
concealed it and redoubled my cries. In
a few minutes they came running up
the hill and soon liberated me from my
unpleasant position.

"Well, Ned," said Jack as he shook
my hand, "I am glad to see you're
safe, old fellow—the more as Bill and I
have been deceiving you a little. You
know we have been trying all summer
to get you in a tunneling operation, and
you have only laughed at us."

"Yes," I said.
"Well, when you got that letter we
made up our minds that we would go
into the job with you—not in the hope
of finding any bag, but because we
knew you would work twice as hard
with such an inducement, intending,
meanwhile, to wash the excavated dirt.
This we have done; and, my boy, we
have not made less than \$300 any day
since we began."

"Then you think the bag a humbug,
do you?" I asked.
"Of course," said he.
"Well, I don't, and I intend going on
looking for it."

"Now, what is the use of being
foolish?" quoth Bill Jennings. "We
have got as much dirt as we can wash
for some time, and it pays. I can't see
the use of continuing such a wild-goose
chase as the hunt for that bag."

"Be that as it may," said I, "I intend
to follow it up."

"Well, Ned, we may as well tell you
first as last. I wrote that letter in
order to get you to go into tunnel-
ing."

"And the 'blazed' tree," said I, "how
about that? That 'blaze' is certainly
two years old."

Jack hesitated.
"Why, you see," said he, "we found
that tree, and wrote the letter to suit
it."

"Then what do you think of this?" I
asked, showing him the bag I had found
in the cave.

Jack was nonplussed. On opening
the bag we found about three thousand
dollars' worth of gold. Jack would
never confess, but always insisted that
the variance between the statement in
the letter and the amount in the bag
was proof enough that there was no
connection between the two. I don't
think so, however, and I believe that
Jack's assertion of having written the
letter was untrue. We could never
ascertain anything about Mr. Forest, so
we divided the money among us.

"MEALS AT ALL HOURS."

JOHN FORRESTER was very cor-
rectly named, for until a few days
ago he had spent his life in the woods.
Several days ago he threw aside his
maul, came to the city, and now handles
the somewhat lighter rock hammer.
The story of John's downfall shall be
briefly related. Shortly after arriving
in the city he was attracted by a
sign bearing the inscription, "meals at
all hours." Entering the place and
meeting the proprietor, he said:
"You keep a tavern here, don't
you?"
"No; I keep a restaurant."

"I don't know much about your
new names; but you feed folks here,
don't you?"
"Yes, sir."

"Well, I want to board here three
days, or I reckon until I get a job of
some kind. I see your sign says, 'meals
at all hours.' You don't mean that do
you?"

"Certainly I mean it. I'll board you
three days for three dollars."

"And give me my meals at all hours?
Here, take the three dollars. I never
set myself up as a regular eater, but I'll
buck agin you for the next three days.
I think that I can stand her that long.
It's eleven o'clock. Give me something
to eat."

A meal was brought out and quickly
dispatched; and remarking that he
would be back on time, Mr. Forrester
left. At twelve o'clock he came back
and ate again.

"You needn't stare at me," he said to
one of the waiters.

"You are a regular boarder, are
you?"

"The regularest one you've got. I
don't intend to miss a meal. I've got a
chance now to git even for bein' hungry
many a time."

At one o'clock John came back and
remarked as he hung up his hat: "I'm
on time. It's one o'clock. Fetch me
suthin' to eat."

The waiter went away muttering, and
brought in a rather slim meal.

"Look here," said John, "don't try
to go back on your contract. I reckon
you did rather underrate my ability, but
I'm a man."

At two o'clock John came back and
took a seat. The proprietor came in
and asked him what he wanted.

"I want my dinner, supper or break-
fast, just what you have a mind to call
it."

"You have already eaten here three
times to-day."

"I know it."
"Why do you come again?"
"Because it's two o'clock."

"It's not supper time."
"No, but it's two o'clock time."
"I don't understand you, sir; what
do you mean?"

"Your understanding may have been
injured by my surprising ability. I
came here with the understanding that
I was to have meals at all hours."

"The contract has been adhered to;
you have come irregularly."

"No, sir, I have come here regular.
It was the agreement that I was to have
a meal every hour, and I am going to
stand up to it if it packs my stomach
as tight as a green watermelon. You
are trying to impose on me because I'm
from the country. I have made ar-
rangements with a boy to wake me up
every hour to-night, and I'm coming
here to eat. That's my business now,
and I'll act fair with you and eat every
time. Give me an oyster can of coffee
and some ball sausage."

The proprietor handed the man three
dollars and requested him to leave. A
fight ensued, and John was led away by
the police. When he has completed his
rock pile engagement he will sue the
restaurant for damages.

THAT INQUISITIVE BOY.

THE other day a lady accompanied
by her little boy, boarded a train at
Little Rock. The woman had a care-
worn expression hanging over her face
like a tattered veil, and many of the
rapid questions asked by the boy were
answered by unconscious sighs.

"Ma, that man's like a baby ain't he?"
said the boy, pointing to a bald-headed
man sitting just in front of them.
"Hush."

"Why must I hush?"
After a few moments' silence: "Ma,
what's the matter with that man's
head?"

"Hush, I tell you. He's bald."
"What's bald?"
"His head hasn't got any hair on it,
now hush."

"Did it come off?"
"I guess so."
"Will mine come off?"
"Sometime, may be."

"Then I'll be bald, won't I?"
"Yes."
"Will you care?"
"Don't ask so many questions."

After another silence the boy exclaim-
ed, "Ma, look at that fly on that man's
head."

"If you don't hush I'll whip you
when we get home."
"Look! There's another fly. Look
at 'em fight; look at 'em!"

"Madam," said the man putting aside
a newspaper and looking around.—
"What's the matter with that young
hyena?"

The woman blushed, stammered out
something, and attempted to smooth
back the boy's hair.

"One fly, two fly, three flies," said
the boy innocently following with his
eyes a basket of oranges carried by the
newsboy.

"Here, you young hedge-hog," said
the bald-headed man, "if you don't
hush, I'll have the conductor put you
off the train."

The poor woman not knowing what
else to do, boxed the boy's ears and then
gave him an orange so as to keep him
from crying.

"Ma, have I got red marks on my
head?"
"I will slap you again if you don't
hush."

"Mister," said the boy after a short
silence, "Does it hurt to be bald-head-
ed?"

"Youngster," said the man, "I'll
give you a quarter now if you'll keep
quiet."

The boy promised and the money was
paid over.
The man took up his paper and re-
sumed his reading.

"This is my bald-headed money,"
said the boy. "When I get bald-headed
I'm going to give boys money. Mister,
have all the bald-headed men got mon-
ey like you?"

The annoyed man threw down his pa-
per, arose and exclaimed: "Madam,
hereafter when you travel leave that
young gorilla at home. Hitherto I al-
ways thought that the old prophet was
very cruel for calling the she bears to
kill children for making sport of his
head, but now I am forced to believe
that he did a Christian act. If your
boy had been in the crowd he would
have died first. If I can't find another
seat on this train, I'll ride on the cow-
catcher rather than remain here."

"The bald-headed man is gone," said
the boy, and the woman leaned back and
blew a tired sigh from her lips.

How Shoes Affect the Eyes.

A young lady here went one day
to an oculist with a trouble with her
eyes that threatened frightful results.
She was already in a state where read-
ing was out of question and other en-
tertainment was fast becoming a tor-
ment. The oculist looked at her with
his professional wisdom, asked her var-
ious questions, and then suddenly
amazed her by asking her to put out
her foot. The foot in its kid boot, with
a wicked little high heel, was thrust
forth. The doctor eyed it a moment
with a solid face. "Go home," he said,
"and take off those heels; keep them
off for a month, and then come to me
again, and we'll see how the eyes are!"
In a month the eyes were well, and the
young lady learned by her experience
and a little wise talk how near she had
come to having no eyes at all. It serves
to show that there is the possibility that
with that instrument of torture con-
stantly at work in the centre of the
foot, where so many delicate nerves and
tendons lie that are so intimately con-
nected with all the other delicate nerves
of the body, there must presently come
disarrangement and disease that may
work fatal mischief with the health.—
Boston Letter.