Chapter XXIV

On the Miner's exchange list, the most interesting newspaper to me was the New York Herald. It was loaded with want ads, not only the Sunday edition, but also every day of the week. The personal columns were a never-failing source of interest to me, and every day I would pore over the wants and troubles of the "agony column" to the exclusion of every story of war, pestilence, tragedy, pathos, or bathos.

Time had slipped quickly by, and I was going on thirty-six and still "heart and fancy free." The girls of Silverton of marriageable age were few, and the one I knew best and sometimes escorted to dances always showed alarm when I started to get serious. I had a good home but no one to share it with, with as little prospect of finding a suitable companion as Robison Crusoe on his desert Island. It was therefore not surprising that one day, in casting my eye over the day's personals in the latest copy of the New York Herald, I was suddenly transfixed by the following: "To ladies, unattached, afflicted with a sense of ennui, would correspond with a Western gentleman. X Y Z, Washington Star."

I cut out the advertisement and spent half the night in framing a letter that would attract those ladies and relieve them of their ennui, a letter which would stand apart from the hundreds of answers they would receive. As a matter of fact, they did receive hundreds of letters, and no longer did they complain of that tired feeling. They had entered the advertisement in the paper as a lark and source of amusement. Each day they would meet at their rendezvous with their bundle of letters, and would laugh at the merits and demerits of the various love-lorn wights who had the temerity to put their heartthrobs on paper.

Across the continent, in the little mountain town, after many days of anxious waiting, watching for the arrival of the mail, and hoping that there would be a letter for me, I was greatly elated to receive a reply stating that of all the letters received, mine was the most attractive! A correspondence ensued, and one of the ladies proved to be Mr. Olivia Star, the widow of a general, a woman of wealth and owner of one of the palatial residences of Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, D.C. The other was Mrs. Ida M. Stone, not so wealthy, but a brilliant writer and possessing a delightful disposition. Through an absorbing correspondence I learned that she was the daughter of a professor of the Glens Falls Academy. She had a sister Mrs. Hathaway, the widow of a Congressman from Missouri, and both were members of the Congressional Club. I had no great difficulty in persuading Mrs. Stone that her lark could easily be turned into a matter of lifetime importance, and soon I very happily laid plans for a trip East to meet her.

It was November when I telegraphed Mrs. Stone of my coming, and arranged to meet her in New York. The train was late arriving in Jersey City, and the cab that I chartered seemed to take hours in reaching Forty-second and Broadway, where the two sisters were awaiting my coming at the St. Cloud Hotel. We met in the parlors of the hotel, and after mutual greetings and my embarrassment had worn off, we ordered dinner in their apartment. Over the various courses, we discussed the situation, and by the time the evening was over we were so entranced with each other that we decided to be married the following evening, November 23, 1891.

The wedding took place in the apartment of the bride in the St. Cloud Hotel in the presence of Mrs. Hathaway and the wife of the minister. My bride was arrayed in a beautiful dress of pearl gray silk, and about her throat was a necklet of precious stones with a pendant of a gold

cross. Her hair, a golden chestnut, curled gloriously about her sweet face, and she carried a corsage of roses which I had provided.

We left for Washington the next afternoon to spend a brief honeymoon at the Shoreham Hotel, after which we took the train for Colorado to make our home. Our arrival at Silverton was the occasion for a boisterous greeting from a large crowd that had gathered at the station and around our dwelling. The same night we were treated to a real old Charivari from the younger element, with all the embellishments of rice, old shoes, noisy wash boilers, caroling (?) and attempted kidnapping. The occasion of course ended in a happy party, for which I had expectantly provided in the way of refreshments.

The change from the comforts of a large city to a mining camp lying under a blanket of six feet of snow must have a been a heavy strain on my wife, she stayed with it and did not complain. Her sweet disposition was ever a joy to me. When spring came and the trails were open, with a saddle horse that was a beauty to look at, a single-footer with a gait that was a constant delight, Ida had the happiest time of her life. In my search for mining news she would accompany me to the highest mines, would follow me through the stopes, climb the upraises, and join me in the bucket that lowered me in the winzes.

We had a summer home in one of the picturesque spots that abound in the San Jun, about seven miles north of Silverton. The house was built of peeled logs, with a shingle roof and windows all around that afforded a view of the surrounding peaks. It was perched on a bit of a table land a hundred feet above the highway, with tall spruce timber all about, while a never-failing stream of mountain water, clear as crystal and sparkling as the nectar of the gods, rushed by on its way to join the waters of Cement Creek. We had brought some of her furniture and rugs from Washington, where Ida owned a house on Third Street, and with some things from the Silverton home, we were as snug as the proverbial bug.

May is the month that the snow pictures ornament the peaks above timberline. From our windows we had front seats at one of the greatest shows on earth. Before us was a scene of sublime interest, and so vast that the human eye could not encompass it. For miles across the rocky slopes, crevices, jutting spurs, and cave-like openings begin to show their lines, and points above the melting snow, leaving figures of grotesque shapers, and forming pictures that change from day to day with the influence of the warm spring sun.

Have you been among the mountains
When the rocks begin to show?
Then try Ariadne Basin,
Under Boulder Mountain's brow!

There you'll see the wondrous pictures,
As you high and higher go.
Rich with changing beauty –
Formed by the vanishing snow!

There's Napoleon on his charger,
Leading his tottering clan;

While on a cliff, split by a rift,
Is “the bear that walks like a man!”

The old woman doing her knitting,
A pot o’erhanging the hearth;
The dog on a run, a man with a gun;
Creating a feeling of mirth.

Then there’s that other picture –
The most wonderful scene of all –
A never-forgettable picture,
That formed on my memory’s wall!

Two saddle horses carried us to town when we needed supplies, and on the arrival of my wife’s sister from Washington for a visit, I added a fat burro to our livestock, which led contented lives on the rich mountain grass that covered the hillsides. In fact at times they were too contented, as I found to my chagrin when I wanted to catch them for a trip to Silverton.

We made frequent excursions to nearby places of interest, and often parties of young people from town would join us and we would ride to Gladstone, a mining village three miles above our cottage, to watch the stamps dropping in the Gold King mill and the gold washing in long strings along the concentrating tables. From Gladstone the waters of the south fork of Cement Creek joined the main stream, and we would follow the trail to the lake that forms the headwaters of the branch. There, with the mountains rising almost perpendicularly on three sides of us, with the blue water of the lake filling what appears to be the neck of an ancient crater, we would spread our lunch and loll around to count the threads of mineral that rise from the solid rock not unlike the threads of a spider’s web, through which the great Ariadne lode, as it courses through the mountain, rises above the surface like a section of the Chinese wall.

On one of these trips we visited the Ariadne Mine, my wife and I on the saddle horses and her sister on the burro. “It wasn’t so high up,” she said. We climbed the long, steep, zig-zag trail through the heavy forest to timberline, and then the trail emerged into a wide expanse of the Ariadne Basin. The snow had yet disappeared from the flat, but its surface was frozen and the animals went over it without difficulty. The peaks above us were bare on the sunny side, and the columbines were already in full bloom on the bare spots of the flats. The day was an ideal one, and the few fleecy clouds floating above through the deep sapphire blue of the brilliant Colorado sky served to make the scene still more beautiful. Across the floor of the basin, the mine houses were far up on the mountain’s slope, which is steep and smooth except for the zig-zag trails leading from each of the mine openings. As we gazed up this awe inspiring slope, my sister-in-law thought she would stay below and pick flowers, leaving my wife and me to make the climb alone.

Back and forth on the switch-backs our horses climbed the steep trail, as we watched the small figure of our sister below us growing tiny in the distance, stooping here and there to pick her Alpine flowers. We reached and passed the two lower tunnels, but between us and the top level the trail led around a jutting rock with space barely wide enough for a horse to pass. On the

outer side the slope was too steep for a foothold, and I had once seen a mule slip off at that point – it did not stop sliding for a thousand feet. My wife however, was a fearless horsewoman, and I allowed her to take the lead. As she approached the rock, which was less than a hundred feet from the upper tunnel, her horse shied, but she urged him on until they reached the point of the curve around the rock, where he rose on his hind legs and pawed the air as he turned outward. In an instant I was off my horse, and leaping below the trail I caught the weight of the animal as he was coming down. Ida, agile as a panther, slipped off the saddle on the upper side, and I swung the horse back on the trail. We lead the horses the rest of the way to the mine, but are spirits were too depressed to enter the tunnel.

We were late returning home that day. Mrs. Hathaway had gathered her flowers but was having difficulty in making her burro behave himself. He simply would not go! I got behind him and pushed, but he pointed his ears backward and stiffened his forelegs, and there he stuck. My wife petted his nose, they both pulled his bridle, and I coaxed, but all to no purpose. Finally after an hour or so, the darn thing walked off as if nothing had happened, and we had no further trouble. That evening, after taking off the burro's saddle, I found a sharp piece of rock in the blanket which had been chafing him had worked loosed, so the sturdy little animal was forgiven.

That night we were roused from our beds by the clatter of horse's hoofs coming up the road, and as he neared the house the rider began shouting "Fire! Fire!" at the top of his lungs. I flung open the door and asked the visitor what was the cause for all the noise. He replied that the "Miner" office in Silverton was on fire, and that if I expected to save anything I must hurry. Throwing on my clothes as I dived out the door, I caught my sorrel mare "Nellie" and raced to town on a dead run. My building was on the corner of the main street. It was a two-story wooden structure, the upper story fitted up for living quarters and the ground floor being occupied by the printing plant. A large crowd had gathered around, but no attempt had been made to salvage any of the material. At the time of my arrival, the volunteer fire department had the blaze under control. The damage was largely confined to the upper story, and the printing office was still capable of operation.

This event marked another change in my life. I did not have the heart to rebuild in the face of the increasing depression, so I sold what was left of the building to the masons, who wanted a permanent lodge room, and put a man in charge of the a paper, giving him power of attorney to act. The slump in the price of silver had stopped shipments from the Ariadne, and I decided to close the mine until a better price could be obtained for the metals.

Whereupon, in August '92 my wife and I packed up our belongings, bid our fiends goodbye, and boarded the narrow-gauge train (which by that time had been extended up the Animas Canyon from Durango) bound for New York City, with the intention of embarking in some small business until a revival in mining should make its appearance.

Chapter XXV

It was the fall of 1892 that we made our home in one of the apartment houses on Fifty-second Street. Next door lived a theatrical man, Charles E. Bolt, with his wife and children, a son, Campbell Bolt, who had become a New York lawyer, and a daughter, Enid. A friendship sprang up between Mrs. Bolt and Ida, and we learned that Bolt was then promoting a series of Sunday night concerts at the Lenox Lyceum, for which enterprise he was looking for an "angel" to furnish the wherewith. I became interested in the proposition and advanced some two thousand dollars necessary to get the concert inaugurated. Bolt had no money, but in return for my investment I was to receive a payment of $150 a week and a share in the profits.

On the opening night, which was heralded with great éclat, the house was crowded to the doors to hear Seidel's orchestra of eighty pieces and such stars as Melba, Nordica, Campanini, Fischer, and many other great artists of the day. Mr. Bolt conducted my wife and I behind the scenes, where he formally introduced us to Madame Melba and Campanini, who had just arrived. Melba was regal in her appearance, but at the time I did not consider her the beauty that she was reputed to be. Campanini was a handsome fellow and a pleasant conversationalist. I liked him, and he in nowise the unapproachable chap he was said to be. My company paid him $400 for each night's performance, while Fischer got $450. Bolt told me that Melba received $600 and Nordica $550. Seidel's orchestra cost $600 for each performance. Besides these stars there were other luminaries of lesser degree, so that the box office did not show much profit, although the receipts ranged from $4000 to $4500 for each Sunday performance, and after the first payment of $150 to me I received no further return on my investment.

After a run of several months Bolt put on an opera "parsifal," giving performances in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, and Washington, chartering for the occasion a special train to carry the company. My wife and I accompanied the troupe, and while the run was a success from a financial standpoint, Bolt always had a plausible excuse for not reimbursing me. His Nemesis never did overtake him, however, for although on returning to New York to resume the concerts he was unable to renew his lease on the Lyceum, which put him out of the opera business, the Spanish war came on, and with a powerful connection with the administration, he and Abner McKinley secured a lucrative contract to supply the army with "fresh" meat, from which he emerged with a fortune that enabled him to buy a palatial residence on Seventy-second Street, New York.

The loss of my investment in New York and the fact that my wife was a Washington girl impelled us to move to the capital city, where my thoughts naturally reverted to the newspaper business. The era of typesetting by machinery and the great Sunday editions was only just starting, so I thought there would be plenty of time, if begun in a modest way, to develop with the crowd. The Sunday Herald and National Intelligencer, a weekly newspaper of twenty-four pages, owned by Soule & Hensey, was then on the market. The national Intelligencer was the oldest newspaper in Washington, and was doing business when Washington was invaded by the British in 1814. It had been merged with the Sunday Herald and was enjoying a wide circulation, with offices on the corner of Eleventh and E Streets, the site of the present Hotel Harrington.

In less than ten days after our arrival the paper passed into our possession. My wife was a natural-born politician and versatile writer, and when she took the editorial chair with myself as

business manager, we were sure that the road was open to success. In addition to our large acquaintance with the statesmen "on the hill," my wife's brother-in-law, Robert A. Hathaway of Missouri, and a cousin, Thomas Updegraf of Iowa, were both in Congress, while Wade Hampton, the war governor of South Carolina, was one of our most intimate friends. Our staff included Clarence B. Rheem, later of the firm Swartzel, Rheem & Hensey Company, as dramatic critic, John F. Doyle, sporting editor, and several local writers.

The paper was not a moneymaker, in spite of a reasonable circulation. After continuing the paper as a weekly for a year, the competition of the big dailies began to have its effect, and I decided to turn the paper into a daily. Thereupon, the first issue of the Washington Morning Herald made its appearance on October 7, 1893. It consisted of four pages, six columns to the page, and sold for one cent. Its politics were Democratic, and it printed all the news up to the hour of going to press in a much more condensed form than was usual with other morning newspapers. The paper started with a circulation of 5000 copies, and from the first morning of its publication it was a favorite with the newsboys. For quite a while the sheet looked as if it would make a go. However, small as it was, the expense was enormous. There apparently were not enough Democrats to make the paper self-supporting, and although Mr. Cleveland, who was then in office, issued orders to the department to use the Herald for the government printing, even this support failed to provide enough revenue to put the paper on a paying basis. Therefore, when a syndicate made me a cash offer I accepted the inevitable. The Herald is still running, and has grown to be one of the most influential newspapers of the nation.

The year 1894 marked the worst phase of the panic of '93. Industry was taking a lay-off; unemployment was rife everywhere; the banks were issuing certificates for money; and the mining regions of the West felt the stoppage of the silver purchase law acutely by the closing down of the silver mines. However, since my Eastern ventures were not crowned with success, in spite of advice from friends to remain in Washington, and regardless of the depression in mining, I felt that the opportunities were greater for me in Colorado. There is something about the West which clings to one. The years that I had spent on the clean, wind-swept slopes of the Rocky Mountains was in my blood and had become a part of me. Ida, the lovely and faithful wife that she was, was quite in harmony with my sentiments, and was quite willing to return with me to Silverton, to go back to her saddle pony, the clear mountain sunshine, the deep forests of spruce, and the glamorous excitement of mining.

Chapter XXVI

On our arrival at the old camp I found that during my absence the editor of the Miner had mortgaged the plant, left the country, the mortgage had been foreclosed, and the paper was running under a new ownership.

With the extinction of my newspaper, I fell back on my old standby, the Ariadne, with the aid of a sound physique and robust health I was able to work the mine single-handed and ship several carloads of ore, which gave me a good profit. With my new capital I decided to promote some promising prospect rather than rob the Ariadne, and my choice fell on the Star of the West, a mine located among the clouds on Mt. Kendall, which claim I secured for a few dollars on bond and lease. I had the force of four miners, including my old-time partner Byrd Wilson as a cook, and we made camp under the shelter of a rock jutting out below the mine. The mine workings were well above timberline at an altitude of 13,000 feet, close to the summit of Mt. Kendall, and instead of packing lumber from town for a house, we built it of rock, using a white sticky substance (which I afterward found to be rich in gold) for mortar. We also erected a bake-oven of rock that would bake bread for a large force of men. The house, however, proved to be cold and damp and the walls did not dry out that winter, although we had plenty of fuel and kept a good fire, so that we were fairly comfortable.

The ore in the mine contained copper and gold, not rich enough to send to the smelter, but a good concentrating product. I had sent a carload to Denver to be tested for the most adaptable treatment, and while this was being done, the ore body, which was large, was opened up and put in shape for production.

One forenoon, on coming into the cabin, I found Byrd engaged in the act of thawing powder for the noon shots. He had a piece of wood laid lengthwise on the plate in front of the stove, and standing upright against it were fifteen sticks of dynamite, with the nitro-glycerin running into the ash pan. Quickly gathering up the powder I warned my cook that another break like that would find him either in Kingdom Come or flying down the hill, as he seemed to have learned nothing from his former experience in the Gunnison country. I carried out the threat a few days later, when I caught him sprinkling dynamite on the kindling like so much sawdust, which he said was “elegant” for making a quick fire.

It was late in the fall when we started. I had not laid in our winter supplies, as we had no place to protect them from the icy blasts of that region, and we had no liking for frozen vegetables. Therefore, when our provender would get low and the trail blocked with snow, a couple of men on snowshoes would bring up enough from town on their backs to keep us going for a few more days.

Winter closed in upon us, and a food shortage was looming. All four of us therefore went on skies to town for supplies. When we started back the next morning, the thermometer stood at forty degrees below zero. Our route lay along the south slope of the mountain, as it was easier traveling than up the steep gulch on the north overlooking the town, although the mine was on the north side and it was necessary for us to climb up over the top and down the other side to reach the mine. After the laborious climb to the summit, which we reached about noon, we stopped for a brief rest, and thinking it would warm me up I took a generous drink from the flask I carried. Perspiration from the climb and melting snow froze into my clothes, so that I could

bend only my knees with an effort, but the whiskey stimulated me so that I thought I could make the descent to the mine and catch up with the others before they reached the cabin, which was now in sight. The liquor deceived me however, and its stimulating effects quickly wore off. I felt deathly tired, and with a weak shout I called to the boys ahead to go on and I would follow. Then I sat down in the snow, exhausted, perfectly helpless, and leaned back without a care in the world. The next thing I knew I was being dragged by a rope feet first to the cabin, where my icy clothes were pulled away and hot ginger tea poured down me. By rubbing me with snow, which stimulated the circulation, the boys successfully thawed me out so that I had no ill effects from my experience. The process of freezing to death is not painful, especially in the last stages, as only a delicious drowsiness overcomes one. It is much more painful to be brought back to life, however, as the circulation is restored and the nerves recover from their torpor, which brings an excruciating pain in every muscle and bone. If warmed too quickly, the patient will suffer at times for the rest of his life.

Shortly after this I made a trip to Denver and sold my interest in the mine to an attorney for $7,000. It was with great satisfaction that I brought this back to my wife, who had been patiently enduring, if not enjoying, the hardships of a small mountain town while I was at the summit of the mountain above, working the mine.

About this time, the great Cripple Creek discoveries of gold took place that attracted miners and prospectors from all over the West. W. S. Stratton, one of my former employees at the Ariadne, was there and had located the Independence Mine. He had optioned his find to an English company, who had given him $20,000 as a first payment, spent $50,000 in prospecting the property, but after finding no values had turned it back to the owner. Stratton, still having faith in the property, sank the shaft sixty feet deeper, and inside of three months was shipping ore so rich that it went to the smelter by express, protected by armed guards. This started a boom at Cripple Creek, and as I was footloose after having sold the Star of the West, and my wife enjoyed the novelty of the gold rush, we joined the crowd that was swarming into the new camp.

My experience in Cripple Creek was limited to a location on Mineral Hill, where we found plenty of low-grade stuff but none that would stand the heavy treatment charges of that day. The divining rod men were there in force, and one of them tried his doodlebug on our ground, finally “locating” a rich ore chute under the table in our cabin. He assured us we would strike $100 ore in thirty-two feet. We went him eighteen feet better and sank fifty feet, but failed to get a trace of gold. The first fire at Cripple Creek mercifully stopped any further expense by burning up our hoisting plant.

We then followed the stampeded to Creede, and after we had tried out the camp on the Rio Grande, we flitted over to Silver Cliff, which also had an incipient boom. Silver Cliff got its name from the surrounding escarpments, of which there are plenty, but the mineral deposits are limited in extent, and the camp resulted in nothing more than a temporary field for crocked promoters, gamblers, and thousands of tenderfeet, most of whom did not know what they were there for, but just “joined the stampede.”

There is an old saying among prospectors that “when you are dissatisfied with your own mine, go and see others.” Well, I had done that very thing, and returned to Silverton convinced in my mind that there was no better mining camp in the West.

In the early nineties an English company had built a smelter, but a slump in mining had closed it down, and its idleness had accentuated the depression in Silverton. Thomas F. Walsh then happened along and took a lease on the English plant. The Red Mountain district was just opening, and Walsh found plenty of heavy sulphide ores, but he needed siliceous ores to be used for flux. In his search for silica, Tom would scour the district, and his pack train was a familiar sight at the Ariadne, where the dump was highly siliceous and also carried sufficient values in the royal metals to offset his cost for packing.

It was while Tom was looking for more dumps that we encountered the Camp Byrd property in the Sneffels district. The mine was owned by two brothers, one of whom was engaged in business and the other did the work on the claim. When there was any assaying to be done, the brother in town did it. In the days of the pioneer, gold was little thought of. The smelters never paid for the yellow metal if they could help it, and the whole San Juan was devoted to silver. In fact, it was widely known to be strictly silver country. Under these conditions, when the brother at the mine sent a sample to the brother in Ouray, the assayer merely weighed the silver button, without parting it for the gold content, and let it go at that. Tom Walsh was more careful, and on sampling the dump of the Camp Bird he found it to contain $60 in gold to the ton. He secured an option on the mine for less than $20,000 and paid for it out of the quartz already mined. How Tom took millions from this accidental find, built business blocks and a palace in Washington, and died a multi-millionaire, is a story of only one of the many individual fortunes, which had their origin in the mountains of the San Juan.

With the passing of the years, my life was subject to many changes. I alternated in the working of the Ariadne with the leasing of other mines, which never failed to be called off if by chance I should make a rich strike, which I frequently did. The Spanish War brought back good prices for the metals, and thereupon began one of those cycles of prosperity that was checked only by the free silver campaign of William Jennings Bryan, the Boy Orator of the Platte.

My old operatic friend, Bolt, who was wont to say that what he owed was “a debt of honor,” was then a rich man, having accumulated a fortune through war contracts in partnership with a man high up in administrative circles, and his palace on Seventy-second Street is one of the show places of New York. So I still have ‘opes!

Chapter XXVII

Among my wife's Eastern friends was Colonel C. C. Bean, the first delegate to Congress from Arizona. Bean was a mining enthusiast of the first rank, and his experiences and exploits in the great copper state are written indelibly on its records. He was one of the discovers of the United Verde, which he worked for silver, totally oblivious to the fabulous wealth in copper that lay underneath his working and which was destined to bring fame and fortune to W. A. Clark. Bean sold the United Verde for $2500 to other men who continued to work it for silver, and then meandered over to Copper Basin, where he made a stake of $100,000.

In 1898, Colonel Bean secured an option on the old Ajos group of claims forty miles south of Gila Bend, Arizona, a watering station on the Southern Pacific Railroad. The Ajo property was a group of six patented claims set down in an ancient crater, dotted with shafts and honeycomb workings that are characteristic of Mexican mining. Colonel Bean, who was also a promoter, organized a syndicate in New York in order to work the property. It was composed of Willard B. Ward, a retired mining engineer, a member of the executive Union Club of New York and Commodore of the New York Yacht Club; Isaac Untermeyer, brother of Sam Untermeyer, a prominent lawyer; Anton Eilers, the builder and owner of the great Eilers Smelter in Leadville, which was consolidated with the American Smelting & Refining Company; Henry R. Wolcott, retried capitalist; and R. P. Lounsbury, a New York broker and son-in-law of J. B. Higgins, one of the owners of the Homestake gold mine.

Through my wife, Colonel Bean was given to understand that my accomplishments as an expert mining man were legion and that without my assistance the Ajos would not amount to a hill of prairie dogs, and so impressed was the genial colonel with my capabilities that he sent me a wire asking if I would take the job of superintendent of the Ajos. This I accepted promptly, and in a few days, accompanied by my wife, I arrived at the Ajo camp to start operations.

My crew at Ajo consisted of an assortment of I.W.W.'s Yaki Indians, renegade Mexicans, and two Americans. Communication with Gila Bend, some forty miles away, was maintained by two mules and a buckboard, driven by a local character known as the "Arkansas Traveler," a title acquired by virtue of his naïve curiosity and stupendous gall. He would carry no letters without first tearing off the corners, and his inquisitiveness sometimes extended to reading the contents. Tom Childs, who had a cattle ranch adjoining the Ajos, told him to inquire for his mail on one occasion, as he had sent in a mountain lion's pelt to the state treasurer and expected a check for the bounty. On the return of the buckboard, Tom asked Arkansas if he had a letter for him. Arkansas said: "Yes, I have a letter for you, Tom," and felt in his pockets for the missive. "I guess I must have lost it; but anyhow, it was all about a lion's skin." Except for these little foibles he was a faithful fellow, but when I caught him reading a private communication from the company, I had to find another driver.

The supply of water in that arid desert was always a matter of concern to me at the Ajo camp. There was an incline tunnel in a wash, which was filled by rain when we had it, but it was usually dry and used as a cellar to store our food supplies. My sailor instincts detecting the indications of a coming storm one day, I advised my Irish cook to get the goods of the tunnel before the flood came. This he neglected to accomplish in time, and the tunnel began to fill with water. I

ordered him to get busy, but he sashayed with the reply, “Do you take me fur a submarine diver?” and I was minus a cook.

We had a hoisting plant on one of the shafts, and the water from this was sufficient for boiler purposes, but it was so strongly impregnated with copper that the tubes had to be replaced every six months. By condensing the steam from the boiler we were able to supply the boarding house with water. At the southern end of the claims was an excavation in the wash, twenty feet deep and about the same in diameter, which furnished water for the saloon camp that had inevitably been established outside our sidelines. This “well” water was greatly relished by the denizens of the neighborhood, who assured me of its wholesomeness, adding, “There’s some body to that water!” In order to avert an epidemic I had the whole cleaned out, and among the curiosities hoisted was a variety of Mexican saddles, skeletons of coyotes, snakes, and the decomposed carcass of a burro.

While we are on the subject, I might mention a trip taken during my sojourn at Ajo with a visiting engineer who wished to inspect the Harqua Halar Mines, located about sixty miles from Ajo. We traveled in a light spring buckboard, and carried only a small tank of water, as I planned to reach the mine on the second day from Ajo. All went well until we sprang a leak in the water tank, and my companion suggested that we branch off to the south, where there was water in the Aqua Dosia Mountains. There was no choice in the matter, so we pointed the mules to the well, which was twenty miles off our route. When nearing the well we met a prospector with his burros, and asked if there was water in the Aqua Dosia well. He replied that there was plenty of it, and that all we had to do was to “shove that Mexican who was floating in it to one side, and get all we wanted.” And that is what we found, the body of a man floating in the well face downward; also a coyote, which in its desire for a drink had leaned too far over the rim of the hole and tumbled in. The water was not particularly appetizing, but quenched our thirst and that of the mules, after which we put a plug in the tank to stop the leak and filled it to the brim. We did not salvage the Mexican or the coyote!

The climate of the Ajos is warm and dry, and the nights, cooled by the breeze from the Gulf of California, are delightful. In the summer the days are intensely hot, and several times I crossed the desert with the thermometer at 128º in the shade, while the water in the tank behind almost reached the boiling point. The great desert, which, while it possesses neither a Sphinx nor a pyramid, nor a Muslim, Arab, or camel, is rich in varied fascinations, which one could never imagine to exist upon such an arid waste.

The moment the sun is up - and he is no laggard there – intense heat prevails. The air pulsates with it. The sun, accompanied by the hot winds, scorches one’s bones, blisters the flesh, creates boiling water in his canteen, cooks eggs, and does all manner of extraordinary stunts. The sagebrush, mesquite ironwood, and cacti are all as dry as the sandy arroyos. Then the dazzling and glaring day passes, and the sun like molten gold disappears. A marvelous transition comes over the desert. A cooling freshness permeates the air. The refulgent light is merged into an almost supernatural beauty. The Western horizon blazes with glory, and the wonderful rainbow sky of Arizona entrances us. All around the edge of the heavens, encompassing the entire horizon from where the sun had gone down and back again, there is a gorgeous rainbow of every prismatic shade.

Twilight is of brief duration in a tropical climate, and suddenly the sky turns and quivers with the marvelous constellations. They look as if one could reach up and grasp all the planets like so many jewels and bring them down to earth. But between sundown and the blossoming of the stars a most incredible transition takes place, which is to that part of the world what the Aurora Borealis is to the North. Often we would take seats out of doors, as if in a theatre and the same intent – to watch the transition scenes enacted by the peculiar tropical atmosphere, which, strange to say, I have never heard described. George Elbert Purr, in his exquisite etchings of Arizona, has caught the spirit of the desert. You have all beheld transformation scenes upon the stage, where the magnificent filmy curtains, fine as gossamer, ascend and descend, and each revelation exceeds the other in splendor.

For months in this part of Arizona the sky is cloudless, but when there is a storm, Nature works miracles. Upon one occasion, my wife and I were returning to our camp from Gila Bend, forty miles away. It was early morning, and the atmosphere was enchantingly and marvelously blue, of the liquid radiance and brilliance of a zircon. There was a felling of unreality, as if we were in Fairyland. We had traveled thirty-five miles when the sky suddenly became overcast. Deep indigo clouds of surpassing beauty began to gather. The sun fled; the wind became a hurricane. The air grew cold, and the lightening blazed across the sky with dazzling forks of electricity, plunging into the ground on every side of us. Then came the cloudburst, and we were overwhelmed with water that came in endless sheets until it reached the horses' knees. Part of the top and sides of the carriage, together with our canteens and other articles, flew with the winds. We were wet to the bone; our teeth chattered, and we would not speak. Momentarily we expected death in one from or another – from the lightning or the wind, or, if we escaped that, from being drowned when we reached the arroyos we had to cross before reaching Ajo.

Night came with intense darkness, save when Illuminated by lightning, and we had raging rivers to ford, for the arroyos that had looked so guileless ordinarily now were tremendous, turbid, roaring, dangerous torrents, and the water cold as ice. Our horses partly swam and then touched the ground, while the water overflowed the floor of the carriage. On the sand dunes we could almost fancy hearing the rattlesnakes shaking their rattles in the bushes as we crossed. When at last we saw the lights of the little settlement and knew that we were safe, our emotions were mixed with relief over our escape from danger and a felling of awe and exultation over having witnessed nature in the grandeur of her angry mood.

With morning the storm was over, and the desert bloomed and sparkled like a garden. The ashen earth, devoid of vegetation in the way of grass or flowers, was at once covered with the most delicate and fragile blossoms, like the field of Ardath. The cacti, so weird, uncanny, and varied, grotesque in shape, fantastic beyond description, was covered with blossoms of brilliant hue, and rain-washed in the cool of the morning assumed a new dignity and meaning. In the desert, nature performs marvels whenever a few drops of rain fall from the passing clouds upon the fertile soil.

Chapter XXVIII

From the days of 1859 the Ajo mines have been producers of copper. Hi Golly, a Greek who did odd jobs about the camp, told me that he had come to Arizona with a herd of camels and packed copper to California for many years. The veins were small but rich, and no two openings had the same form of mineral. None of the shafts were more than seventy feet deep. The deepest had a streak of calcite studded with native copper the size of a pea; another shaft had copper glance or chalcocite; still another had red oxide; but the best showing was in the shaft were I put the hoist. There, after the hole had been deepened below the old workings, I found a streak of bornite and glance that produced several carloads of ore yielding 63% of the red metal. This was hauled over the desert in wagons to Deming and sold to the sampler there. A drip of water, blue in color, from the back of one of the drifts, was productive of almost pure copper when it fell upon the iron scrap. The formation on the surface was a soft porphyry, well saturated with the copper solutions, but that was only the secondary excretion of the vast bodies of sulphides that underlay the whole mass.

Barney Barnatto, the South African diamond king, was approached as likely to finance the project on a large scale, and he sent Charles Roelker, the chief engineer for the Chartered Company of South Africa, to make an examination, but the grade of ore was just below his limit and he turned the proposition down. That was before the day of "porphyry copper'" and no process had yet been invented for the successful reduction of low-grade ores. It was owing to the sagacity of Karl Eilers and his sterling qualities as a geologist and mining engineer that the values of the great Ajo copper deposit was demonstrated to the world. Mr. Eilers, who was an official of the American Smelting & Refining Company, came to the Ajos to study the geological conditions prevailing around that ancient volcanic crater out in the middle of the desert and decide whether there was a real mine there. Together we selected sites for four shafts, which were sunk to a depth of one hundred feet each, and these four pits have since proved the existence of a mineral deposit that has produced hundreds of millions of dollars in copper. Since then has come the transformation of that barren spot, on which was nothing but cactus and greasewood, into a thriving young city, modern to the Nth degree, including business houses, hospitals, churches, schools, hotels, theaters, parks, and fine residences, a water system that is the envy of every town in Southern Arizona, and a railroad connected with the Southern Pacific at Gila Bend, forty miles away.

The job of managing an outfit of misfits, renegades, and bandits forty miles from nowhere and getting a reasonable day's work from them was not altogether a sinecure. The Mexicans would demand high wages, and by working two days would make enough to keep a family of ten children for two weeks, so they would quit work and spend most of their time lolling around their adobe huts. The Yaki Indians were by far the best workers, as every payday they had me send their wages to their people in Sonora to buy arms with which to fight the Mexican government, and for this reason they were always broke and anxious to hold their jobs. This set an example to the others, which engendered a fierce antagonism. However, should a grievance arise, they all banded together against the common enemy – the management.

Colonel Bean, the manager, was seldom at the camp, as it was necessary for him to give his time to the financing of the work and other activities of the syndicate. Mr. Ward, the chair-

man of the group, was very prompt in forwarding the pay roll to Bean, but in those days of uncertain transportation the money did not always arrive on time at the camp. This would cause a hullabaloo and give the radical element an opportunity to stir up trouble. On one occasion when the pay roll was behind time, a stick of dynamite with a lighted fuse attached was thrown into the assay office, but no one was present and the damage was confined to the destruction of the assay furnace and chemicals.

My wife and I had a house separate from the rest of the camp. The building rested on posts as a protection from snakes, Gila monsters, and other reptiles. A delayed pay roll had aroused the anger of the I. W. W.'s, and one morning as I emerge from the house I observed a thin line of smoke coming from the spot under the house above which our bed was located. I walked over to it and saw that it was a lighted fuse, which I jerked out from a bundle of six sticks of powder wrapped in burlap. In another minute the house would have been blown to atoms with my wife in it. I was never able to locate the dastard who had intended to murder us in our bed.

The most trying time at the Ajos was when the whole force went on strike for more pay and shorter hours. The pay roll was also behind, which added to the dissatisfaction. The men were in an ugly mood, drinking heavily at the saloon tent, and word was sent to me of the dire threats they were making. Fortunately there were no firearms in the camp, or an attack would have been made that night.

The following morning, as my wife and I were walking over to the cookhouse for breakfast, the crew came around the corner of the house and blocked the way. I told them stand aside. The spokesman, one of the most rabid of the I. W. W.'s, said: "Where is our money?"

I answered: "Why worry about your money? The mail will soon be here and then you will be paid off!"

"We don't propose to wait any longer! Come on, boys!" they all shouted in unison, and closed in on me. One of the Mexicans produced a lariat and flung the loop over my head. Another tried to tie my hands, but I frustrated him. Pushing and dragging me toward the head frame of the mineshaft, they fastened the lariat to the sheave wheel above and evidently intended to drop me into the hole.

My wife rushed in among them and pleaded for my life, explaining to them that I was only an agent and should not be held responsible for their troubles. This had not occurred to them, and the argument seemed to have some weight. The gang began to argue among themselves, and I saw that my wife's pleading had erected a split, the outcome of which was in doubt when the crunching of wheels was heard coming up the canyon. With the coming of the buckboard I was released, and I lost no time in going through the mail sack. Fortunately the money for the pay roll was there, and I fired each one as he reached for his money.

While waiting for a new crew of men, I did some prospecting on the desert and found that the mineralization was not confined to the Ajo crater. The formation looked good to me and I made one location on what appeared to be an exceptionally rich piece of ground. I did not proceed with its development, however, but a company several years later opened up a producing mine at that spot.

On one of these prospecting trips I went out into the desert with another engineer, traveling in a light spring buggy drawn by two horses. At nightfall we made our camp, and tried out a recipe we had heard of to keep the snakes by tying our hair lariats together and running it around

our camp. The theory was that the snakes would not cross the scratchy rope. Then we spread our blankets on the ground and rolled up together. Our sleep was undisturbed until the wee sma' hours, when I felt a heavy lump of something between us which was slowly moving. I was awake in an instant and threw back the blankets, yelling "Hey! There is a rattler in the bed." My companion leaped out, and we looked around for a club, but before we found one the snake had uncoiled and wriggled off into the brush. We spent the rest of the night in the spring buckboard.

The flies at the Ajo boarding house were legion. Everything was covered with wire screens, yet they would get into the food while we were in the act of eating it. The scorpions and tarantulas would crawl along the rafters and drop down on one's plate; then scamper off with a mouthful, much to the disgust of the diner and the despair of the cook. Armies of ants, both red and black, were always on the march in front of my house. Trapdoor spiders seemed to be their meat, for they were usually transporting to their barracks, in sections, a spider, which had probably been disabled by a scorpion. On one occasion they had captured a small tarantula, and if a moving picture could have been taken of that battle, showing the neat and scientific was in which they overwhelmed the big insect, then jauntily dissected the monster, and ended in a victory parade conducted in precise military order, it would have been the prize feature of the year.

A few Gila monsters made their habitat in the district, and sidewinders, king, and rattlesnakes were plentiful. The king snakes would dart between one's feet with lightning swiftness, but they are harmless and we encouraged them because they are death to the rattlers.

Colonel Bean was a connoisseur in rattlesnakes, and one day as we were riding together on muleback to Gila bend, I saw a large rattler coiled on a bank beside the road, and called his attention to it. I always had an aversion for snakes, no matter what the breed, and was for keeping on our way.

"Hold on!" cried the colonel. "I want that snake. I promised a friend in Phoenix I would bring him one!"

Dismounting so as not to disturb the reptile, the old gentleman cut a forked stick, and moving closer began to manipulate the switch over the snake until it uncoiled, when he got the forked end over its neck, pinning it to the ground. Then he reached down, and running his hand along its back, grasped the rattler behind the fork. Straightening up, with the snake writing and thrashing about, and winding about his wrist, he came over to where I was standing and shoved its head close to my face. As I sprang back he shouted: "Isn't he a beauty?"

I was too disgusted to express any admiration for the reptile, but nevertheless unstrapped a pair of overalls from my saddle, tied up the bottom of a leg with a shoelace, and the old fellow dropped it in. This impromptu sack was tied on behind the colonel, and we pursued our way. We nearly lost the rattler though, for on looking behind I saw that the string had loosened and about a foot of the snake's tail was hanging out and flopping against the mule's belly with the movement of the animal. Bean dismounted and shook the snake back where it belonged, tying it up more securely. Later he presented it to his admiring friend without any further mishap.

Later on in the year the option on the Ajo came due, but the syndicate declined to exercise it, and we closed down. The land lay idle for several years. Then came the discovery of a method of treating low grade copper ores; the old Ajos became the New Cornelia; and the dream of my old manager that the property would one day become the greatest copper mine in Arizona has been fully realized, although the old colonel did not live long enough to see it.

Chapter XXIX

With the closing of the Ajo, I was summoned to New York for consultation with Mr. Ward, the leading spirit of our syndicate. On my arrival, I was asked to make an examination of a gold mine near Halifax, Nova Scotia, This was very agreeable to me, as I had always wanted to visit the northern part of the country and inspect the operation of their mines. The property I was to examine lay about eighteen miles from Halifax, and the owner of the mine accompanied me from New York.

We took the New York Central to Boston, a steamer to Halifax, a slow train, and finally a long drag in a spring wagon to reach the mine. We stopped for the night at a farmhouse, and I was in shape for a hearty meal and a good night's sleep. The farmhouse was surrounded by a stone wall topped with broken glass bottles, and flower beds all about. The house was of red brick, and the walls were covered with a heavy growth of ivy. Half-opened lattices peeped through the greenery at intervals, and a massive stone chimney reared its crest above the roof. The farmer and his wife were English and very cordial in their welcome. Of course I was more than pleased to see the interior of a cottage that reminded me so vividly of the old country. We were hungry, and as we sat in the cozy room with the big logs glowing in the open fireplace, a tankard of old ale beside us, and the odor of a pot roast to tickle our nostrils, I for one felt at peace with the whole world.

The next morning a ride of two miles in the spring wagon took us to the mine, and for the rest of the afternoon I explored the drifts and shafts, crawled through the stopes, and chipped samples of the gold bearing rock from the vein. I also panned the fine sands and gave the mine much more than the usual inspection. The day passed quickly, and it was long after dark before our buggy left us at a hotel on one of the streets of Halifax leading down to the waterfront. The steamer carried me to Boston the following morning, and I was soon back in New York with my bags of samples and notes for an elaborate report.

When I returned to the Mills Building, a commission awaited me to go to Old Mexico to examine and report on some mining properties which the syndicate had been operating for some time with indifferent success. Two of these mines were in the state of Durango.

The Mine Grande near Torreon was the first one visited, and then the Purissima in the southern part of the state. Neither justified the expenditure that was being made upon them, so on my unfavorable report the syndicate closed them down and gave them to the superintendents as presents. The third mine was situated near the Pacific Coast and was called the San Francisco. To reach this mine meant a long horseback ride from Durango, with a pack train carrying the supplies. We passed through Santiago Papasquiero (which in English means "St. James, some potatoes") and spent a night at Topia, where I went through the Peria Mine, which had one of the most continuous and uniform veins of galena ore I have ever seen. The drift was 1400 meters in length, with a solid streak of lead ore the entire distance and assaying high in silver. It was offered to me for $20,000 Mexican money, which was a wonderful bargain, and I wired my syndicate to buy it, but they refused. Two years later I saw an item in a mining journal that La Perla at Topia had been sold to an English company for $900,000 in gold.

From Topia we descended from the great Mexican, plateau into a nest of foothills, where we found the San Francisco Mine perched on a ridge overlooking the Pacific and close to a vil-

lage of the same. There had been but little work done on the claim, although the vein showed a large body of chalcopyrite, which in a more accessible location would be pay ore.

The men of the village were an ugly lot and seemed to resent my presence. They carried guns around with them, and followed my every movement. I was something of a shot myself, having won several prizes at the shooting ranges of the British navy. To show them a sample of my skill I put on a shooting exhibition. My companion would toss tomato cans and bottles into the air, and my bullets would invariably hit the mark. After that their courtesy knew no bounds, but I still suspected the place to be more of a bandit's hideout than a modest mining camp. This property too was abandoned on my recommendation to the syndicate, and then I took the return trails.

Soon after my return to the city of Durango, I received a visit from a Señor Gonzales, who said he represented the governor of the State of Puebla; that he knew of my reputation as a mining engineer; and that he wished to interest me in procuring capital for the governor's mine. He said that the property was situated near Zapotitlan, in the state of Puebla; that it had not less than 100,000 tons of 14% copper ore in sight; and that he would guarantee not only my expenses but that his statements were absolutely correct. This appearing to be a reasonable proposition, I telegraphed Mr. Ward in New York for permission to make the trip, and he wired back to go ahead.

My wife was then visiting in Washington and I sensed a pleasant experience for her, so I wired her to come with me. We met at San Antonio, Texas, and together took the train for Mexico City, where we stopped at the Hotel Iturbide, a very old and historic hostelry. We did not find it extremely comfortable. It was early in the spring and the weather was cold, especially at night. Our room was unusually large and there was no way to heat it. On the center table was a huge coal-oil lamp, and this we proceeded to burn all the time. Each of the four corners of our room was adorned with a cuspidor. There was also one on each side of the bed - in fact, all the houses are profusely decorated with them, as every one bows to Lady Nicotine. The maids who did the chamber work were men, who were not particular in their vocation.

There was no cafe connected with the hotel, so we foraged around for our meals. The restaurants were very inferior in character, and decidedly unattractive. The cooking was poor and not at all appetizing. However, we made some discoveries and managed to sustain life. There is a fire-and-brimstone quality about the food in Mexico that would blister the internal organs of a salamander.

Mexico City itself is interesting. Only a few motorcars had up to that time made their appearance, but the carriages of the aristocracy were drawn by the most beautiful horses in the world. The drives and parks about the city are most charming. The quaint and ancient cathedrals, the old palatial dwellings with the inevitable patio, with the Castle of Chapultepec over towering the city from its eminence, give the scene an atmosphere quite in line with its antiquity.

My arrangements included an excursion to the mining property with the two sons of Governor Saltillo, one a member of the Mexican Congress and the other a doctor, both of whom made their homes in the city. They met us at the appointed time, and we took the train, which runs between Mexico City and Vera Cruz. Fifty miles east we changed to a narrowing jerkwater road which ran north, and after twenty-five miles of slow travel we arrived at a peon hamlet, from which we were to take saddle horses for a thirty-five mile ride to the mine.

It was dusk when we alighted at the station, and the landlord of the "hotel" where we were to stop met and escorted us to the edifice. The sign "Hotel Zaragossa" was so immense that it covered the entire building, but the hotel was a small shanty with no windows. Ushered into our bedchamber, we found it small, cold as ice, with a coal-oil can half full of charcoal for a stove, which we lost no time in starting. The furniture consisted of two iron cots opposite each other, with no sheets and only a single blanket on each, a clumsy table with a washbowl, a tiny pitcher half full of water, one wooden chair, and the usual complement of cuspidors. This cozy boudoir was of course without windows.

The landlady was dumpy woman of Spanish origin; the landlord a Mexican, tall and brigandish, who wore the tightest of trousers, the brightest of striped blankets around his shoulders, and a huge sombrero. The chef was a filthy squaw, and the food – well, it was commensurate with the surrounding.

We awoke to see the rain in a downpour, and not wishing to subject my wife to such weather, we agreed that she should remain while I made the trip to the mine.

A party of horsemen gathered together by the Señors Saltillo were to accompany us as an escort. The riders were political adherents of the governor, and eager to do him honor. At the first village I telephoned back to my wife, telling of our progress, while the escort, now being joined by additional riders, were regaling themselves with liquid and other refreshments, of which there was an abundance. When we left that village our little army had increased to sixty-men.

The weather had cleared, and another fifteen miles brought us to Chalito, a larger town, almost a city, with cathedrals, town halls, quaint dwelling surrounded by orange trees loaded with fruit, coffee bushes in bloom, and flowers everywhere. A banquet hall, large enough to accommodate the entire escort, had been prepared by the local politicos, and the tables were spread with a lunch that included the choicest of wines and cigars. Such munificence was a revelation to me, as it was my first experience with Mexican hospitality.

Another squadron was added to our party at this place, so that we now tallied up an escort of one hundred and fifty men. The road led to the summit of a low range of hills, from the top of which we looked down upon the Valley of Zapotitlan. I thought this scene was the most beautiful in Mexico. The valley was enclosed by two spurs from the main range, and was probably four miles across, through which a rippling, silvery river extended as far as the eye could reach. Arched bridges spanned the stream at intervals, wherever a hacienda appeared, and the entire country was in bloom with fruit orchards, coffee plantations, and banana fields, providing a setting that was a delight to the eye.

Along the floor of the valley, paralleling the river, was a wide roadway paved with cobblestone, and in the distance I saw another cavalcade of horsemen coming in our direction. It was Governor Saltillo of the State of Puebla, with his escort. We met, and after our greetings were over, we joined his cavalry. It was quite a company that cantered into the city of Zapotitlan, eight horses abreast, with the governor at the head and myself at the right. As we rode up the band in the Plaza struck up “The Washington Post” march. It was a remarkable reception and could not have been improved upon had I been prince of royal degree.

Halting in front of a long building, a mozo sprang to my horse’s head; another took my foot from the stirrup and assisted me to alight. I was conducted to a small house where an apartment had been prepared. One mozo served as a valet; another brought in hot water for a bath.

Refreshments were placed on the table, and I was left alone. Reflecting on the wonderful journey and my reception, I deeply regretted having left my wife behind in that dismal Zaragossa shack while I was having the time of my life.

Soon an escort called upon me to join the Governor at a banquet in the great hall where we had halted our arrival. The party was already seated at the long tables, while I, as the guest of honor, was next to the governor. The food was deliciously cooked and served, and here I learned that to enjoy real Mexican cooking one has to be entertained by one of the Old Spanish grandes, below Mexico City. Wine flowed and the choicest cigars were handed around, while the Mexicans expounded their political views until near midnight, when Señor Saltillo invited me to a seat on the Plaza, where the band had been playing the entire evening. The bandmaster asked me if I could suggest something for them to play, and I mentioned a few selections, which they immediately rendered. I retired to my apartment shortly afterwards, and a mozo slept outside my door on guard.

The next morning, after breakfast, I took a walk about town. It was a quaint old place, full of interest and none of the squalor that one sees in the towns further north. The people were clean looking, and while there were no such things as modern conveniences, the houses looked neat and well kept. Each home had its little garden and orchard, and the walks were lined with flowers. The governor's home was not palatial in size, but it was a two-story building set in a commodious patio enclosing artistic fountains and beautiful gardens.

The whole town turned out to see us as we prepared to go to the mines, which were three miles away. In addition to the governor and myself, only twenty-five of the party went with us. At the mine a brush house had been prepared, fully furnished, and with kitchen arrangements equal to any in the country. I was eager to see the mine, and acquainted the governor with my desire, but he said mañana would be time enough, and I must rest. There was nothing to do but put in the time the best I could. The same excuse was offered the next day, but on the third day I insisted on seeing the mine or else I would have to leave. This brought acquiescence on the part of the governor, and I climbed down the ladder to the workings.

What I saw was a great disappointment to me. Instead of a vein of ore, there was exposed a quarry of barren rock which had been excavated beside a ledge that formed a wall, and on a beach was a small mound of copper ore that I could have put in my Gladstone bag. About a hundred feet away was a tunnel, from which peons were carrying baskets of white muck, which I examined and found to be quite innocent of any mineral content. With effort I disguised my chagrin while I pretended to be pleased with the proposition. I reasoned that while the governor and his sons appeared to be gentlemen, yet I was a lone American far from civilization, and the zeal of the rest of the crowd might be put to the test of it were known that I was going to turn down their chief's mine.

The rest of the day I prowled around the estate, chipping off pieces of the different rocks, taking photographs, one of which showed the governor and several others with outstretched arms showing the width of the "deposit," and making every effort in my power to discover something which would make it possible for me to conscientiously give a favorable report to my syndicate.

The evening was spent much the same as the others, dinner lasting to nine o'clock, and the interval before bedtime filled with wine and cigars. The next was again a day of rest. The old cry of "Mañana" seemed to be a chronic affliction, and no amount of argument had any effect.

They could not understand that time was any object to me, and "tempo fugit" had no place in their lexicon. We finally got into the saddle again, and with many "Adios, Señors" we bade farewell to Zapotitlan. On the way back I had much the experience as in coming, leaving the sections of my army in each town as I passed through.

My wife had not been having a very gay time during my absence, and had this story to tell me: "After you left and the rain had subsided, I took a walk through the village. As I passed along the street every man I met absolutely swept the earth with his sombrero, for there is an old-time grace about these vagabonds and an air of great gallantry. The houses of the village are low huts, where one has to double up like a jackknife to enter. I went about making friends among the poor, ignorant people, uttering a few Spanish words and listening to their excited replies, of which I understand not a word.

"Not being a bat, and since there is no window in my room, I have been compelled to leave the door open in order to see. The women have congregated there to watch me make my toilet. They shyly enter sometimes and handle loving my hat, gloves and wearing apparel. They all call me "Señorita," as they do not think I have any "esposo" because I have been alone. No American woman unaccompanied has ever stopped here; hence I am as good as a circus, and they regard me with curiosity. One of the station agents has become alarmingly attentive and pursues me everywhere with a Spanish-English conversation book, which he gravely consults when he attempts to address me.

"The dirt that I must have devoured while here is appalling. The "kitchen" adjoins my room, and the "stove" consists of an excavation in the dirt floor with a hole in the roof through which the smoke is supposed to escape. Here on a flat rock they make the tortillas and totopos, and toast them amid smoke and grime. Huevos frietos, frijoles, and other atrocious concoction, together with café con leche, have formed my diet. Upon seeing a dog lapping a drink from the water pail that is used by the family, I insisted that the water be thrown out and a fresh substituted. This caused them to laugh, as it seemed funny to see me so particular.

"Your return is hailed with joy, I assure you! I have been here six days and it seems like six centuries, I have nearly forgotten how to speak English in struggling for so long to make myself understood in Spanish, and all night I have murmured "Muy frio! Muy frio!"

The next morning we left the city of Zaragossa. The dumpy landlady embraced my wife; the landlord embraced me; the squaw cook chattered some kind of jargon most feelingly; and the entire population escorted us to the station. There my wife's admirer, the station agent, took leave of her. He hung on to the platform of the car until his neck was endangered when he jumped off, and the last we saw of him was a dark, frantic figure waving his sombrero and crying, "Adios, Señora! Adios, Señora!"

On our arrival in Mexico City, I wrote the governor a letter, giving him a copy of my report of my examination of his mine, and regretting my inability to interest my friends in its financing. On account of the royal treatment which he accorded me, I felt my situation to be somewhat difficult, and I made no attempt to collect the guarantee.

Having nothing further to detain me in Mexico, my wife and I began our return to the States by easy stages, stopping in Durango, Torreon, Agua Caliente, and finally reaching the border at El Paso we boarded the Southern pacific and in due time reached New York.

Chapter XXX

The quickest way to open up a new country is to make a discovery of gold there. No matter where it is, be it around the North Pole or in the interior of Africa, the prospector will do the rest. This was exemplified in the Klondyke craze, the rush to Nome, and the frenzied excitement on the Copper River in 1898, the latter did not prove so wide or rich a field as the others, and its gold boom faded. The excitement was revived by the copper discoveries in 1900, both on the coast and in the interior of Alaska.

During the winter of 1900, while we were still in New York, my syndicate obtained an option on some copper claims lying some two hundred miles in the interior north of Valdez, Alaska. They were owned by one Scotty Crawford, a Copper River prospector. It was arranged that as soon as the snow had gone in the spring, I should make an examination of the property. When May came around, I bade my wife goodbye in Washington, where she was visiting with her sister, and entrained for Seattle with no more preparation for the trip than if I were going to Arizona.

At Seattle, I secured passage on the "Elihu Thompson", a small steamer that had a mail contract. There were no other passengers on the boat, which was a leaky old tub that under no circumstances would be allowed to clear from an Eastern port. The captain was a veritable drunken sot whom the crew called "Bunny." I was given a bunk in the mate's cabin and took my meals in the fo'castle with the crew. We were to take the outside passage. The first night out, when off Port Townsend, Bunny was so drunk and his conning of the ship so peculiar that I protested to the mate and insisted that he drop anchor until morning, the mate agreed, and coaxing the skipper into his cabin where he dropped off to sleep, we anchored the boat in three fathoms of water and I felt safe for the night. The next morning the captain was duly sober. He expressed astonishment at finding his ship riding at anchor, and damned everybody for a lot of land lubbers as we got under weigh.

For seven days and nights we were buffeted by gales, during which we shipped seas that threatened to break the back of the old Elihu Thompson with each comber and kept the crew diligently at the pumps, until on the eighth day we entered Prince William Sound.

Prince William Sound is formed out of the eastern corner of the Gulf of Alaska, and the north-bound passenger drew a breath of relief when the steamer passed the long headland of Kyak and swept from the rough waters of the open sea into the quiet waters of the Sound Islands, large and small, dot the estuary, all covered with a dense growth of spruce timber with an undergrowth that defies the most hardy adventurer to penetrate. Excepting a few Indian villages, a fox farm, and a mining camp or two, the islands are mostly given up to the wild life of the region. On the mainland side there is unfolded to the view an expanse of towering peaks for hundreds of miles, outlining the coast range, most of them covered with snow, with great glaciers extending to the water's edge. A belt of timber reaching to timberline two thousand feet above sea level fringes the foot of the range, through which small inlets formed by mouths of rivers and the erosion of the sea form minute breaks in the coastline.

Passing through these waters we came to a narrow opening at the extreme eastern boundary of the Sound, through which the tide rushes with tremendous force. The walls on either side are vertical and smooth, and one standing in the waist of a ship can almost toss a biscuit (if they

haven't a dollar) to the shore on either side. The passage is about a half mile in length and opens into the great harbor of Valdez. This is one of the finest bodies of water in the known world, and from this landlocked bay Alaska could be defended from all the navies of Europe. Great mountains rise into the clouds all around, and little side bays through which glaciers sweep down in awesome magnificence nestle behind coves and inlets. Rushing streams pour their torrents down the Mountainsides, and some of them have since been harnessed to furnish lights and power for the town and surrounding mines. The town of Valdez is situated in the extreme northern corner of Valdez Bay.

On that June morning the sun was rising over the Valdez glacier as the steamer slid into the mud bank that skirts the town at low tide. With the lowering of the gangway, leaving my baggage to be brought off later, I stepped off into the mud of the tide flat and picked my way to dry land.

Valdez was only a village at that time, but it had many of the creature comforts that had been a stranger to me on the boat. There was a large merchandise store, a jeweler's shop, two restaurants, a number of saloons, and one dance hall. The mail boat came twice a month, and there was talk of another steamer coming with a big load of passengers. Several new buildings were in process of construction, and with the expectation of a boom coming the people were preparing for it.

During the day I met Pete Cashman, a relic of the days of '98. By reason of his having fallen through an ice bridge covering a crevasse on the Shoup Glacier, he had acquired the cognomen of "Glacier Pete." He had also made several excursions into the interior, so I employed him as guide to pilot me as far as the Copper River. With two saddle horses and two horses for packing the camp outfit and supplies which I collected at Valdez, we took the Abercrombie trail, which was in the making just then and had been completed along the bank of the Lowe River to the top of the coast range, which is known as Thompson's Pass. For fourteen miles the route lay along the river flat, and although it was covered with a heavy growth of spruce timber we made good time. The river bottom then closed into a deep canyon, which the stream had scored through the foothills to the main range. It was called Keystone Canyon, and was too narrow for a trail by the aide of the river, so a pathway was made above it. From the upper end of the canyon the river curves to the east and finds its source at the summit of a low pass which overlooks the Copper River, while the trail from the canyon maintains its northerly course and zigzags its way over Thompson's Pass, which is a thousand feet higher. This route was selected because of the impassability of the Copper River canyons.

We camped on the other side of the pass, where we found plenty of grass for the horses, but the mosquitoes were a torment. On the Valdez side of the range they were the size of a dragon fly and slow of movement, so that when they would land on a bare spot with their cold feet one would have time to brush them off before they prospected around and got their drills in operation. But with the army on the other side of the range, there was all the difference in the world. They were much smaller and came in clouds; got in one's ears, eyes, and nose. We had to scan every mouthful of food and scare off a dozen or so or they would surely go in with the morsel. There was nothing slow about them either! They would sting as they landed. The sleeping tent was not much protection so we got very little sleep that night and were up and off at daybreak, which in that country at that time of year was soon after midnight.

Four days of travel through narrow valleys, open marshes, deep morass, occasional grassland, and patches of timber, brought us to the Tonsina River, which we followed down for a few miles to where it joined the Copper. The trail had ended at the Tonsina, and from there on it was anybody's choice. Here Pete experienced a siege of "cold feet" and decided to turn back in the morning.

We put up the mosquito tent on the bank of the river, and it was not long before we had a visit from Copper River Charley, whose wicky-up could be seen in the distance. The old buck was a Copper River Indian, and he lived in the wicky-up with his squaw, a son and two daughters, Mabel and Minnie. Outside his domicile could be seen the usual fish line strung between two trees, decorated with split salmon hung out to dry. He was accompanied by his family, as well as an aroma of fish that was far from appetizing. It was apparent that Saturday night was unknown to them!

These Copper River Indians have not received any assistance analogous to their cousins of the United States from the federal government, and they live in poverty and squalor that the American Indians would regard with contempt. Their clothing is nondescript, mostly depending upon the generosity of the white man, and none know the luxury of the furs of the Eskimos, being content with bare feet and legs so long as they can have a blanket around their necks.

While we were preparing supper, the Indian group squatted down and watched the process with great interest. When we had finished the meal, Mabel emptied the coffee grounds from our breakfast pot into a tomato can she was carrying, then added the tea leaves from the meal we had just finished, and scraped the bacon grease from the frying pan into the mess, after which with her filthy paw she gravely mixed the concoction and whispered to me: "Bi'me by, hi yu soup!"

Early next morning Pete mounted his horse, wished me good luck, and trotted away up the Tonsina for Valdez. Copper River Charley agreed to transport me and my outfit across the river, so he and his boy loaded my belongings into his flat-bottomed boat, with the two of them at the oars and me in the stern holding the ropes which towed the horses behind, and we crossed without mishap. There I was deposited alone, with nothing but my map to guide me to Scotty Crawford's camp on the Kotsina River. I was one hundred miles from the coast, with three horses to take care of, but I thought to myself, "If McPherson of the Geological Survey could find his way through the country, I can."

For two days I followed McPherson's route as marked on the map, which took me northeast over divides, across rivers, and "nigger-head" flats. Those nigger-head flats are found all over this part of Alaska. They are great stretches of water-soaked moss with deep little ditches criss-crossing and cutting up the field into small squares like a checkerboard. They are difficult to negotiate on foot and almost impossible on horseback.

As the long days had already set in and the fear of darkness coming on meant nothing to me, I kept going the second day out until I emerged from the timber on to a plateau overlooking the headwaters of the Kotsina River. Below me were wide slopes on both sides, and with my binoculars I scanned the landscape for a glimpse of Scotty's camp, but there was nothing in sight. Taking A chance that he was somewhere in the neighborhood, I fired several shots from my automatic, but no reply was heard. The grass was abundant, so I dismounted and left my horses to graze while I worked around the point of the mountain on my right into another open basin,

and there I found a tent but no Scotty. I deducted that this must be his camp, and yet if it were, where were the samples of ore that a prospector always accumulates around his bed? All I found was a bandanna handkerchief full of float pebbles, some of copper ore, but most of them almost barren. Scotty had described his mine to be a vein of copper glance, with hundreds of tons in sight, and his price was the modest sum of $50,000! I figured that if he had any ore at all, some of it would be lying around his camp.

While I was meditating over these matters and trying not to be prematurely disappointed, Scotty appeared on the scene. I listened to his story and then said: "Scotty, you have told me where your claims are. Now take me to the best showing you have!"

I followed him two miles to the head of the basin, and he pointed out to me a split in the greenstone with a knife-blade streak of chalcocite on one of the wills. I then realized that my journey had been another of those will-o'the-wisp hunts that crowd the life of every mining engineer!!

Chapter XXXI

From Scotty Crawford I learned that a rich strike of copper ore had been made near Kennicott Glacier, and that I was within seventy miles of the discovery. Having come thus far, I determined to see what there was in the country. Wishing Scotty good luck, I returned to the horses and camped for the night. The next morning I spent several hours rounding up the horses and packing, and it was late before I started out.

My course lay over the Kotsina divide, across the Kuskalina to Lakina, and from there up the Copper River I had no trail to follow, but was told that there would be one after I left the Lakina River. My saddle horse was a spirited animal, and for some reason I changed him for one of the pack animals that day, which action probably saved my life. We had been crossing some swampy ground, and I turned my horse's head up a steep hill to get away from it. As the horse made the turn, with his forelegs up the ascent, his hind feet sank into the morass and he fell over on his back with my right leg under. Had it been my regular horse he would have struggled and thrashed about and probably injured me, but fortunately this animal lay still, and when I saw that he had quieted down I said gently, "Get up, Moore," and he rose without giving me a scratch. I was then entirely alone one hundred and twenty-five miles from Valdez, and had I suffered a broken leg my body would have been lying there yet.

In due time we reached the Kuskalina Glacier. At first glance I thought it was a muddy river flowing down from a great cloudburst, the surface resembling a choppy sea. The valley at this point was probably a mile wide, and was completely filled with enormous masses of ice, the sides rising straight up a hundred feet or so. It was necessary to cross this monster or else make a detour of many miles, so I found a place where I could lead the horses to the top and managed to make the crossing by following the riffles and dodging the big waves of ice, From this ice sea I descended and wandered about as though I were lost, but I followed an old Indian trail leading over a meadow of nigger heads for many miles until I reached the Lakina River, which was running over the banks.

It was late in the day and I was tempted to camp for the night In order to get some rest before attempting the ordeal of crossing the swollen river. The warm sun had been melting the ice of glaciers during the day, and water was running everywhere. However, as I had none too much food to carry me through this detour on my way back to Valdez, it was necessary to make as many miles as possible during the daylight hours.

My horses had hardly entered the river when one of the pack animals stumbled against s boulder. The horses were tailed together, and when one went down the others followed suit. Instantly we were all floundering in the torrent. I slipped out of the saddle and turned my animal loose. The water was up to my waist and I had difficulty in keeping my feet, but I managed to work my way to one of the pack horses which was struggling to get to his feet with the heavy pack dragging him down, and resting his head on a boulder to keep his muzzle above water I loosened the pack and managed to toss the packages to the bank. The other horses were able to regain their feet without assistance.

As the river would be lower in the morning, I decided to camp there and dry out my provisions and clothes, and soon I had a rousing fire going. Being so far north, it was daylight

twenty-two hours and -twilight two hours more, so I was early in the saddle and successfully negotiated the river.

Twenty miles down the Lakina, which is a good day's travel in Alaska, I came in view of the Copper River, bordered by a wide expanse of river bottom covered with timber, and reached what appeared to be a camping place where I stopped. There I found a big blazed tree which bore this information:

"Sixty- five miles to Tonsina
One hundred and fifty miles to Valdez
Forty miles to the Kennicott Pot Hole
God bless our home."

The Kennicott Pot Hole is the place of discharge for the melting waters of the Kennicott Glacier. The lower end of this body of ice forms a quarter circle, and the river coming down underneath the glacier under pressure boils up in the pothole like a turbulent cauldron. It is an awesome, fearsome, and dangerous spot. The surrounding wall of ice is eighty to one hundred feet high, which is another source of danger, as great masses of the clear blue ice break off from above from time to time and splash into the pool below.

The only way to cross over was by a narrow path, which had been cut around the edge close to the seething, roaring up burst. I dismounted and turned the horses loose. Then, watching my chance to cross between avalanches of falling ice, I led one animal along the narrow trail to a safe place. Returning, I did the same with the other horses, leading each one in turn across the icy precipice.

Three miles beyond, I reached the camp of the Bonanza Mine, soon to be famous. The Bonanza and Jumbo Mines, later to be absorbed under the name of the Kennicott Corporation, had been discovered only a few days before my visit by a party of grubstaked prospectors. They were supposed to have obtained the information leading to the staking of the deposit from Chief Nikolai of the Copper River Indians. Standing on one of the high ridges that abound in that section, the bright green color of the outcropping ore could be seen for miles, so that its discovery was a simple matter after once having obtained the direction.

The whole party numbered eleven men and these were grubstaked by eleven others, making twenty-two owners, all told. The shares were divided into smaller units, and the four who had located the mines were headed by Charles McClellan, who was the leader of the group. Stephen Birch, who later became the president of the great Kennicott Corporation, was there, at first only as a visitor like myself, but he had purchased one of the interests and was then a full-fledged partner. He was said to .be a relative of the Havemeyers, which seems to be borne out by the fact that the sugar men later on purchased all the other interests at prices running from $2,000 to $25,000.

No work had been done on the mine, for as a matter of fact none was needed save to put the ore in sacks and ship it to market. McClellan asked me for an estimate of the ore in sight, and I guessed six thousand tons. He also asked whether I would make an offer for the whole property, and being asked for a price he said it could be bought for about $200,000.

On my offering to mine and market the ore on a fifty-fifty basis, Mac said that if I would meet the whole party in Valdez when we come out, he thought a deal could be arranged, When I left, Birch became one of the party, and we each had packages of the ore. My samples assayed 76% copper and twenty ounces of silver to the ton, which meant a value at that time of $250 per ton.

On arrival at Valdez, I cabled ay syndicate a report of the find and recommended its purchase; but while they thought well of the mine they balked at the $20,000,000 railroad necessary to properly develop it. The Havemeyers completed their purchase, but for a year or more the mine lay idle, during which the Alaska Copper Company made a vigorous fight for its possession through the court, alleging that it was the source from which the grubstakes were supplied. It was also claimed that Major Abercrombie, the trail builder, had secured his interest by supplying army food to the discoverers. Be this as it may, the Havemeyers won their ease. Delamar, an Idaho mining man, sent his experts to appraise the Bonanza, but the railroad question was again the stumbling block. Finally the Guggenheims entered the field, and how the richest body of copper ore ever found on this continent was opened up in the Bonanza and Jumbo Mines, how the railroad was finally built up the Copper River from Cordova, the coal fields were opened up, and how the Kennicott Corporations became one of the foremost copper producers, is now current history. All of these enterprises were conducted in the face of almost unbelievable difficulties through the conservation activities of the government. Since then the consensus of opinion of the Alaska people has been. “Would that we had half a dozen Guggenheim companies!”

Chapter XXXII

The Northwest coastline of the North American continent is formed by a partly submerged range of mighty peaks. Up the coast of Canada and into Alaska, the ocean has poured in between these mountains, filling the valleys and following the canyons in long fjords of exquisite beauty. The Japan Current on its way north, not being able to escape into the Arctic Ocean through the narrow Bering Straits, swings east of the Aleutian Islands and follows the curve of the Gulf of Alaska, continuing southward down the coast. This warm currant brings a mild climate along the entire coast, with almost tropical vegetation during the summer. The inside passage of ships plying between the States and Juneau lies through the ocean-filled valleys of this coast range, as they stop here and there at the canneries located in the coves and bay, waiting at times for the changing of the tides as they pull through the narrow channels, and now and again feeling the swells of the open ocean when passing the entrances of the sounds which open into the Pacific. Out through the icy Straits into the Gulf of Alaska, the ships continue to follow the coast like bees in a hedge of flowers. There is Mt. St. Elias, towering over eighteen thousand feet into the clouds, and many other giants which look down at the tiny specks floating along on the ocean below.

My return voyage to Seattle was made through the inside passage. The days were long and nights only short periods of luminous, lavender twilight, which made us stay on deck at all hours, drinking in the beauty of the magnificent scenery, and only dropping off for a nap in the sun in a deck chair when sleep would overcome us.

Back in New York, the depression in mining was gradually evaporating, and metal prices were once more on the upgrade. At that time, the Nowell Brothers of Juneau were in New York City, endeavoring to interest J. B. Haggin in their mining at Berner's Bay. Haggin was the principal owner of the Homestake, and probably the foremost mining operator in the United States at that time. During one of my daily visits to the office of my syndicate in the Mills Building, Dick Lounsbury, son-in-law of Haggin and a member of the syndicate, said that Mr. Haggin would like to see me. The office of the mining magnate was on an upper floor of the same building, so I hurried up to see him and was ushered into his private office. Having closed the door, I took the seat indicated by him, and Haggin, drawing his chair closer, gazed at me with his fishy eye which seemed to bore through to the back of ay head, and said, "What do you know about gold mining?"

"I know how and where to prospect; how to pan free milling ore or assay a sulphide. I also know how to sample or develop mines when found."

"Where would you look for gold?" asked he. "Most anywhere," I replied, "Gold is where you find it."

Mr. Haggin appeared to be satisfied with my answers, for after giving me another look of peculiar fixity, he said: "I have sent two engineers to examine Nowell's mine at Berner's Bay. They will retune with long, larruping reports that I have neither the time nor the inclination to wade through. I want you to go to Alaska and check them up. Tell me in as few words as possible whether it is a good thing or not. Be brief. The cashier will give you a check for $1000.00 for your expenses."

When I left the office of the foremost mining operator in the United States, I was treading on air and felt as if I had been exalted into a new sphere of life. To be singled out for such an important mission, and the fact that on my judgment and decision would depend an investment running up into the millions, could mean nothing less than an appreciation of my work for the syndicate.

Again I took the train for Seattle and the inside passage for Alaska. Outside of the superb beauty of the scenery, the voyage was uneventful, except for a side trip to Governor Hoggatt's mine above Juneau. There I spent the first night picking pieces of rock out of the anatomical structure of one of the miners who had nonchalantly drilled into a missed hole. The man's body from his face down had been peppered with rooks the size of a pea. Dust and even a piece of cap was dug out of his chest. He was a pitiable sight, but he afterwards recovered and for years served as an example around Juneau for the people who fool with dynamite.

When I reached Berner's Bay I learned that the two engineers sent ahead of me had completed their work, but after a perfunctory handshake the silent antagonism of the fraternity kept them aloof and I saw them no more. I was favorable impressed with the mine, but the situation was so complicated that many years of successful operation would be required to straighten it out. Retuning to New York, I made my report to Mr. Haggin. He said my opinion had already been corroborated by D. O. Mills, the controlling engineer of the Alaska Treadwell Mine on Douglas Island.

By this time my trips to Alaska had awakened my imagination as to the possibilities of the country, and after I had completed my mission for Haggin I returned to Juneau. Before leaving the States I secured an option on some mining claims back of Juneau, for which I was to pay $100,000. At that time things had begun to move rapidly around Juneau. The country was discovered to be full of mineral, and anyone who could handle $1.00 ore at a profit could find a mountain of it for the asking and ample capital. However, it was only when the great consolidation of claims engineered by F. W. Bradley made possible the Alaska Juneau Mining Company, which transposed the industry from mining into a manufacturing proposition, that success was reached. My Humbolt claims went in with the others, so I shifted my activities to making mine examinations along the coast, and was appointed consulting engineer for the Alaska Treasure Mines on Douglas Island.

Those were pre-conservation years, a time when everything was wide open and the pioneer still had a chance. It was the pioneer's last frontier. The mining lands were still open to the prospector, and he could harness a water power plant, build a cabin, help himself to the coal that lay scattered along the beaches by the thousand of tons, and obtain a patent for his mining claim without interference from government agents. The steamers were crowded with passengers going to the interior to prospect. Business seeking locations, and investors with money for building, for electric light plants, canneries, and saw mills. The traffic was all one way, save for those going back to the States to buy goods, a few tourist and salesmen. The stampede to the Klondyke was about over, and the tide of travel was turned to Valdez and the Copper River country.

It was early in 1902 that I joined the rush by taking passage on the “S. S. Excelsior” from Seattle o Valdez. She was an old boat of about seven hundred tons, slow as cold molasses, but safe enough in to smooth waters of the inside passage. In addition to the crew, she had two hundred and four passengers crowded on her, the second class sleeping on the dining tables and on

the deck. Dr. Fred Cook, who many believe to have reached the North Pole before Peary, was on his way to climb Mt. McKinley. Major Abercrombie, who built the first military trail from Valdez to the interior, was also a passenger. C. E. Johnson, Captain Barnett, and Jim Fleming were on their way to the Yukon, from which they were to emerge as millionaires in the next two years. Charles Miller, of Miller Gulch fame, with his small daughter, Nancy, who was later to become the wife of an Indian Rajah, were also on the boat, as was Charles Anderson, who in 1898 had three five-gallon oil cans filled with gold dust in his cabin on the Klondyke River, had gone broke, and was now on his was to Valdez to make another stake.

It was snowing hard on the "morning" that the Excelsior butted her nose into the same bank that had greeted the Elihu Thompson eighteen months before. After debarking from the steamer in a small boat and wading through half a mile of the tide flat mud, the passengers who were to stay in Valdez wended their way into the town and were soon located in the hotels and boarding houses. The snow was some five feet deep, but it did not seem to bother anybody, as all were on snowshoes except when in the sled track on the main street. About three thousand people were in the town and more were coming on every boat.

Two Swedes, just arrived, saw a twenty-five cent piece lying in the snow. One stooped to pick it up, but the other restrained him, saying: "Don't fool ban that! We'll ban finding five-dollar gold pieces soon!" That describes the sentiment prevailing. Although it was winter, reports were coming in from the interior of rich strikes on all the creeks. Everybody was expecting to get rich as soon a they could get over Thompson's Pass.

In the meantime, I was looking for an opportunity close at hand that promised a profit, and decided that what the town needed more than anything else was a dock where boats could unload their passengers and freight cargoes without having to wade and draw everything through the mud. There was plenty of money available, so a few of us got together and outlined our plans, with the result that the Valdez Dock Company sprang into being forthwith, for which I was made president, Walter Gollin, the agent for one of the steamship companies, treasurer, and Frank Kinghorn, secretary. There was plenty of timber for piling on the hillsides overlooking the bay, so we hired some ax men, and as the logs were dropped into the water they were towed to the wharf site. The commander of the military post across the bay had promised to loan us a pile driver.

Valdez Glacier, three miles beyond the town, form which the place derives its name, is gradually receding, and the moraine resulting there has formed a level plain several miles in extent, reaching out one half mile below the limit of high tide. Below that line the loose, gravel deposit has been carried away by the action of the tides, leaving a perpendicular bank extending entirely around the head of the bay. Arriving at this bank the steamers could come no closer to the shore. Our dock enterprise therefore contemplated a roadway trestle for one half mile out over the tide flat with a landing place for steamers to tie to in deep water.

While the piling was being driven, some of it being ninety feet long, I went to Seattle to buy lumber. The first load of planks was taken by the S. S. Excelsior and landed in safety at Valdez. The balance nearly one hundred thousand feet, comprised the cargo of the S. S. Bertha had seventy-five passengers for Valdez, and I went along for good measure. All went well and we were making good time until we reached Queen Charlotte Sound, when at a late hour on a moonless night we crashed on a rock off the shore of Fitzhugh Island. Immediately all was bedlam on

board. The passengers awakened in fright from their berths and rushed around the decks. The women screaming and the men calling for the boats. I at once saw that there was little danger from a wooden ship laden with lumber going down while spitted on a pointed rock, and I did what I could to quiet the passengers, while the captain shouted that we were close to the shore and there was no danger. Some of the men passengers then took off their coats and helped the crew in throwing the planks overboard, so that soon the cargo of lumber was floating around the ship. Thus relieved of her load and the holes in the hull of the steamer plugged, the bertha was easily floated with the incoming tide. Later in the day, the Santa Ana, which had recently been added to the Valdez line of boats, came along and our passengers were transferred to her. The Bertha was towed back to Puget Sound for repairs and reappeared on the run on her regular sailing date.

Very little of our lumber was saved, but it was insured, and I suffered no loss, however it was necessary for me to return to Seattle to replace the shipment. When I finally appeared at Valdez with the dock material, I learned that the government had recalled the loan of the pile driver, and by the time we had the wharf completed it was spring.

Chapter XXXIII

During the spring if 1902 I took one of the most perilous expeditions of my life into the interior of Alaska, and yet one of the most interesting. My syndicate had called on me to proceed to the head of the White River and investigate the native copper deposits in the vicinity of the Russell Glacier.

As assistants for the expedition I engaged Jim Davis, whom I brought from Juneau, Bill Anderson, an old timer of the Tanana, and Jim Fleming, who was just one of the rush. Our equipment consisted of fourteen horses, bobsleds, and a complete line of tools and supplies to last several months. Before leaving, I inquired of Anderson if there was anything else that should be added to the outfit. He casually glanced over the list.

"Hev yez eny mush?"

"Sure," I said, "two sacks of it, oats and cornmeal."

"Then," said he sagely, "get some more mush."

We left Valdez late in March. Spots of bare ground were appearing on the flat, and time was precious. If the ice should go out in Keystone Canyon, all travel by that route would be impossible for that year, so we worked long hours, but still it took several days to get our outfit over the range. Once on the other side it was colder and the going better. The snow was leaving fast, and by the middle of April we were dragging our sleds over bare ground.

At Copper Center, about one hundred miles from the coast, were the remains of the winter camp of the '98ers. There were still several log cabins in a fair state of preservation, one of which was a supply store and post office, but used only for convenience of the mail contractor, James Fish, who also owned a store at Valdez. He had the contract to carry the mail between Valdez and Eagle, a village on the Yukon, just below the international boundary, a distance of 405 miles. We camped in one of the log cabins, and next day built a wagon out of the wooden sleds, hewing the axles from logs and making the wheels from boards. It was a crude affair, but it held up under the load. What we could not pile on the wagon we packed on the horses.

Long before any trail had been built, the United States Signal Corps had strung a telegraph line to the Tanana River, which afforded communication with the interior. After the first few miles, the line, which was a fine copper wire, a mile of which was carried on a small reel, had been laid along the proposed trail on the ground, over bushes and tree branches. As our wagon trundled along, the wheels would pick up the loose wire and wrap it around the axels, much to the disgust of the driver, although it wound up prettily and grave the axles a roller-bearing action. We managed to clear this without disrupting the telegraph service.

For forty miles we got along fine and then trouble began. There was no suggestion of a road or trail, and we were meeting with obstacles that no wagon could long survive. Over broken timber, around rocky points, through swamps, and over nigger-head flats, our home-made wagon held up sturdily until one day a hind wheel dropped into a rut and the axle broke off short. The wagon was wrecked, so it was abandoned, and it can probably still be found beside the old trail which we blazed as we went along. From that time on we had to depend on our horses to pack the supplies. What could not be taken along we cached in the woods and covered with some canvas.

Crossing the Golkona was a problem (the last two letters "na" mean "river"). The river was edged with ice, with an open stream four feet deep in the middle. Getting the pack train across the break was no easy matter, but we made it without any mishap. That night two prospectors from the Koyakuk and one from Forty Mile on the Yukon visited our camp and took supper with us, and agreed to carry my mail to Valdez. In crossing another river, the next day, one of the horses broke through the ice, and we barley saved him and the pack from being sucked under. Still plodding through mud, water, and nigger heads, one of the horses played out and we had to leave him to recuperate in the rich pasture.

The Chestachina, 178 miles from Valdez, is the largest river this side of Tanana. On the morning of May 11 it was running bank full, and at the place where we had to cross it was 1500 feet wide. A hundred yards back from the river the Signal Corps had established a camp, and from the soldiers I borrowed a canvas boat. With this we carried the outfit across and then returned and swam the horses. At this point Jim Fleming decided to leave us and strike out for the new camp on the Tanana, so I provided him with supplies. The next time I saw him he was a full-fledged millionaire.

Once again on our way and wading through mud, water, and nigger-heads, we camped to an ideal camping place by a clear stream. A heavy rain that night with five inches of snow in the morning induced me to remain there for a couple of days to rest and dry out. That evening, while Jim Davis was cooking supper, a flock of blue cranes flew over us more than a thousand feet up. I reached for my savage 303, and with a doubt that a shot could reach that far, I pointed it at the bird and pulled the trigger. With the second shot, one of the birds was seen to be fluttering down from the flock, and Bill Anderson, who was an experienced hunter and had been watching, shouted, "If he hasn't hit one, w'y damne!" It fell two hundred yards away, and Davis killed it with a club. When dressed it weighed over thirty pounds, and we had meat for a week.

Day after day, we made slow progress, with heavy rains above and mud under foot. A very little sufficed to tire the horses, and as we toiled through a wide expanse of nigger-head flats, we eagerly watched for a dry place to camp. In the twilight one evening, as we emerged from a bunch of bastard spruce, cold and wet. I saw a dim light in the distance, which proved to be a Siwash wicky-up, and we approached the dulcet strains from a phonograph broke upon our ears: "Just because she had dem goo-goo eyes!" Copper River Indians are always glad to have men come to their camp, because it means flour, tea, and sugar, the three luxuries they are eager to take in exchange for their furs, fish, and copper knives. They brought dry wood for a quick fire and helped with the tent, all the time chattering about a bad kinsman who had stolen their only horse. Chestachina Billy was willing to run back to the Signal Corps camp on the river for my mail, and he brought a cablegram from my wife, which he said had come by "white man's string talk."

My aneroid showed me that we were then at an altitude of 2500 feet. We were approaching the foothills of the great Arkansas Range, of which we had a fine view, as well as the Wrangell Mountains, with Mt. Drum smoking in the distance. Mt. Drum is the only active volcano in the interior of Alaska. It rises in the Wrangell Mountains as a smooth, round dome with a thin spiral of smoke issuing from its summit, with numerous cracks surrounding the dome from which smoke and steam spout perennially. If Mt. Drum should become active, it would follow the tactics of Mt. Katmai to the westward and blow the top off with a burst of gas, filling the at-

mosphere with sulphurous smoke, which curiously enough, I imagined that I could smell as a reminder that another Katmai could break out at any time and cover the country with ashes.

The Signal Corps of the U.S. Army blazed the trees as the telegraph "buzzer" was strung along, and had put up posts marking every five miles. This we called the government trail to the Yukon, but at the 190-mile post our route diverged into the foothills, through which we picked our way haphazard. In doing so, we met with plenty of trouble, and arrived at the banks of the Slana with half-drowned horses and packs thoroughly soaked. We found the river to be a large, sluggish stream, too deep for fording, and heavily timbered on both sides. We were not long in building a raft, and in swinging the float to the other side, Jim Davis endeavored to jump ashore with the rope but landed short and went in over his head. Jim was one of those rare souls who are able to turn an unpleasant incident into something amusing, and therefore he performed some antics to get out of the freezing water, which gave us the heartiest laugh we had had since leaving Valdez. We ferried our goods across and then swam the horses. In crossing, one unruly animal jumped into the stream before we were ready, but was glad enough to scramble out again when he found the temperature of the water not to his liking.

Above the confluence of the Slana with the Copper, the river becomes the Batzulnetas, the headwaters of the Copper River. The rivers had widened into lakes at that point, and the ground around was swampy. There was little firewood, and even that was green, but we needed rest and decided to camp. Some Indians had their shacks at the junction of the two rivers. There were six of them: the old buck Dick and his squaw, two daughters, an Indian named Batzulnetas Jim, and a boy about ten. There they spent their lives hunting and watching their fish traps. They had no firearms, but were expert with the spear, bow and arrow. The arrows and spears were tipped with copper, though they did not know where the metal came from except that it was brought from the Tanana. The lakes were high and the flood had washed away their fish traps and their only bridge, so that they had to wade in the ice-cold water up to their armpits in order to reach my camp. They brought salmon to our table, for which I paid them two cups of flour. I also gave them supper, and had Jim put on a pot of beans to give them in the morning.

We were now on the divide from which one lake discharged into the Copper drainage and the other ran off into the Tanana country and the Yukon. We chose Nebesna Creek as the one to follow, on which not even a game trail was discernable. The timber was dense, interspersed with thick willow brush, windfalls, bog, and thick moss down to the water's edge. The horses were heavily loaded, and we had all we could do to make any perceptible progress. At last we reached the summit of a hill where we could see the mountains on the other side of the Nebesna. There we camped and were rewarded by the arrival of Indian Joe with the mail. I kept the Indian to show us the trail to the river. He took us through some fine grassland, surrounding which, in the form of an amphitheatre, the fringe of mountains with their snow-covered peaks gave us a view of sublime grandeur. Off to the west is a mountain of variegated colors, which contains an immense deposit of copper, owned by Washington men, of whom James C. Dulin was president.

We found a camping place on a small flat, nestled against the spur dividing Nebesna Creek from the big river of that name. Close by were the ruins of several cabins, all in line and backed up against the bluff behind like a village street. At the lower end were the remains of a larger log building which may have been the church and meeting house. Or, more likely, a Saloon! There was no indication of any windows, but roughhewn timbers were mute evidence of

bygone floors and benches. The outlines of an immense fireplace were still to be seen, the rocks used for masonry being nearly leveled off to the ground. A long bar of copper, crudely hammered and dovetailed together to give it the required length, on which to hang a great copper pot, was salvaged from the pile of debris, while the pot itself was discovered a few yards away from the house. It was of flattened copper, and the handle had been broken off. Years of use by the early Muscovites had worn holes in its bottom, and two of them had been patched over with thin sheets of the red metal that were sewn on with threads of copper about the thickness of old-time ten-penny nails. I should have liked to bring these relics back to civilization, but the pack horses were too heavily loaded to undertake it, so I contented myself with bringing a handful of copper nails, which have long since been distributed among friends after my return to the States.

A short distance from the "community house" were the remnants of a rude fence which enclosed the graveyard, and a number of mounds, not yet crushed to the elements, some wooden crosses put together with copper nails, gave us the clue that the place had been an early Russian settlement, long before the real estate deal was consummated with Uncle Sam.

Searching among the old cabins, we unearthed a few dozen leaves of a diary of a member of the Cooper expedition, which had passed that way some years before my arrival. It related incoherently a drab story of the sufferings of the party after being stranded in an unknown country three hundred miles from the coast. By piecing the story together, it told of the terrible condition of the party, which was reduced to the necessity of eating decayed eggs, berries, and willow brush in the efforts to sustain life; how they had lost their firearms and ammunition in the rivers; and although in one of the greatest game countries in the world were literally starving to death. We were told later that the few that survived were finally rescued by some Indians, who took them to their village, and after feeding tem, showed the way to the Yukon River.

The sun was beating down upon as we crawled out of our sleeping bags at three o'clock in the morning, stirring the day shift of the mosquito army into action so that they might make life a burden to everybody except the cook, who secured immunity by keeping his head close to the outskirts of the column of smoke that came from the green willows we were using as a fire. It promised to be one of those rare days in June that the poets tell about, and after the morning meal we hastily packed the horses and soon were crossing the foot of the glacier on the ice and beginning the climb over the divide between the Nebesna and the great Ranana. About half way to the top of the divide we found ourselves in the snow, and had to lead the pack train up the bed of the stream we were following. Then the creek ran under the snow, which forced us to the bare spots on the bank. Now and then the horses would slip from the bank and get down in the water, wetting everything and necessitating taking off their packs and repacking on the bank in the wet moss. We were not traveling on solid ground, but passing over an old glacier. The horses were exhausted and it was getting late, with nothing in sight but ice. Although there was no wood or water, no food for the horses, and the night freeze was upon us, I decided to camp. We made supper of raw bacon and frozen beans, and then spreading our wet blankets upon the ice, we rolled in and shivered until daylight.

The morning came, but it brought no cheer. We were hungry, homeless, cold, and damp, and our blankets were frozen to the glacier. The horses had strayed, but were seen huddled together behind an ice hummock not far away. However, we perked up our spirits, munched some crackers and cheese for breakfast, and gathered the horses. They were too spiritless to remon-

strate, and submitted to the diamond hitch without trouble. It was a woe-begons and bedraggled outfit that staggered up the hill to the saddle of the divide that morning and by good luck reached the top, altitude 4800 feet. The sun was just coming from behind the great Alaskan Range in all its glory, and the rays imbued the whole party with a cheerful refulgence. The sky was a beautiful rose color merging into blue, with a few rolling clouds on the western horizon, which seemed to reflect the sun's brilliance on the ice and snow gradually merged into a welcome scene of green meadows, flowering streams, and forests of timber.

Before the sun had reached its zenith we had selected as a camp a small flat under the shelter of a hill, which had a southern exposure, with a good pasture and plenty of dry wood and a lovely stream of cleaner water close by. While Davis built a roaring fire to dry our outfit, Anderson took the horses to the pasture and left them for a well-earned rest.

Chapter XXXIV

For the hunter or the lover of wildlife, Alaska is a veritable Paradise. Through the entire expedition we saw many game birds, and at this camp especially there seemed to be an abundance of feathered game all about us. Mountain sheep in flocks filed along the cliffs above, and at no time did we fail to see animal life in some direction from our camp. One red fox came within a few yards of the camp, but he reached cover before Davis could rush from the tent with the rifle.

In the afternoon I took the gun and made for the timber that bordered the meadow below us, remarking that I would try to get some ptarmigan that appeared plentiful all about. I had hardly gone two hundred yards when among the trees I saw what appeared to be one of the horses, and I wondered why it had strayed from the rest of the bunch. The animal had its head down in the tall grass, and I drew nearer with the intention of driving it back where it belong, a short distance behind the camp. I had approached within fifty yards when suddenly, to my astonishment, the animal raised its head, and I saw with consternation that instead of it being one of the horses, it was a glacier grizzly bear.

It was the first time I had ever seen a bear outside the menageries. My hair rose up like bristles, and I was almost paralyzed with fright as I contemplated that I was face to face with the most furious beast in Alaska, not excluding the Kodiak bears. These grizzles do not have to be hungry in order to attack a person. They are simply downright mean, and usually when encountered it means a fight to the finish, as they are not afraid of anything. Also, it quickly recurred to me that these bears have a way of going through prospectors' camps and scattering everything in the way of food among the scenery, an experience that would be almost fatal at this stage of the trip. An injured bear is of course more ferocious, and I hesitated to shoot, fearing that I would miss the target. As I backed away, the bear calmly returned to his grazing, and it looked as if he had not even noticed me. Returning to the camp, I shouted: "Ho, Anderson, here's a bear. What shall I do with him?"

Jim Davis called out not to shoot, as Bruin might make for the camp and we had enough trouble for the time being, but Anderson whooped: "Shoot the ---- -----! Kill him!"

At that I dropped on one knee, pointed the gun and took careful aim - and missed! The bear started to run, and I shot again. This time the big fellow lunged forward, his head went down, and he crumpled up on the grass. We all crept up but stood at a respectful distance and pelted the carcass with rocks to make sure he was not shamming; then closed in, peeled off the skin, transferred the best of the meat to our larder, and called it a day.

That was a wonderful country for grizzles. While looking for horses, Anderson said he saw a very large one, which he designated as "Pa," and was sure that "Ma" was not far off.

Later in the day I counted eighteen mountain sheep in the rocks opposite our camp, and bear and caribou signs were plentiful. In the morning the sheep were still there, with a venerable old bighorn keeping guard. I directed the men to take the gun and get one, and they started off. The old ram was smarter than they were, however, as he gave the alarm, and shortly the hunters returned to camp.

"Well, what about the sheep?" I inquired.

"They saw us coming and got away, so we thought we would get that bear over there!"

I looked around, and there within one hundred yards of me, in the middle of a draw running up the mountainside, was a big grizzly calmly digging for roots. This time I was not so frightened, and hastily opened my camera, motioning the men with the rifle to keep back. Stealthily I crept within fifty yards, but the bear pricked up his ears and moved behind a clump of bushes in the middle of the draw. There he stood upright and peered over the bushes at the men with the gun, paying no attention to me. Having taken the picture, I motioned to Davis to fire away, which he did and missed! The bear started over the rim of the draw and along the mountainside on the lope. Jim kept firing and the bullets would strike the rocks just behind the grizzly, who would look around at each shot, while we were holding our sides in merriment and Jim was cursing a blue streak. If the animal was wounded he did not show it, so we returned to camp.

After a meal of boiled bear, I took the rifle and wandered up a hill to get a shot at some different kind of meat. I had gone only a short distance when I stumbled on an immense vein of rich copper ore, in places twenty feet wide, and I could see it outcrop for half a mile along the mountain. The rest of the day was spent in staking out six claims.

We broke camp the next day, leaving such bear meat as we could not take along for the benefit of other pilgrims. Our course lay down the bed of the river to the right fork of the Chisana. This was the locality in which the Indians had told me there was copper, so we decided to camp. About three miles away was a gulch running south and heading up a tall mountain with a crest of snow. I carefully prospected this to the snow line, as Indian Joe said the copper was up there. There was plenty of lime and greenstone, with the usual diabase and volcanic material of the country, but no mineralization, and panning the gravel brought no better results. Ten mountain sheep watched me from a cliff as I hiked back to camp for supper.

At a point four miles below the glacier we crossed the Tanana River, fording the different channels, none of which were more than four feet deep, and then passed over a low divide between the Tanana and the White. On the way down we killed two caribou, and now having plenty of fresh meat we threw away what we had left of the bear. Later we saw twenty-nine more caribou, but did not molest them. The sun was bright and hot as we continued down the creek, which was assuming the proportions of a river. Soon we came to an ice overflow, at the end of which was a narrow canyon. One horse got his leg in an ice crack, and we narrowly missed losing a good pack animal. Then another floundered into a stream of flowing mud, and was swept down the slope with his pack. We finally fished him out all covered with mud, and he was a sorry-looking object by the time we got him straightened up again. And then it began to rain torrents! Looming ahead of us was another box canyon, so we crossed the river to a clump of timber and unpacked the horses.

If the reader had ever had the experience of finding himself in an absolute virgin country, where “the hand of man has never set foot,” so as to speak, he can visualize our camp as it appeared the following morning. Our tent was pitched in a small clearing among the trees, a log fire built with uprights and a crosspiece for the convenience of the cook, and a table improvised from the box containing our provisions. As the aroma of our old stand-by, the bacon, sizzling in a pan, mixed with the pungent incense of the burning logs, tantalized our appetites, my gazed wandered to the west where the hills were still shrouded in mist, and heavy clouds hung over the great range, while the sharp peaks protruding through gave the impression of a second layer of

clouds ready to relieve the low ones as soon as the sun appeared to dissipate them into the fog below. The great patches of grassland about us were spotted with miniature lakes, with vast stretches of timber in the distance that would delight the eye of any timber cruiser, although it will be generations before these giant logs of spruce will be called upon for the use of civilization.

While the men were drying out their clothes, bedding, and making repairs to our dilapidated outfit, I left the camp to reconnoiter and to find a way out of the pocket we were in. Climbing to the summit of a hill to the southeast, I crossed a wide plateau and then circled around a lake to the top of a ridge to the east, from which I could look out over the beautiful valley of the White River. The Russell Glacier was directly ahead of me, part of it pouring from a canyon to the southwest, where it heads in the saddles of the hills known as the Scolai Pass. Below the glacier the river is diverted into many channels through the valley, and forty miles below it empties into the Yukon.

This was the region which I had been directed by my syndicate to explore. At the headwaters of the White had been reported many discoveries of copper, not only by prospectors, but also by responsible engineers, and the only drawback to their operation was the extreme inaccessibility of the deposits. We therefore moved the camp to a desirable position on the riverbank, where we had a fine view of the White for at least twenty miles. With two packhorses to carry tools and emergency supplies, we proceeded up the river, with a man paralleling the pack train a mile or so distance on the lookout for indications of mineral and also for the camps of the prospectors who had reported the discovery of copper.

Suddenly we changed our course from the main channel to a small creek running up into a basin in the mountains. Bright nuggets of copper were shining in the water! We followed the float until the narrow canyon opened out into a basin half a mile wide, surrounded on all sides by precipitous rocks. The upper walls of the basin had the appearance of a monster vein of mineral. Erosion of the softer parts of the deposit had left the quartz in all sorts of fantastic figures. The whole was covered with a heavy green stain of the carbonate of copper. Chunks of copper, pure as the metal ever comes, lay scattered everywhere, much of it peeping out from the debris of the finely granulated quartz, and tons of the red metal lay in such big slabs and grotesque forms that all three of us combined could not turn them over. One especially large mass was in the form of a mushroom, with its root in the solid quartz. Among the odd shapes of the metal, one piece weighing about sixty pounds attracted my attention, and I determined to take it along. It was in the shape of a ham, with the knucklebone and hole through it in exact counterpart of those hanging in the neighborhood butcher shop. I had been led to expect a large deposit of copper somewhere in the district, but this wondrous exhibit in this basin far surpassed anything that had yet been discovered in Alaska.

The procedure was to put up several mounds for our location notices in the name of the corporation. I then secured my specimen on one of the horses, and we returned to our base camp, well satisfied with our discoveries.

Following up our success of the day before, we roamed over a large section of country below the glacier, but found no more copper. We avoided the main stream, which was swift and too deep to wade, but we climbed hills, crossed deep and precipitous canyons, and scaled almost perpendicular cliffs. The only result of our effort was a bighorn sheep with a record pair of horns.

This specimen I nailed to a stump and took a picture of it, which picture later found its way into the New York Herald.

Never was there such a country for game! Anderson brought in the hindquarters of a young caribou, and we were happy. On every mountainside were mountain sheep, foxes, caribou, bear, and ptarmigan. We caught two cross foxes and one silver, but fur was out of season, which applied to all game at that time of year. Approximately one hundred and fifty sheep were grazing on ram Creek as we passed, and Jim Davis hid behind a rock and caught one as it trotted by. They were on the slope of a hill, and Jim, with one arm around the sheep's neck and the other clutching a hind leg, had the fight of his life. Over and over they rolled down the hill, the sheep in its struggles cutting a deep gash in Jim's cheek. The sheep was strong and so was Jim, but the latter was badly out of breath when they reached the bottom of the hill. However, the sheep had reinforcements! Along came an old ram to the rescue. Lowering its head as he charged, he gave Jim such a jolt that it loosened his hold on the sheep, and it scampered away, leaving Jim hors de combat! I washed and dressed Jim's wound, and we resumed our tramp.

The most friendly and affectionate of the fauna of Alaska are the mosquitoes. They followed us everywhere faithfully! However, we forgot about them for a short time while we chased a small grizzly, which we killed and also a young caribou.

This about concluded our exploration of the headwaters of the White. On a side hill Anderson uncovered a ledge of chalcopyrite or copper sulphate, forty feet wide, from which we broke some specimens, but we made no locations. After a little more hunting, we made preparations for the return trip, little knowing what dangers and suffering we were to encounter before at last reaching civilization.

Chapter XXXV

We began our return journey with the horses recuperated, Jim's wound healed, and a satisfied feeling of having made a successful trip. All the horses wore cowbells, which we found a great advantage in holding the train together. Our route lay along the side of a grassy ridge, and we were making good time, as the ground was firm and very few obstacles were in our path. Suddenly we espied in the distance in the valley below a large herd of caribou, coming toward us on the run. They had herd the bells, and were coming to hear the music and see what kind of animals we were, as I do not suppose they had ever seen anything in the shape of a horse or human being. I stopped the train, got out my camera, and went down to within forty yards of them. There seemed to be several hundred in the herd, and they spread out in a line across the valley. As I edged down closer I unfolded my tripod. Two old bulls that were in front of the line reared up on their hind legs and pawed the air as if in defiance and daring me to come any further. It was a wonderful picture, but later I lost it in the Nebesna. I then returned to the pack train for the rifle, but by the time I was ready to shoot, they were out of range. Then two brown bears calmly walked along the mountainside, but we would have none of them.

Next morning I went to the top of a high hill to look over the country west of Scolai, and as I turned to descend I found that I was in the midst of a countless herd of caribou. They were everywhere – and I was without a gun! Working my way back to camp without stampeding the herd, I started Jim out with the Savage to get one. He returned with the choicest part of a three-year-old, and we sat around the fire broiling the meat on sticks, eating it as it cooked – a meal that was fit for the gods.

We stayed at this camp for several days, making excursions into the surrounding mountains, panning the streams, and hunting. The days were hot the nights cool. The spring rains were over and the rivers rising fast. An eighteen-mile trek brought us back to our old stopping place at the Chisana cabins, where we found the mosquitoes so numerous that it was impossible to keep them out of the tent, and sleep was out of the question. The trip had been a hard one. The Chisana River was up and divided into about twenty branches, which we managed to cross after getting the horses down in the quicksand, from which they were rescued with great difficulty. One horse, in climbing up the bank, fell back with his pack into the water, and the excitement, combined with our frantic efforts to save his life, tired us all out, but we manage to pull him out. At our camp that night we managed to get some rest from the mosquitoes by making smudges to drive them away.

The morning set in with a sizzling drizzle, but as there is no way to judge the duration of such rains, it was useless to wait for clear weather. As we left camp, it was pouring steadily and the river was bank full. The passage over the divide was a nightmare. Descending to the Nebesna, we found the canyon still clogged with ice and the creek rushing madly down like a cataract. We were stopped by a narrow gorge, which we crossed next morning on the subsiding of the flood.

The Nebesna River was covering much of its mile-wide bed, and in crossing the first small branches of it the mare I was riding was forced to swim. In order not to drag her down, I scrambled off her back by grasping the root of a tree that was near the bank, while the mare made the crossing safely. We did not attempt to move the next day, as the storm was not over and

the main channel of the river was very high, so we made our camp and rested for the ordeal of crossing the main body of water. The Nebesna is a large stream, similar to the Tanana. Some of the channels are fifty to one hundred yards across, and its crossing is a perilous undertaking. About ten miles below the spot where we found ourselves, the river gathers together all its branches and passes between two mountains in one torrent. Anderson rode up the valley several miles to see if a fording could be more easily effected in that direction, but returned to report that there the river was running in one channel also, and there was no way to get around by land. I prospected the channel at which we were camped and decided that it could be crossed, but the matter was deferred until morning, after putting out marks to show the rise and fall.

During the night the river fell two inches below the level at the previous noon, so Jim and I saddled our horses and began to cross. At the second channel my horse swam for a few yards, but we reached the bank safely. After this, we met with no very deep water, although the channels were quite wide in places, and the greatest care had to be used in gauging the depth and swiftness of the stream.

We had tested out the crossing of the river successfully, so now we returned, prepared to take the outfit across the next day. At seven o'clock on the morning of July 16 (that fateful date is engraved on my memory), we began our perilous undertaking of crossing the Nebesna with a loaded pack train. The horses were tailed into three sections of four horses each, I leading the first bunch on my saddle horse. We negotiated the first three leads without a mishap, but the forth and largest branch resulted in disaster. When nearing the shore my horse suddenly sank in the quicksand, and he immediately floundered. In his efforts to dislodge me, we both were swept into the swiftly rushing current. I was crushed under the horse, and as he torn away I struggled madly to rise to the surface and struck out for the bank with all my remaining strength. The weight of my clothes, binoculars, camera, and long rubber boots bore me down and rendered my frantic efforts futile, and as I was rolled over and over on the bottom of the stream, I clawed at the gravel of the river bed, digging my fingers into the bottom as I tried to work myself toward the bank. By some extraordinary effort, I rose to the surface and got a few mouthfuls of air; then down again to the bottom to be rolled over like a log by the force of the raging torrent. At last, when almost exhausted, I felt a bar beneath me, and I again clutched at the rocks as I was rushed by. Finally, I was able to drag myself up the bank on my hands and knees high enough to raise my head out of the water and gather strength to hold against the sweep of the river.

Looking around, I saw Jim in the water and reaching the bank, while three horses and their packs were being carried off down the river. My saddled horse appeared to be drowned as the water was flowing over him, but he soon recovered and reached the opposite shore, and the rest finally came across. Anderson with the third section, got over without much trouble. I was still holding my head above water without the strength to move when Jim came running down the bank and pulled me ashore.

On the bank I changed my clothes, and as soon as my blood began to circulate again, for I was numb with cold, we gathered our train together and prepared to cross the remaining channel. Here once more I was doomed to trouble. In the middle of the stream my horse went down in the quicksand, and we were again fighting for our lives in the muddy waters, but I swam to the bank, and with the help of the other men rescued the horse.

This ended our tribulation for the day, and after finding a suitable place, we pitched our camp to dry out, figure up our losses (among which was the loss of my last set of pictures, including those of the herd of caribou taken at close range), and congratulated ourselves on escaping with our lives.

The following day we resumed our homeward march and covered twenty miles. It had required four days to make the same distance coming in, but our packs were now light and we knew the way. We ferried across the Slana on the raft which we had constructed on our journey north, and entertained our friends the Indians at Batzulnetas at dinner. We lost no time getting back on the government trail, forded the Chestachina, and stopped at the mail station, where we packed out enough supplies to take us to Valdez, and sold the rest to the agent for a dollar a pound.

Only about a hundred and twenty-five miles more to go! We had passed through many dangers and had escaped with no real injuries. It seemed that no evil had the power to touch me, and we continued our journey without apprehension.

We had arrived within seven miles of the Tazlena River when the pack train, which was a hundred yards ahead, walked over a hornet's nest in the trail. By the time I arrived at the spot the hornets were on the warpath and ready for business. I was riding with my leg thrown over the horn of the saddle and the other foot in the stirrup. When the hornets began to sting, the horse gave a leap and sprang from under me. My foot was caught in the stirrup and I kept hold of the lines as he dragged me along the trail. As the hornets continued to sting the maddened horse gave me a vicious kick; my leg crumpled and slipped free of the stirrup, and I dropped on the trail like a bag of sand. As I let go of the lines I knew that my leg was broken, and I called to the men in front, who ran to my assistance.

After a hasty examination it was found to be a compound fracture, a part of the bone protruding through the skin. Anderson ran to the pack train and tied the horses, returning with a rope. With this they tied me to a stump; then, with both men pulling on my leg, I pushed in the bone. Anderson, who seemed to have handled such cases before, said: "now pull hard! We must get the big toe in line with the knee-cap and hip, and it will be all right." This they did, and with the aid of some willows for splints, with dry moss for padding and a flour sack torn in strips for a bandage, we soon had it fixed.

The boys then made camp ready for a long stay, as it was apparent that I would not be able to travel for some time. My rubber mattress was inflated, and with the bearskin I had obtained on the Nebesna and plenty of blankets, I was made as comfortable as possible, but I passed the night in great pain owing to a miner fracture above the ankle and the tightness of the bandage. In the morning I loosened the wrapping and gained considerable relief. Meantime, Anderson rode to the Tazlena River for assistance, and returned with a Mr. Hammond, who was on his way to the coast with gold dust from Slate Creek. They brought news that the ferry on the Tazlena had been swept away, drowning four people. That night I had another painful time of it, and the following noon an ex-Red Cross man arrived, bringing an emergency kit. Romage soon showed that he was at home in the sick room, and in an hour had my wound comfortably dressed. He also gave me the comforting news that the bone would not begin to knit until nine days had passed, and would take two months to thoroughly heal. The fracture was a clean break, and the bone had been set in place.

Romage stayed with us and helped to prepare a litter on which to carry me back to the Tazlena River in the morning. The boys made the litter, and swung me, bed and all, between two horses, with a man at each bridle. Romage with an ax led the way, and chopped out the timber to widen the trail, so that I made the seven miles without discomfort.

At the River we found a number of others waiting to cross the turbulent stream, which was overflowing its banks and wildly tearing away everything in its path. The Indians call it the mad River, as it acts in a crazy way every seven years. The source of the trouble is the large glacier at the head and a hot sun. Tazlena Billy, a Siwash Indian who operated the ferry, and who had escaped drowning a few days before by clinging to a branch from the bank as he was swept down the river, declared that the spirits of the white men who had been lost in the crevasses of the glacier were angry, and that they turned the waters loose every so often to remind the living of their fate. He said that there had been many who had lost their lives during the gold rush of 1898 through their folly in taking the Valdez Glacier route as a short-cut to Copper Center. One party of fourteen in that year followed the glacier, and four of them in crossing a snow bridge over one of the crevasses in the ice, dropped through. They were caught in a narrow part of the crevasse sixty feet down, with nothing but sheer walls of ice above them. Their companions on top could do nothing to help them, and dispatched one of their number to Valdez for a rope. While waiting they conversed with the doomed men below for hours, as one by one froze to death before help arrived.

On the bank of the river my men put up the tent we prepared again for a long stay. A week later they tried to swim the horses across but failed. The government pack train came in, bringing a dozen more weary travelers. On the eleventh day after my accident, I could lift my leg without assistance, showing that the knitting of the bone was progressing, and I could sit out in front of the tent. The boys caught some salmon, which we had for dinner, and we entertained some prospectors who had also been in the Nebesna section.

At last came the time when we could cross the river in a boat, and on the other side I mounted the mare Kate, but on reaching the Copper River clay banks the men had to carry me on a litter for half a mile. The trail was torn away, and the horses had to swim from one point to another. The eight miles I spent in the saddle were almost unbearable, but I stuck it out until we arrived at copper Center, where I was carried into a cabin in a fainting condition.

This was the first time we had slept under a roof in three months. We had a stove, table, a big supply of wood, and clear water, and all were comfortable. I was now convalescent, and my leg was painful only when I attempted to use the crutches the boys had made for me.

Copper Center, the old camping place of the ‘98ers, is at the confluence of the Copper and Atna Rivers, one hundred and two miles northeast of Valdez. At one time the place had a population of 1500, with stores, saloons, and all the concomitants of a wild and hilarious western mining camp. It was Dawson on a small scale, and there was neither Mayor nor Marshall. The only law enforced was that presided over by Judge Lynch, and the first man to be convicted was William Norton, who had stolen the camp outfit of his partners, had sold it, and was hiking back to Valdez. A posse was formed which captured the thief, brought him to Copper Center, and he was hung to a branch of a big cottonwood on the bank of the river. Here the gold seekers gathered, some coming up the Copper from Orca, more in the Thompson pass from Prince William Sound points, and others over the deadly Valdez Glacier and down the Tonsena. At Copper Cen-

ter the pilgrims would separate, one group heading for Nizina, which is the Kennicott district, and the others following up the Copper, some by the route we had traversed to the Tanana, to the Yukon and Koyukuk.

It will be remembered that this is where we had built the wagon on the way north. Our stay at Copper Center was more extended on the return trip on account of my disability. After a few days of rest, we started out for the lap of our journey, and camped at Teikel Point, almost in sight of the pass over the coast range. I had the stirrup strap around my leg below my knee, but the long ride in the saddle was a constant torture. Next day we made twenty-two miles to Wortman's on the coast side of the range, and the following morning reached Valdez. At the hotel I examined my leg to see how it stood the trip. I found that the pressure of the strap had worked the bone back, but I gave it a smart kick from behind and knocked it back into place. The next day I was out on crutches and have never had any further trouble with it.

To my syndicate I made a glowing report of my discoveries in the White River country. However, again we were confronted with the problem of accessibility – of bringing this ore to market with a reasonable profit over and above the cost of transportation. The tremendous cost of developing these inaccessible copper deposits, together with the exploitation of vast areas of copper of exceptionally high grade in the interior of Africa, militated against the Alaskan discoveries, and my syndicate deferred taking any action until the situation clarified. The death of Mr. Ward, followed by that of Mr. Lounsbury, then served to disintegrate the syndicate and end its activities.

Chapter XXXVI

After seeing with my own eyes the enormous deposits of copper in interior Alaska, it was simply impossible for me not to make an attempt to open up the country so that such resources could be developed. In surveying the situation, it was clear to me that Valdez was the natural gateway to the interior of Alaska, being many miles shorter than any other route and the only town of consequence on Prince William Sound. Therefore, I decided to make Valdez the terminus of a railroad to the Yukon River – a trunk line that could throw out its branches on both sides and draw business from every point in Alaska.

I conceived the idea that I was the man to build such a road, and shortly after my return from the expedition to the White River and my convalescence from my broken leg, I lost no time in starting the enterprise. George Baldwin, a prominent railroad engineer, was selected to survey the line through to Eagle, on the Yukon River, and a company was organized to have a capital of $25,000,000, with dummy officers, who contracted with me to build the road. I was to receive $250,000 for each mile built, in stock, and 30,000 a mile in 6% bonds. The details of organization completed, I applied to the Secretary of the Interior for a franchise and right-of-way through Keystone canyon on the Lowe River, which I obtained, and the town of Valdez granted me a right-of-way through the streets. I already owned the wharf, the income from which would pay the interest on the bonds for the first ten miles. I bought ten thousand ties at fourteen cents each, and built a railroad trestle paralleling the dock, following that with eight miles of grading.

Having started and paid for this work with my own personal funds, it dawned upon me that I could not build the road myself, and would have to get outside money. With this in view I called a mass meeting, and that evening the town hall was filled with the citizens of Valdez. I laid my plans before them, offering the railroad stock at par, payable in quarterly installments on the completion of each five miles of road. This proposition took like wildfire, and before the meeting broke up they had subscribed for 276,000 shares. Still, I was getting no cash to pay for five miles of rail and some rolling stock, a matter of $14,000. Now, $14,000 was not much money to put into the construction of a railroad, but it would have completed the five miles, after which twenty-five per cent of the stock subscription would be due. On the whole, the proposition was sound. It was the first railroad in western Alaska, and no other project of the kind had been mentioned.

While all this furor about a railroad from Valdez was going on, the town started to boom. Houses began to go up on all sides, and at once there was an occupant for every vacant lot in the town. The steamers were coming in crowded with passengers and heavy with cargoes. Inside the range there was the Bonanza mine with trainloads of high-grade ore waiting for transportation, with freight, passengers, and mail all along the line, offering a business for the road that would pay for it in five years.

I determined to try Seattle for the money I needed. There, though it is possible that many wealthy men would have been glad to give me the funds if they could have been reached. I could get in touch with none of them. In Seattle I put my plan before the Chamber of Commerce, which appointed a special committee, and these gentlemen obtained additional subscriptions for 700,000 shares, but not a dollar in money, although Seattle was the greatest beneficiary of the Alaskan trade. The same thing happened in Portland: plenty of stock subscriptions but no

$14,000! From Portland I continued my pilgrimage to Whatoon and then to Bellingham, but the best the latter would do was to offer me free wharfage for my steamer. One shipbroker offered me three steamers, then in the Eastern fruit trade, in return for my bonds, but I had no money to take them over and bring them around the Horn, so the deal fell through.

During the time when I was commuting between Alaska and the States, my wife stayed in Seattle, as she was not well. During my railroad affairs she was taken dangerously ill from anemic poison, and I dropped everything to attend to her. As soon as the physician permitted, I secured a drawing room on the Burlington and removed her to Washington D.C. There some doctors took her in charge, declared her trouble to be cancer of the liver, and carried her to Dr. Fry's hospital on Connecticut Avenue for an operation. As soon as she could be removed, I brought her home, and with careful nursing she recovered, much to the astonishment of her physicians.

In New York I resumed my railroad activities, and put my proposition up to Mr. Willard P. Ward, Dan Guggenheim, and Sam Untermeyer. These gentlemen were very dubious concerning the feasibility of building a railroad in Alaska. They said I was years ahead of time, and that it was impossible at that time to buy railroad iron. I told them I had an option on the steel at Vancouver, and if they would give me the money, I would show them. With such powerful men as these refusing to come in, what chance had I with smaller fry?

In Washington I had a bill introduced in both houses asking for a subsidy of $5000 a mile, for which I agreed to carry the army and munitions in case of war and the mail free in time of peace. For a time the bill had a favorable reception, but the knockers heard of it, and one man, who would have been largely benefited if the road had been built, appeared before the Senate committee and declared that I had no financial backing. Senator nelson of Minnesota, who I knew was a great friend of Alaska, talked with me in the Marble Room of the Senate, and said: "Tell me who your backers are, Mr. Iles, and if they are satisfactory we will put this measure through for you!" I replied, "Senator, I have no backers except the subscribers to more than a million shares of stock. If the Government gives me this subsidy, I shall need no backers." The news of my application for a subsidy soon brought opposition from various promoters, who were preparing, on paper, railroads for Alaska, with the result that my bills went into that bourne form which there is no return.

The closest I ever came to financing my road and putting it through as originally planned was when a telegram was handed to me in Washington from James Murray, president of the Miners & Merchants Bank of Butte, Montana, which read:

"Alfred B. Iles
Washington, D.C.

"Will take two hundred fifty thousand bonds Valdez & Northern provided I am president of the road. Come to Butte and close deal.

James Murray."

I promptly wired back:

James Murray
Butte, Montana

"Conditions accepted. Send guarantee for trip.

Alfred B. Iles."

To which I received the following reply:

"Alfred B. Iles
Washington D.C.

"You don't need any guarantee. Come on and get the money.

James Murray."

With those telegrams I boarded the Pennsylvania Limited at the old Sixth Street Station in Washington the next morning. The car was empty and I took the first chair in the aisle. The next passenger was a lady, who took a seat about the middle of the car. A newsagent next appeared on the scene and the lady bought a magazine, handing him a ten-dollar bill, and he turned to me for change. In my pocket was a folder used for letters of credits, etc., and in it was $192.00 in bills, cards, and my railroad ticket from Chicago to Seattle. In my vest pocket were my railroad and sleeper tickets from Washington to Chicago and some silver. I took the folder from my inside coat pocket, gave the boy two fives, and returned the flap to its place. That was the last I saw of it.

The car filled up, and the conductor changed my seat. I had a buffet lunch on my way to Harrisburg and paid for it from the silver in my vest pocket. On the main line platform I sent a telegram to a friend in Seattle and also paid that from my silver. Dinner in the dining car cost me $2,40, and I reached for my pocket book. It was gone! I was on the Pennsylvania Limited going to Butte, with the capital of about ten cents! I called the conductor of the diner and told him of my loss, and asked him if he would take a check for my dinner, to which he agreed, and accepted a draft on the Boston National Bank of Seattle.

We arrived late in Chicago, and the Pioneer Limited was waiting to pull out. I rushed up to the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul office and there met Mr. Southy, the passenger agent. I told him of my loss, showing him my telegram, etc., and asked if he would take a check for a ticket to St. Paul. He said: "Certainly! And I am something of a sport myself. Take this – you will need it to eat on!" handing me a five dollar bill. He then stepped to the telephone and held the Pioneer Limited until I could get on to the train. The Milwaukee road had never lost anything through that kindly act.

At Milwaukee I telegraphed my Seattle bank to have money for me at St. Paul on my arrival. When we pulled into the station I hurried to the Western Union Office. "Have you any money for me?" I inquired, giving my credentials. "Yes," the operator replied, "but you can't get it tonight. The cashier has gone home, and we haven't the combination of the safe." I said it was of the utmost importance that I got the money at once, but it resulted in nothing, so I went to a hotel to wait for the next day's train. In the morning I reported the loss of my ticket at the Northern Pacific offices, and a year afterward received a check for the amount. The lost ticket was never presented.

I had a presentiment that the delay meant no good to me. When the train stopped at Butte and I saw Jim Murray on the platform with a telegram in his hand, I knew that my fears were well grounded. After a perfunctory greeting, Murray said that the deal was off, as his partner had decided to go into a streetcar line in Los Angeles. Without further words I stepped on the train again and went on to Seattle.

This episode ended the first phase of my attempt to construct a railroad in Alaska. I had built the trestle from the ships' landing, completed five miles of grading, and had ten thousand ties ready to lay. Yet I could not raise the few thousand dollars that would have completed the

five miles and furnished me with plenty of funds for the next section, made my bonds marketable, and insured the building of the road. Had I succeeded, the history of that part of our Northern territory would be vastly different from what it is today.

Chapter XXXVII

Pigeonholing my railroad activities for the time being, I returned to Valdez and proceeded to locate a water right in Solomon Gulch with the intention of supplying power and light for the town, which was then being furnish by a steam plant. This, together with another visit to the interior in the region of Wrangell on behalf of my New York syndicate, occupied several months, during which I experienced plenty of hard work and many disappointments. There was an abundance of copper but in such inaccessible localities that I was compelled to pass them by, and returned to Valdez with no tangible results other than a fund of information. This information inevitably led to the same conclusion: that if the natural resources of Alaska were to be reached and developed, there would have to be railroads. Everywhere was this stumbling block, and it was not possible to consider any project without facing the problem of transportation.

Therefore, in spite of my previous disappointments, I again tackled the proposition and organized the Copper River & Tanana Railroad Company, secured another right of way through Keystone Canyon, and started east for capital. In New York I met Duncan B. Cannon, treasurer of the Brooklyn & Coney Island Railroad. Mr. Cannon introduced me to the firm of Gifford, Hobbs & Beard, in the Hanover Bank Building on Nassau Street. These gentlemen, one of whom was the son-in-law of James J. Hill, the railroad magnate, made a contract with me to build the road on approval of their engineers. A Canadian surveyor named Rose, with assistants, was sent out to report on its feasibility and cost. After months of waiting, the engineers came back with a report admitting the advantages of the road, but recommending adversely because of cost. As they had based their estimates on a Pennsylvania Railroad scale, this was not surprising. Gifford, Hobbs & Beard, however, claimed that I should pay several thousand dollars toward the expense of examination. This tied up my proposition, and as my right of way was good for only a year, I had to act quickly to save anything.

I had about given up hope, when one morning, as I was hurrying up Broadway, I collided with a man. For some reason a conversation ensued and he said that his name was Bradshaw; that he was about to build a railroad in Alaska; that his company was called the Valdez & Yukon Railroad, with a capital of ten million dollars, half of which was in the treasury, along with $250,000 cash. He also stated that A. W. Swanitz was their chief engineer and had already been dispatched to Alaska, but at Seattle he had learned that the Iles road had the right of way, and he was awaiting instructions. I told Mr. Bradshaw that I was Mr. Iles, and that if his company really meant business, there was no reason why we should not get together. He then took me to 70 Wall Street and introduced me to Ambler J. Stewart. Mr. Stewart is the brother of Judge W. F. Bay Stewart, a Pennsylvania millionaire, who was president of the Valdez & Yukon. Mr. Stewart said that if I could demonstrate the validity of my right of way they would be willing to join forces with me in building the road. I agreed, and made an appointment for a meeting at the Gifford offices the next morning, at which I introduced him to the firm and left him. The meeting was satisfactory, and a contract was made wherein I was to receive $750,000 in stock and the privilege of selling an allotment of bonds on the same terms as Mr. Stewart. This had the effect of making me a minority stockholder and I lost my controlling interest.

Swanitz, the chief engineer, was given full authority to build the line, the New York office merely furnishing the funds. He began the work by sweeping my plans into the discard and

locating a town site about two miles from Valdez, where he built a $100,000 dock and located the terminal buildings. This action set the old town of Valdez by the ears, and the antagonism engendered resulted in a boycott of the wharf, the railroad, and the new town site, so that not a ton of freight came over the dock nor could a lot be sold. Swanitz, who in his sober moments might have been a good engineer, did not have enough of them to offset the forces arrayed against him and was carried aboard the steamer, after squandering about $400,000 of the company's money, which I had deemed sufficient to build twenty miles of the road twice over, and Valdez heard no more of him.

While this railroad work was going on, I was developing my water right and building a power plant. With a force of two men and myself, we constructed a concrete dam across Solomon Creek, giving us a head of 410 feet at the wheel. From this we laid a wood flume, first cutting a foundation in the rocky walls of the canyon. This was a difficult piece of work, and for several hundred feet we drilled holes for blasts while hanging in rope slings suspended over the cliffs. Tools were scarce, an ax doing service for a hammer, and I did the sharpening of the drills by heating them in a cook stove, using a boulder for an anvil. In time we completed the grade, and the electric company came along one day and leased the plant for two hundred dollars a month.

Having established an income, which would provide for my wife and relieve me of that worry for the time being, I set about to regain the fortune which had been lost in my railroad ventures. During this time I had retained my ownership of the Ariadne, my mine in Colorado, which I knew would produce some capital in time of need. Therefore, having arranged my affairs in Alaska so that I could absent myself for a while, I returned to the San Juan, where even single-handed I knew that I could take out enough ore to make me a decent stake by the time I was ready to return to Alaska. At Silverton I hired a burro train to take my supplies up to the mine. I found the workings all in good condition, but the winze on the third level, where I wanted to work, was half full of water. This was overcome by putting in a stage at the water level, and I began work on a small streak of ore on the footwall of the lode. As I shot out the quartz the streak widened, and in a week I was well into the vein under the ore step above. Tossing the broken mineral onto the stage, letting the waste drop into the shaft, and loading the ore into the bucket, I would climb the ladder to the level above, windless up the loaded bucket, and dump it into the car. When the car was loaded, it was run out to the dump, the ore put into sacks, and piled up until I had a car shipment. As I drove ahead in the drift the ore streak gradually widened until the entire face was mineral, and one morning I took a sample from the foot wall that looked so good that I rushed to town and caught the assayer just as he was putting through a batch of assays. The ore proved to be worth $370 to the ton! I had nearly two carloads of ore sacked, and continued to push the drift ahead, with no change in the vein.

One afternoon, while putting in a shot, I heard some one descending the ladder, and presently a light appeared coming along the drift. It proved to be Colonel E. C. Condit, a well-known promoter around the San Juan and a man who had brought many thousand of dollars into the district. He said he had heard of my work at the mine and wanted to see it; that if terms could be arranged he would include the Ariadne in a company he was organizing. He made a careful examination of all the workings, and said: "I will pay you $100,000 in easy payments in money,

300,000 shares of stock in my company, and if you will come to Silverton, I will give you $5,000 to bind the bargain."

I did not reply for a few minutes, during which my memory floated back to the time when I was offered $75,000 and the mine was only a prospect. Experience had taught me since then that it takes capital to develop mines, and while I could make a good living working the mine by myself, the time would come when a deeper mining would call for more money than I could command. So, turning to my visitor, I replied, "Colonel, you're on!"

In Silverton I received the first payment of $5,000, and the following afternoon took the train for Seattle, arriving there just in time to catch the "Santa Ana" for Valdez.

Chapter XXXVIII

Many changes had taken place in Valdez during my absence. The prospect of Valdez becoming the terminus of a railroad had naturally started a building boom, so that every lot owner was putting up some kind of shack in order to protect his title, and little attention was given to the railroad activities at the new town site. Alaska at that time was in high favor all through the East, and a railroad up the Copper River also was being talked of. The Government was laying a cable from Seattle, mines were being discovered in the hills surrounding the town, and one had already begun to pay dividends.

A letter was waiting for me in the post office, appointing me manager of the Alaska Consolidated Copper Company on Nugget Creek, 175 miles in the interior. I had been on Nugget Creek prior to this, and had seen a nugget of copper weighing about four and a half tons on the property, with outcroppings of bornite on the mountainside. This appointment caused me to hurry back to the States to assist in financing operations. We raised $200,000 in the next six months, the largest subscription being gathered at such places as Lancaster, reading, York, Baltimore, and Washington. At Baltimore we entered a hotel at ten o'clock in the forenoon. At ten-forty-five we had a check for $10,000, and the next day secured $40,000 from a bank near Havre de Grace.

The long trip into the interior was accomplished, packing in supplies. Commencing work on the property, we found a large block of solid are at the entrance of the tunnel, which was probably the bottom of some rich lense that had been eroded away in prehistoric times, as underneath the ground the ore gradually tapered into small pockets, and finally disseminated among the calcite (lime). I sank the shaft and ran drifts on the vein in search of more of the rich lenses found on the surface, as that was the only ore that would stand shipment. In this way months passed, during which the railroad up the Copper River was built, and we then began hauling the sacked ore to Strelna, the railroad station nearest to us, a distance of twenty-three miles. I had also opened other deposits near by, and Steve Birch made us a visit, remarking as he left that we had a fine property, and that all it needed was work. The proposition was so encouraging that I made a trip to New York to promote the extension of the railroad from Strelna to the mine. Mr. Stewart and I called on J. P. Morgan, who lent us considerable encouragement by assuring us that whenever the engineers reported a sufficient tonnage of ore in sight the road would be built.

All was not well, however, in the councils of the company. A change was desired in the directory, and my principal was offered a handsome sum to step out. He did not take it, but had to resign anyway. The new president was Samuel Warriner, president of the Lehigh Valley Coal & Navigation Company, who selected George Dubois, mining engineer to be manager in my stead.

Dubios was supplied with a large sum of money, ample to build a mill of large capacity. After a year of his administration the new manager made a statement that he had developed $5,000,000 worth of ore and wanted a mill. Mr. Warriner went to Alaska to corroborate the report, and on his return from the mine it was whispered that Dubois' figures had somewhat exaggerated the tonnage. The next day the body of Dubois was found in the Philadelphia River with a rock tied to his neck. Since then the Nugget Creek Mine has been idle. The big copper nugget is still there.

The World War had started. My power plant at Valdez was completed and supplying the town, the government fort, and one of the local mines with light and power. The railroad had laid five miles of track and was in status quo. The Guggenheims had built the Copper River & Northwestern to the Kennicott mines. I was summoned to Juneau in my capacity as consulting engineer for the Alaska Treasure Company on Douglas Island, to make an examination of a property, plan a system of development, install a power plant and build a twenty-stamp mill to be used to sample the ore, all of which occupied several months.

On the completion of this project, I was invited to participate in a bear hunt on Admiralty Island, together with Fred Stone, the president of the Company, Louis Potter, a New York sculptor, and Baron von Olegar of London. Our boat was a powerful steam launch, in charge of Captain Rufus Graham, with a camp cook and roustabout.

Our course lay up a channel of the Glass peninsula, then turning into an estuary called "Windfall Harbor." We had scarcely made the turn when we saw a bear prowling around some huts on shore. Mr. Potter took a shot at him, but bruin scampered off into the timber. Just ahead were five deer swimming across the inlet, but no sportsman would shoot a deer in the water, we passed on to a good landing place, where we tied up and spread out into the forest with our guns. We saw but one bear, and that was when I was making my way through a clump of bushes. A big black bear was in the middle of the brush, standing upright, with one forearm around a bush loaded with salmon berries on which he was feeding. The surprise of our sudden meeting was so great that I do not know who was the most scared. I was within five feet of his paws, and he could easily have reached out and ripped me from head to toe. Instead, he turned on his hind legs, and as I ran away I turned my head and saw him loping madly through the timber! I did not even get a shot at him.

The other two hunters brought in a young buck, and that evening we changed from city provender to juicy venison steaks, with salmon berries for dessert. The night was made hideous by the coyotes, that kept up a serenade of howls and blood-curdling screams which seemed to come from a band of fifty. It is amazing what a racket a few of these wolves can make when they are following a trail. At the Ariadne mine I had had some eerie nights when a big porcupine would start his scratching on the mine building, sounding like a sawmill wrestling with a knotty log, and three or four coyotes would come racing up the basin, snarling, screaming, and yelping, as if they were close to their quarry. That night on the boat, nobody got any sleep, and to vary the monotony of the serenade, one after the other of us would crawl out of his bunk, reach for his rifle, and take a shot out of the cabin window. As a matter of fact, however, we had not expected the comforts of home while on this trip, and we certainly were not disappointed. A sportsman will sleep out in the woods in wet clothes, eat with his fingers, and under go any hardship for the thrill of bringing down his game, whether it be bear or buzzard.

The next morning the launch was cast off and we moved to the head of the inlet, where a large creek emptied into the salt water. We landed on an expansive flat through which the creek wound, in a series of bends. The flat itself was trampled about with hundreds of bear tracks, which made it resemble a corral. The stream was loading with fish, humpbacks and dog salmon, as they are called. There must have been millions and millions of them. In crossing the creek we had to push the fish aside in order to get through. Our roustabout was an Indian, and he made us hide behind trees.

Presently a large she bear emerged from the timber driving her two cubs ahead. As soon as the young ones saw the salmon in the creek they scrambled in and played exactly like a couple of boys. They then began to pick up the fish with their sharp claws and throw them at one another, but this the old mother would not stand for. She trundled down the bank, reached for the cubs with both forearms, much in the same manner as the Captain catches the Katzenjhammer Kids, and slammed them together as if to say, "Didn't I tell you to leave those salmon alone?" Then she tossed them on to the bank, where they scampered away, with Ma after them.

We were about to move toward the boat, but Indian Jake motioned up to keep our place behind the trees. The hillsides were heavily timbered, and well-worn trails ran through the forest in every direction. We had not long to wait, for the bears were coming from their hideouts for dinner, and they made straight for the creek. I counted seventeen feeding on the salmon at the same time, all within two hundred yards of us. We watched them for an hour, and it was only when most of them had disappeared up their trails that Jake waved his hand to us to began firing. At the first volley no one hit a target, and we lost our best chance, for when the bears start to run, although they have a clumsy gait, it would take a fast horse to keep up with them. One of them was making the run up the flat on the other side of the creek. Indian Jake and I floundered across the stream after him, to try to head him off. Jake fired and apparently missed, and I did the same. The bear was now within fifty yards, and coming full tilt. The situation was desperate, for another miss meant death to one of us. I dropped on one knee and fired just as he raised his head for another leap. The shot caught him square in the throat and almost raked him for and aft, for we afterwards found the bullet in the muscles of his stomach. It was a splendid specimen of black bear, as large as any I have seen outside of Kodiak, and his skin went to the home of Mr. Stone as a prize exhibit. Potter in the meantime had killed two of the bears, and with another deer brought down by Stone, we left for Juneau with the felling that our trip had been a success.

Chapter XXXIX

The route to Prince William Sound from Juneau lies through Icy Straits, which is the northern end of the inside passage, although some masters take their boats through a channel nearer to the open sea, to avoid the ever present danger of ice. The straits at times are full of floating blocks coming from the Muir Glacier. Some of them are large enough to assume the dimensions of icebergs, and every so often a mass is turned loose which may be several acres in extent and moves out to the sea covered with trees and vegetation, with all the dignity and enchantment of a floating island. The Alaskan glaciers are of such antiquity and moved so slowly that large trees and vegetation grow upon them before reaching the end and breaking off into the sea. As a matter of fact, much of Alaska is laid on a foundation of ice, which underlies a great deal of territory that has all the appearance of solid ground. This account for the fact that it is sometimes not possible to lay a finger on a spot which is not either rank, tropical vegetation or running water.

Out through Icy Straits, passing Cape Spencer, we emerged into the open sea, and most of the passengers took to their berths as the mighty wavers of the broad Pacific were captured and restrained by the curve of the Gulf of Alaska. The hoary summit of St. Elias was lost in the mist that hung over the coast range, and the white cliffs of Kayak Island was the first glimpse we got of Prince William Sound. Passing the Copper River delta, we were soon once more in Valdez.

The lease on my power plant was about to expire, and the local company, anticipating some difficulty in its renewal, had gone a few hundred yards above my intake, constructed another dam, and built a power house just above my works. This left me out in the cold with a power plant on my hands and no market for the power. A small town is always in a state of unrest, no matter what kind of service it gets, and Main Street will invariably encourage a rival utility. Such is human nature. To organize another local company to wire the town was only the work of a few days, and the new concern contracted with me to deliver them power at three cents a kilowatt. Happily, just then another payment on the Ariadne arrived, and I was able to build my own transmission line from the plant to the town, a distance of seven miles. The new company quickly signed up a majority of the consumers, and then the war was on!

My competitors' plant being above mine, it commanded a view of the full length of my flume, so that I was completely at its mercy, In the night I would suddenly see the lights in the town across the bay grow dim and the voltage at the plant drop, which was the signal for trouble on the flume. There would be a run to the hill and a climb of 400 feet, partly by rope, until the intake was reached, to find no water was being delivered; then a wild run along the waterway, at last to find the sides of the flume chopped away and the water discharging into the gulch below. The rest of the night would be put in repairing the damage, and then there would be a week or two of peace, during which offers to purchase would come from the other company. Nothing coming of this, a stick of dynamite with a fuse just long enough to allow the powder to be carried through the pipe a couple of hundred feet would be inserted at the intake, and the resulting explosion would cause another shutdown.

This sort of thing got on my nerves, for no amount of watching had any effect. I had put a guard on the flume with a shotgun, but the vandals shifted their operations to the transmission line, short-circuiting the wires in the most difficult places to find. Finally, the guard was shot off

the flume, but the murderer was never found. I had plenty of power, but the market was limited, which added to the cutthroat competition made life a burden, and supplemented my crop of gray hairs. The other company never missed an opportunity to try to buy me out, and I was equally stubborn in refusing to sell. My water right, having been located prior to the advent of conservation, was free from government interference and therefore, under any other conditions, would be valuable. But the blight of conservation was now spreading over Alaska. The influx of pioneers, businessmen and prospectors was tapering down. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, I accepted an offer for my plant and followed the stampede to the States.

The old Santa Ana, a steamer of doubtful ancestry and one of the fraternity that had long been condemned on the Eastern seaboard, but which was a crack boat compared to some of the Alaska fleet of those days, was returning to Seattle crowded to the taffrail. I took passage with the benighted pilgrims who could not find a berth and made up their beds on the dining tables. At Cordova, Kayak, and Yakutat we picked up more passengers, for like the New York subway during rush hours, there was always room for one more. To make the trip more interesting, the ship's larder was not overstocked, and the purser, with an eye to his company's welfare, would find supplies conveniently scarce in the way ports as we "went down." At Juneau we had a list of 197 passengers, and the purser opened the ship's purse strings to the extent of $19.75 for delicacies for the rest of the trip. It was a hungry and angry crowd that filed over the gangplank at Seattle, but the Santa Ana was going on the Southern run, and why worry over the troubles of the Alaska crowd?

On my return to the States, I was besieged by my friends who had large interests in our northern possession for an answer to the query, "Why is Alaska declining?" Now to me, who resided there for seventeen years and had watched the peculiar methods in vogue, the answer was easy: "because of conservation, the constant meddling of government officials, and the still worse system of 'home rule.'" From 1896 to 1910 the population of "Seward's Folly" had increased by leaps and bound, the gold production of the vicious Federal license laws and the unconscionable rulings of the Land Office. Then came the blow that finally killed Alaska. It went under the name of "Conservation," but it was really an attempt to gather all the public lands of the territory into an estate; its forests, of old ago? The area embraced by this reserve receives rainfall of 70 to 120 inches per annum. As over 90% of this reserve is destitute of timber and the treeless Aleutian islands to the westward receive more rain than this does, the idea that the cutting of the timber needed by our citizens will have any effect on the rainfall is utterly absurd. The river and creeks have their sources in the everlasting glaciers, and would flow bank full for generations without a drop of precipitation. Furthermore, Alaska has a superabundance of rivers, and the country could be more easily developed if water was not running everywhere to increase the difficulties and perils of pioneering. There never has been a fire in this reserve and never will be. It is soaked with rain in the summer and covered with snow in the winter.

If this conservation policy is for the purpose of raising government revenue, the record is pathetic. It has cost the Treasury $2 for every $1 collected so far, besides imposing a tax of thousands of dollars on the residents in obtaining permits. The Forest Service cannot show one single benefit it has conferred upon the people living in this reserve, upon the people, if any, who will live in it in the future, or upon the people of the United States generally.

Chapter XL

The sale of the power plant brought me $100,000 in securities, and my next objective was Washington D.C. There, as a bull in a bear market, I promptly dropped some $8,000 in U.S. Steel common, and Dean, Onatova & Company failed and swallowed up the rest of my available cash. Then my thoughts again reverted to my mining property in Colorado, which had come back to me on the failure of the promoters' plans in Switzerland.

In New York I met my old friend and promoter, Ambler J. Stewart, and together we started out as of yore in search of capital with which to properly develop the Ariadne. We were successful from the start. We found investors in an office on Nassau Street in the persons of B. F. Barling and H. H. Seaman. Barling was a mining engineer and Seaman a retired bond salesman. The two made an ideal combination and impressed capital favorably. The result was that they raised $55,000 as working capital, for which I gave their syndicate a deed for one-half interest in the Ariadne group of mines.

During the two years which followed, new ore was opened up on deeper levels and adjoining property was acquired which increased our holdings to four hundred acres, with six thousand feet of development and one tunnel penetrating the mountains more than half a mile. With this addition to the Ariadne the syndicate organized the Ariadne Corporation and $21,000 was added to the treasury.

Above timberline we had another tunnel that had already been driven through the Uncle Sam lode, but the three-hundred-foot drift, which had been made, was badly caved, leaving a series of awesome caverns overhead. To retimber this was probably the most dangerous job I had ever undertaken in mine. Great blocks of ore had been caught in their descent from a hundred feet above and hung by their points to the slight swellings in the walls. Every few hours other blocks would be dislodged from the stope and come down with a crash, bringing in their wake tons of debris.

With one man to help me, we had trammed out hundreds of tons, and by dint of placing sets of heavy timbers close together we were gaining some headway. One particular vicious looking spot caused us trouble and nearly cost me my life. A three-ton flat rock had found its "apex of rest" on the footwall, but was gradually sliding down until it was within ten feet of the level, my object was to set the timbers so as to keep it out of the drift. A pile of clay muck had accumulated where I was working, and when I was about to set the post I noticed that the rock had resumed its slide. I tried to withdraw my foot from the muck, but it was fast. I wrenched, and reached for a hold on the timbers, but the monstrous slab of ore kept coming until it was over my foot, and I was fast in a horrible vise. On and on it came, slowly, inexorably, bearing me down, and would soon be over my body unless help came. I yelled to my helper to get his arms around my body and pull, but I could not budge. At last my right foot found lodgment against a rock and I gave another wrench, which pulled my left foot out of the rubber boot and I fell back free. The next moment the rock had covered the long leg of rubber, and I saw it no more until the rock had been blasted and broken up.

It was early in February at the time, and the thermometer for days had stood at 14º below zero. Between the mine and the cabin was a great draw, down which the deep snow was ready to slide. Without my boot in the bitter cold, I was eager to reach the cabin, but the draw looked too

dangerous to cross. Without knowing whether or not it would work, I inserted a fuse in a stick of powder, lit the fuse, and tossed it into the snow. With the explosion came the roar of the avalanche, as it tore past the mine workings and swept everything along with it. We now had a safe trail to the house, where I made a warm fire and thawed out. It was several days before we could haul away the rock and debris, set the post in place, and proceed to other caves beyond.

A week after this happening my companion and I went to Silverton for supplies and I returned alone. The snow was deep, and I left at daybreak. The sky was clear but the morning was cold, and the lofty peaks of the region were surrounded in a heavy mantle that glistened in the sun with a silky sheen. My route lay up Cement Creek for three miles, where at our Yukon Mill I would turn up the mountainside. I wore web snowshoes, but the extra weight of the pack on my back caused me to sink deep at every step, and the snow falling in on the webs made my progress difficult.

It was one o'clock when I reached the mill, where I cooked some bacon for lunch and started out again. From the mill it was two miles to the mine, during which I had to ascend 2400 feet. By the time I arrived at timberline I was very tired. The snow was harder, but the sun had gone down and the cold was intense. It was growing dark as I dragged my weary limbs up the long slope of Uncle Sam Basin, but a bright moon coming up over the mountain peaks showed me the way. My clothes were stiff with frost, which was rather an advantage, as they kept out the icy blast. As night closed in I reached the foot of the steep slope which was covered with the last of the timber, and on the upper edge of this was the mine boarding house. The snow here was soft and six feet deep. My snowshoes were useless, as it was necessary to pat down the snow before I could put my weight on them, so I left them and plunged into it on all fours. It was only a hundred yards to the cabin, but it took every ounce of my strength, and when I burst in the door I fell prone on the floor, completely exhausted.

Those who now travel at ease on the highways which penetrate the mining district may sometimes see a small cabin or mine dump perched high on the slope of a lofty peak, and wonder about the tales of adventures and hardship which could be told by the human beings who clung to the cliffs and battled the forces of nature in order to discover her secrets and enjoy her treasure. The stories which I have told of my experiences in and within the mountains of the San Juan will give the reader some idea of the lives of the prospectors and pioneers of the rugged country, some of whom were not so fortunate as I in escaping its dangers.

In 1923 my Ariadne company, on account of a slump in the price of silver and lead, shut down all operations at the mine. Just as thirty years before, on account of a depression in mining I had left with my wife for the east, the cycle had returned and we again took up our residence in Washington D.C. To be sure the town had changed somewhat since the days of '93, but my old newspaper, the Washington Herald, was now flourishing under the ownership of Mr. Hearst and had become a power on Capital Hill among the great brains of the country.

Like many other new arrivals in Washington, I soon became an habitué of brokerage office, where I promptly invested and lost my slender capital in close margins, Among the stock operators I met one John Alden Standish, who intimated that he was interested in mining and offered me a liberal commission if I would go to North Carolina and make an examination of the Gold Hill Mine. Standish was president of the Pyorrout Laboratories at Rockville, Maryland, and I opined that I could not be wrong in tying up with such a time-honored name as he was carrying

about. After making the report, which was not a favorable one, we investigated the Vaucluse Mine near Fredericksburg, Virginia, a two-hundred acre tract of land that in 1830 had been the scene of one of the earliest gold operations in America. This mine had a fine record, so I looked up the owner, Judge Alvin T. Embrey of Fredericksburg, and when I left him I had bought the Vaucluse for $6000, having about $15,000 in operating the mine, cleaning out the various shafts and tunnels, and putting a large tonnage of ore in sight. While operating this property I had an offer of $200,000 for the mine with a down payment of $20,000 from the manager of a large English company. I took the proposed buyer with me to New York, where we found Standish occupying the bridal chambers in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel with his new wife. He nonchalantly refused the $20,000 deposit and calmly asked for two million dollars. Three months later Standish could not make the last payment of $4000 and the property went back to Judge Embrey. After many vain attempts to obtain another option, Henry Ford stepped in and bought the mine for $10,000, and removed the antiquated machinery to his museum at Dearborn. He has never put the Vaucluse in operation.

Another combination, under the name of the Virginia Gold Mines, availed itself of my services, and would have been successful had it been possible to finance the project, but the fact that it was so close to Washington militated against it, for no one would believe that there was any gold in Virginia. Had it been in Alaska, Canada, or Kamschatka, investors would have fought for the stock, for distance lends enchantment in mining as well as in personal charms.

The allure of the yellow metal still clung to me, and my irrepressible quest for gold resulted in a coalition with my old partner Ambler J. Stewart. Together we secured another Virginia gold mine that prior to the Civil War had been a noted producer. In fact, it was on this property that the first nugget of gold was found in this country. The name of this mine was the Whitehall, and the property consisted of a thousand acres of land. On this tract there are no less than fifty-two veins of quartz outcroppings, and there may be many more in the apex of which do not appear above the surface. There are large bodies of iron, both metallic and pyritic, which will be commercially profitable on the exhaustion of the Texas sulphur deposits. The immediate value of the property is in the quartz veins, nearly all of which are gold-bearing. These mines were in active operation at the time of the Civil War, but were closed on the arrival of the Confederate troops, who demanded that the miners either join the army or go north. The operators, being Northerners, elected to leave, and the shafts were filled up, the machinery destroyed, and the building burned. One shaft in particular, where a pocket of gold amounting to $240,000 was found within a space of three feet square at a depth of twenty-eight feet, was filled to the top, and at the time of our arrival an oak tree two feet in diameter was growing in the center of it. In addition to this pocket, a report written by the superintendent in 1859 stated that $172,000 was also recovered in a stamp mill within a few months.

There were some drawbacks, which we had to overcome before success could be reached. As luck would have it, the best showings of quartz were found to be in low ground. We had a forty-foot shaft there, and opened several pockets of the rich quartz that indicated the presence of a prospective mine. We had sunk the shaft to sixty feet when a heavy rain fell one night and the next morning we found our shaft in a middle of a lake. As this situation could not be remedied without the expenditure of much capital, we were compelled to take our loss and give up the Whitehall.

It would be natural for the ordinary individual to reason that with so many failures to my credit it would be proper for me to withdraw from the mining business and try something else. But not I! The glamour of the mines has been ingrained in my bones, and I must keep on. Any way one looks at it, I must have a nose for the mineral, or I never would have prowled about in the Blue Ridge Mountains until I discovered a fine deposit of native copper. Immediately I got busy in its development, secured a twenty-year lease on a thousand acres, organized the Blue Ridge Copper Company. I sold some stock, and one enthusiastic stockholder was so delighted with the showing that he wrote me the following letter:

Washington, D.C., May 6, 1929

"Dear Mr. Iles,

"Recently, on hearing of your find of copper ore in the Old Dominion State, in company with some mining friends, it was good pleasure, also great surprise, to visit your Blue Ridge Copper property, some 1200 feet up on the southern slopes of Mt. Marshall, Virginia, which we reached by alighting at Little Washington, journeying by horseback along beautiful Rush River and up the mountain slopes to the goal, a trip of about three hours and one thrill after another. This venerable old mountain seemed to tower 2000 feet higher, and from the enormous amount of the real red metal deposit viable, I think no doubt in the future it will be known far and near as Copper Mountain.

"I have personally visited big mines in the great Southwest and helped to work some. After carefully going over your 1000 acres of unique holdings, never before have I seen such an opportunity to quickly develop a great producing copper mine; never before have I ever seen or ever heard of any mine so favorably located for workings: an abundance of water, health and living conditions simply ideal and so clean, in God's sunshine, fine native timber surrounding, and labor eagerly waiting at minimum wage. The ore can be taken out so easily, sent down to low levels by gravity to great ore bins, form which it can be loaded on cars or trucks, and on hard roads taken to nearby markets just as rapidly as men, machinery, and powder can loosen it from the mountainsides, which should be hundreds of tons daily, then increase to thousands, operating day and night, by sunlight and electricity. It seems to me that no one can go over the property, if they have a mining knowledge, without being deeply impressed with its immense wealth so near at hand. There need be no long-drawn-out-make-ready, but high grade ore quarried right now from the surface, and millions of tons, as is usual with such copper deposits, will no doubt be found richer with depth.

"It is so remarkable that the old mountains of the East have been overlooked since 1849, in the rush to California, and that it has remained for you, after traveling the world over inspecting various mines, to make the richest find of copper deposits known to the world today, perhaps, high up on the Blue Ridge, surrounded by primeval forest, which I think will prove better then a gold mine soon, growing better for a century.

"You deserve great credit. Your capitalization is small ($500,000), and selling about one-fourth of it will suffice. We predict a big winner in profits for you and your associates. If you need development funds your friends here will gladly inspect it and join you quickly if they want to make good honest dollars fast. It is a rare opportunity, which we have never had in the east. By

all means hold your controlling interest, as its quick earning will make you rich soon. Your great practical experience and your staying on the property to watch and direct its progress mean so much, and I would advise my closest friends to put in with you to the limit if given a chance. I trust, for a few weeks at least, you may afford them such an opportunity.

Very sincerely,

George Myerz”

The deposit continued to improve, and I was beginning to see a prosperous mine in sight, with dividends galore for my stockholders, when the government closed in on me and took possession of my land for a part of the Shenandoah National Park. Then, with a claim for damages of $20,000 against the State of Virginia, which will probably be paid to my grandchildren, if any. I gracefully withdrew from one of the finest propositions with which I was ever connected.

Chapter XLI

The greatest disaster of my life came in March 1928, while my wife and I were in Washington after the closing of the Whitehall. We lived at the Westmoreland Apartments, where we had maintained our home for many years. Ida had not been well for several weeks, but on this day felt that a walk down Connecticut Avenue would benefit her. The morning was cold and a raw wind blowing up from the Potomac flats made our walk so disagreeable that after a few blocks we turned back. At the corner of Florida Avenue we met an old acquaintance and stood talking for some time. Reaching home, my wife complained of a cold and I advised her to go to bed while I prepared for her some simple remedy.

Towards evening of the next day she felt worse and I put in a call for a doctor, but none responded. Late that night a doctor came, but after he had examined the patient he said he could not prescribe for her because he was not a general practitioner but a surgeon. Again I called for a physician, but it was noon on the third day of her illness before one came. Pronouncing double pneumonia, he ordered a nurse and gave me no encouragement. By evening her pulse had stopped and I prepared for the worst. I had been in constant attendance on my beloved wife since she took to her bed and as night wore on I noticed her hands and lower limbs were growing cold, so I heated them with hot water bags. Her breathing was difficult and her chest sounded dry. She tried to talk to me, but I could not distinguish what she said. Then she lay quiet until 2:00 A.M., when she said clearly, “You are worn out, Allie. Lie down and get some sleep.” I lay down on the bed and she turned over on her side. I must have slept about fifteen minutes when I woke with a start, and reaching out my hand I felt her body growing cold. I sprang off the bed and ran to the other side. There she lay still in death, a seraphic smile on her face. I knelt by her side to chafe her dear hands, but all was quiet and I knew no more.

When I revived, the doctor was there and all that was left of the dearest woman in the world was being taken away in a basket by the undertaker to prepare for burial. We held the funeral services in a chapel and I took the body to Glens Falls, New York, where in the midst of the friends of her girlhood, she was lowered to rest in the family tomb with her parents. Thus passed the love of my life, my helpmate of thirty-five years, an incomparable wife, and a woman true as steel.

Lonely and discouraged, I tried to throw myself into the development of the copper deposits in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, with the results as given in the preceding chapter. My efforts to start a mining enterprise in the East were doomed to failure. It was getting late in the spring, and if I was to accomplish anything that year in the West, it was time for me to be moving. Therefore, I sold my apartment furnishings, and again turned my face to the San Juan, where I had spent so many happy days with my beloved Ida.

If one can stand an altitude of over 9000 feet, life in Silverton can be endured if not enjoyed by “holing up,” listening to the gossip of the neighbors, watching the bus come in, and if fortunate enough to have a job, trying to keep it. Silverton, being a thriving camp, is far ahead of the general run of the mining towns, and having the mines to support its population, it is the Mecca of outside miners in search of employment and the goal of the itinerant promoter, all of which tends to a state of versatility which is needed to absorb the surplus energy of the people. One thing to be sure, the town is not so “wide open” as in former times. The pack trains and ox

teams no longer crowd Greene Street, and lynching bees no longer put the fear of vigilance committees in the hearts of thieves and other evildoers. The businessmen do not outfit the prospector on credit any more, and the mine buyer has quit appearing on the dump of a new strike with his checkbook in his hand. The glamour of rich mineral is still there, but somehow the mines change hands differently from the methods of the ‘80s. I can recall the day when New Yorkers paid $250,000 for an Ouray claim, and all the sellers had with which to make the deal was a specimen of ruby silver from Mount Sneffles. Today the $250,000 would have to be blocked out in the mine before they got a nickel. But the mining game is still very much alive, and as long as one plays honestly and with business sense, there will always be profits in mining.

I am now coming to the end of my narrative. I have passed my eightieth year, and feel that I have earned at least a temporary rest. I have related my story without embellishment, at the risk of being called a first-class liar by those who do not know that truth is often stranger than fiction. As to whether it is believed I am entirely indifferent, for I am rich in my memories of adventures in all corner of the globe. My hairbreadth escapes from death have been almost uncanny. The incident of the Hugli River, where the ship passed over me and there was less than two fathoms of water between the bed of the muddy stream and the “Glasgow’s” keelson; the fall from the royal truck; the loss of the “Captain” when she went down with nearly all hands; the awful feeling of falling from a ship into the Red Sea in the dead of night in a gale of wind; the almost miraculous escape from drowning while being washed overboard by one sea and thrown back by another; the tumbling along the river bottom of the muddy Nebesna in Alaska; the extremely embarrassing situation I was in at the Ajo mine, when I was standing on the brink of a shaft with a rope around my neck, at the mercy of a band of hoodlums; the wild scramble up the shaft at Leadville to escape the explosion; the moments of terror as I watched tons of rock slip slowly down upon me in the true style of Edgar Allen Poe, not to mention the dallying with the deadly snow slides of the San Juan – These things have brought me close to Eternity and snatched me away again. Fate has ordained that I should miss them one after another, and seems to have me tucked comfortably under her wing until perhaps some time I will feel too sure of myself --

My story is one of adventure, struggle, and enterprise, in which failure and success is alternated with sometimes surprising rapidity. The reader, from a disinterested perspective, not influenced by the human element, which was present in each incident, can see my errors of judgment and so may take steps to avoid similar mishaps if confronted with like circumstances. The wise person is one who learns to capitalize upon and not be crushed by failure and misfortune. In the coming years I hope to take advantage of them myself. The secret of success seems to be embodied in the ability to know just when to hang on and when to let go, and it is not always possible to know at the time which procedure is best.

In chronicling many of my disappointments in mining ventures, it was not so much to record the events of my life as to give first-hand information to those who follow as to locations in which lost mines are waiting to be rediscovered and developed. This old world has many fabulous treasures tucked away in her wrinkled old surface, waiting for the hardy prospector who is willing to dig. Let them take advantage of my sixty years of poking about this earth. In this story I have touched many opportunities, which may be seized with advantage by others who are in a position to work out the steps necessary to carry them to a successful conclusion.

There is one lost mine which I reserve for myself, and before "30" is written over my name and I am gathered to my forefathers, I will find it. Back in the summer of '81, one afternoon I was returning from a trip to the south fork of Cement Creek, on the side of Boulder Mountain. It was growing late, and I stopped for the night at the cabin of Doc Wattles, in the timber near Illinois Gulch. Doc was an old-time prospector, and what he did not know of Boulder Mountain was not worth telling. We sat up late swapping stories, he telling of hair-raising discoveries and I of my experience at sea. The next morning I was awakened by a rifle shot under my bunk, and on jumping from my bed I found that Doc had shot a ground hog that had crept into the cabin during the night and crawled under my bed. The ground hog was young and we had him for breakfast. After the meal Doc said he was going my way, and we started out together toward the Pride of Cement Mine, which was in the next gulch. The trail lay along the side of the mountain through heavy timber. After walking about half a mile Doc suddenly stepped off the trail, saying, "Wait a minute," and went straight down the hill. About eighty or a hundred feet below the trail he began to pick in the hillside, and I, curious to know what he had found, also went down to where he was working. He had laid a slab of the moss back and dug a hole about twelve inches in diameter, from which he was pulling out the broken rock with his hands. What I saw made me gasp! The hole was in white quartz, which was speckled all through with a glittering yellow metal. I reached in and took one of the flakes in my finger, thinking it was iron pyrite, but it bent to my touch and I knew it was gold. I slipped a piece of it into my pocket, and Doc, without a word, filled up the hole and covered it with the slab of moss that he had thrown back. He then motioned me back to the trail and we proceeded on our way. Later in the fall, Doc went to Seattle and died there.

After carefully preserving that piece of quartz all these years, in October 1935, I had it crushed and run into a button of gold by Root & Norton, the Durango assayers. The button weighs four pennyweights, showing that a ton of the same quartz is worth $84,000.

For the past several years I have searched that hillside, but there have been many changes in the district that I have not yet recognized it. Old trails have disappeared and new ones have been built, but I have at last located the remains of the old cabin, and feel that I am close to the spot where the blanket of green moss may again be laid aside to disclose the pot of gold which is at the end of every prospector's rainbow. But even if I do not find it, I can think of no lovelier spot in which to spend my last days. There is no place in the world where I would rather be, unless perhaps, if I find that mine, I may again be able to visit the island of Johanna, or some other quaint port in the South Seas!