

THREE LOST MINE MYTHS.

"LOST CABIN," "WHITE'S CEMENT" AND THE "PEG LEG."

They Are the Three Most Remarkable Myths in the West, and Today There Are Men Still Hunting Them.

A score or more of myths about gold mines of fabulous richness once discovered and then lost by some fateful incident or chain of accidents have bothered hundreds of imaginative treasure seekers in the Rockies and the Sierras. But there are three myths that are particularly bothersome to the old time miners in the far West. Two concern the miners of South Dakota and Colorado, and the third occupies the attention of the gold hunters in Southern California.

Everyone in the Rocky mountain region has heard about the White Cement mine, and the Lost Cabin mine. In 1855 Kit Carson, James Kinney and a half-breed Black-foot came into Fort Randall, on the Missouri river, with a bagful of nuggets and a story of gold deposits of incredible richness on Cabin creek, a branch of the north fork of the Cheyenne river, just west of what is now the Montana boundary line. As they were old mountain men, and Carson having a reputation as a guide, everybody went crazy. No white man was supposed to have been within 50 miles of the place, and, indeed, men were being cut off by Indians within five miles of the fort.

Carson and Kinney went on a week's frunk, and soon gambled away their gold, but showed no disposition to take a party to the new Eldorado. The United States officers at the fort discredited the whole thing and dissuaded the crowd from following it up, but men started out and none returned, and hundreds tried it from time to time. The Indians, no doubt, knew of the existence of gold there, and, of course, wanted to keep the whites out, and they did effectually for thirty years. Those who lived and a mountain of treasure were spent in seeking the location in vain, and it was believed by the old timers to be a fraud from the first. Neither Carson nor Kinney ever made the attempt to seek it again, but both repeated the original story from time to time.

The White Cement mine is more remarkable. White was a New Englander, 60 years old, who was in California in 1842. As a gold seeker he was known and talked about in every mining camp on the coast, and stories of his phenomenal riches, no doubt, made many fortunes, but was always poor, and tramped about with a lean mule and half-breed Indian boy, getting supplies where he could. Many people thought he was slightly demented, but all looked up to him, and he undoubtedly knew more about the gold region than any man living.

One day in 1853 White came into Horse Head gulch from the region in Northern New Mexico, driving his mule and looking utterly used up. He got something to eat and then took out of pack a number of pieces of what looked like hard white clay glittering with specks of metal, but he said little and went off to an assayer, a German named Helyat, and an honest man. Before night it was known in camp that White's specimens showed 1,000 ounces to the ton. In five minutes everyone went crazy. Nobody slept that night, but sat around the fire and talked "cement." In the morning a party headed by Senator Sharon's brother called on White, who was sleeping in one of the "shacks." He was told in a few words that he must pilot the men to his find; he should have the pick of the claims and help to work it, but so he must, and on his refusal was warned that his life would not be worth shucks if he "stood off" the camp. Then he consented.

A crazier mining camp was never known and anyone who has ever seen a lot of tired out and anxious gold miners set wild by belief that untold wealth is about to be theirs knows what a crazy lot of treasure seekers means. Men in Horse Head gulch, a little incredulous and not desirous of following White over 200 miles from camp, were offered \$1,000 to \$1,200 each for their camp outfits, consisting of a number of kettles, pans, greasy old blankets, a bushel of beans and two jackasses. But in two days there was no outfit to be bought in the whole gulch mining camp. Everyone was on the go and wanted his own outfit.

The trail led down across the Rockies. It was a very arduous journey even for the old miners, who seemed never to know what physical fatigue meant. It led along rocky trails, up and down canyons and across mountain crests. The first day was a failure and two-thirds of the men broke down. The Indian leaped ahead like a wolf, and then White followed, his long gray hair flying in the wind. By the end of the second day we were in the heart of the mountains, in a desert where no human being had ever been before. Half of the animals were lost, and the men were haggard with fatigue and excitement. White was in rags, and his face as false as he was a dead man, but he still pointed east. The weary party passed good indications that showed gold, but in that land of desolation all the gold in America would not have availed a man there.

On the evening of the third day White said the miners were near to their journey's end, and to-morrow—and then he waived his long arms, and such a yell went up from the frenzied men that partly mad at the pine-needle mountains shrike. Everyone lay down expecting to arise a millionaire, but in the morning White was gone and left no trace. About one-half of the party, after incredible suffering, got back to life and civilization, and yet despite their story 200 men started back over their trail two days after.

Three years after White reappeared in Salt Lake City with his cement specimens, as before, he was rich and again disappeared, and from that time to this has never been heard of, but men still wear out their lives in seeking his lost cement mine.

The "Peg Leg" mine, in Southern California, is the most famous of the fabulously rich mines west of the Rockies. It has been vainly hunted by treasure seekers for more than two decades. A gold miner, John G. Smith, who was known all over the southern part of the state as "Peg Leg" Smith, because of a wooden leg that he wore in place of a limb of bone and muscle, which had been amputated, came into Los Angeles one day in July, of 1871, with his camp outfit, and his mules laden with several sacks of gold ore. The rock was assayed by mining experts in San Diego and the news quickly spread that "Peg Leg" Smith had ore that ran all the way from \$100 to \$800 a ton. Of course, the whole country in and about what was then a little town of Los Angeles, was soon wildly excited at the news of the find of a mine that yielded such ore. Nothing like it had ever been found south of Nevada county. "Peg Leg" Smith was a curious character, kind of a fellow and it was several weeks before he could be induced to say a word about where he got his ore, and the quantity there was of such rock. When at last he did say anything about his discovered treasure, he refused to give but a vague idea of where it was located. He said, however, that it was down across the Colorado desert in the mountains in range of San Diego county, and until he knew whether this mine was located in the United States or Mexico he must keep that part a strict secret to himself. He said that he had spent five months in the locality of this mine with two half-breed Pima Indians, who had guided him there in payment for kindness he had rendered them in serious illness. He told again and again and always with rare exactness in detail and sure indications of his mine, the direction and slant of the gold-bearing ledges, the surrounding geological and mineral conditions and characteristics, and the work he and his Indian assistants had done in determining the quantity of the ore. "Peg Leg" said he was confident there was as much gold ore in his claim as in the Mackay, Fair and Queen's Comstock ledges in Nevada, and every miner who questioned and "pegged" him day after day made the same estimate from the old prospector's statements. Certainly \$50,000,000 or \$60,000,000 were in the mines.

Early in September, Peg Leg Smith turned up missing in Los Angeles, and the news came that he was dead a week or two later from San Bernardino that he had been there and had secretly "fitted out" for a camp of several months in the mountains and a mule ride across the desert. He had, at the last moment, taken two old mining chums with him and set out in the night. It is almost impossible to track a man across a desert of ever shifting sand, especially that the hot sun melts so that several thousand men who had made up their minds and prepared themselves to follow Peg Leg Smith to his treasure find, no matter what the hazard of death from starvation and thirst in crossing the awful desert, were forced to await the next appearance of the old fellow in the pueblo of Los Angeles.

From that time that Peg Leg and his companions set out from San Bernardino, nothing has ever been heard from the prospector. Several years later the dried and mummy-like remains of the two men who accompanied the old man, and the skeleton of the mules and remains of their wagon and mining tools were found 100 miles out on the Colorado desert, but not one trace of Peg Leg. It is probable that he could have escaped from that spot in the desert in September on foot.

From that time to this there have been periodic reports of the finding of mines that Smith told about. The California newspapers have annually had items and stories concerning the most recently reported discovery of the Peg Leg mines.

But the alleged treasure is still awaiting the man who will disclose it. Hundreds of men have risked their existence and suffered agony and pain in hunting for the treasure. A score of men have laid down their lives on the desert and among the mountains while seeking the enormous wealth that such a property as Peg Leg Smith described will surely yield. Only last May two men started out from San Diego, confident that some Indian's description of a mine at the south end of the Colorado desert answered the details of the Peg Leg ledges. They died of thirst with their mules before they had gone eighty miles from home. At this very time there are ten or a dozen miners who are spending the winter in search for the golden ore.

PELTED WITH ELECTRICITY.

Strange Phenomenon Witnessed by a Ship's Crew in an Atlantic Storm.

The peculiar experience of the crew of the British tank steamship Rock Light, Captain Collier, while en route from Rotterdam to this port has created interest among seafaring men, and especially scientific voyagers, says the Philadelphia Press. The Rock Light arrived at Marcus Hook several days ago, but owing to the heavy ice returned to the backwater and will reach here this morning. Captain Collier states that at 11:45 o'clock on the night of February 1, in latitude 41, longitude 43, during the prevalence of a heavy hail squall, a ball of fire or meteor descended from the heavens and, coming obliquely with a hissing noise, struck the sea about 250 yards to the seaward of the ship, causing a tremendous report and sending a heavy shock through the ship similar to a projectile passing right fore and aft. All hands were aroused, and it was thought that an explosion had occurred in one of the tanks, and Chief Officer Waters rushed below and called Captain Collier. There followed a vivid lightning and terrific hail and snow squalls, during which on the yardarm, masts, etc., could be seen small lights, or will-o'-the-wisps.

This lasted almost incessantly until 5 o'clock in the morning and the superstitious sailors became terrified and thought they were doomed. The weather then began to improve and by noon the wind had settled into a strong gale. From noon the barometer began to fall rapidly, with heavy hail squalls. At 4 o'clock it had increased to a hurricane, lasting until 8, when the wind began to fall, and by midnight moderated to a gale.

Nothing of note occurred from then until February 10, the ship being in latitude 29:44, longitude 62:20, when a somewhat similar experience was met with. At 7:30 o'clock that night blinding snow squalls of great force were raging and suddenly there appeared on the port fore yardarm a small light. In the space of a minute it gradually increased in size, when it burst with a loud report. The wind increased from then to a hurricane and continued until 1 o'clock the following day. A tremendous sea prevailed and had the ship fallen off in the trough considerable damage would have been sustained. This is the strangest experience that any of the officers of this ship had during their life at sea, and a full account of the voyage has already been sent to the officials of the United States navy at Washington. What caused the greatest alarm on board this ship was that she was filled with gas arising from empty oil tanks.

SEA PASTURES.

Some of the Curious Vegetable Organisms That Live in the Ocean.

London Times: At the Imperial Institute last week Mr. George Murray, of the British Museum, gave a lecture on "The Pastures of the Sea," which consisted of a brief account of the vegetable organisms which live in the ocean. Treating first of those seaweeds which grow near the land, he said they do not occur at a greater depth than fifty fathoms. They may be classified according to their color into red, olive-brown and green, and this classification corresponds fairly well with the natural one founded on considerations of structure.

The red seaweeds grow below low water mark, the green at high water mark, and the olive-brown between the marks. The colors appear to stand in direct relation with the supply of light, since sea water stops those rays which are especially concerned in the formation of chlorophyll. The red pigment, perhaps, acts as a shield to protect the plant from the blue rays which pass through sea water abundantly. But in view of the teeming animal life of the sea, these trifling amounts of coast seaweeds cannot be considered sufficient to maintain the necessary balance between animal and vegetable life. This is effected by the floating microscopic plants which are found in almost all waters, sometimes in immense masses, as in the Red sea, which takes its name from their color. They occur in fresh waters, too; the spray of the fountains in Kensington gardens in autumn has a blue green tint which is due to the presence of a species of this plant.

The floating weed in the Sargasso sea is a puzzling phenomenon. It has been supposed to be seaweed washed off from the Antilles, but unfortunately for that theory no plant of the same species has ever been found growing in those islands. In conclusion, the lecturer urged the necessity of further study of the ocean and its economy.

Serious.

Washington Star: "I suppose you have given your mind to serious reflection during Lent," said one citizen. "Yes," replied the other, "When I feel that I have given enough thought to my daughter's Easter costumes I think about their hotel bills at the seashore next summer."

BRIEF ITEMS BY WIRE.

Denver, Col., March 29.—State Senator Robert Turner, of Idaho Springs, died today of consumption, from which he has suffered for years.

Jefferson City, Mo., March 29.—(Special.) Upon order from the governor, Secretary of State to-day issued a commission to Emil F. Helf as second Lieutenant Company F, Third Regiment, N. G. M.

Guthrie, O. T., March 29.—(Special.) J. I. Rogers, W. F. Broten and William Ansel, of Grant county, have been lodged in the United States jail here charged with conspiracy to defraud other settlers out of their claims.

San Antonio, Tex., March 29.—Dr. James Kennedy, one of the most advanced scientists in the country, who formerly occupied the professorship of pharmacy in the state university at Galveston, died here today of Bright's disease.

Iola, Kas., March 29.—(Special.) Tommy McClure, 15 years old, son of W. H. McClure, accidentally shot himself this afternoon. The bullet passed entirely through his body, striking the left lung. He may recover.

Fort Smith, Ark., March 29.—Joe Morris, who was shot by "Verdigris Kid" in the raid upon Brazor's yesterday, died this morning. He attempted to run out of Madden's store when the kid shot him in the side of the back just above the point of the hip.

Lawrence, Kas., March 29.—(Special.) The city ordinance against the sale of cigarettes in Lawrence went into effect last night. It is unlawful for a dealer to dispose of them in any way to any person, and the penalty for violation of the law is a fine ranging from \$5 to \$25.

Lawrence, Kas., March 29.—(Special.) The Baptist Young People's Society of the Kansas river, the Missouri river and the Miami districts will meet in this city next week, in a two days' convention. It is expected that there will be a large number of young people in attendance.

Colorado Springs, Col., March 29.—Judge Walker to-day bound over to the district court in \$500 cash the Closkey brothers, leasers on the Pike's Peak mine, who are charged with concealing much valuable ore and defrauding the Union company out of a large amount of royalty.

Fort Scott, Kas., March 29.—(Special.) While driving near the Missouri Pacific depot this evening, the team of M. Coffman, a farmer residing four miles from this city, ran away, throwing Mr. Coffman out of the wagon. He received several severe cuts on the head, which are liable to prove fatal.

Lawrence, Kas., March 29.—(Special.) The body found last night proved to be that of Colonel John E. Dodge, who had committed suicide on his wife's grave by shooting himself with a shotgun. In his pocket was found a note stating that the cause of his act was ill health. Dodge was an old settler in this county, and at one time was superintendent of the county poor farm.

Guthrie, O. T., March 29.—(Special.) Robert Whiston and John Trussler, two farmers, living ten miles south of here, quarreled last night over the payment for a load of hay, and Whiston stabbed Trussler several times in the stomach and abdomen with a jack knife, inflicting fatal wounds. Whiston has been jailed awaiting the effect of Trussler's injuries.

Springfield, Mass., March 29.—James McBride, a quartermaster, today visited Mrs. David Rockford, a widow to whom he had been paying attention. McBride went to her home, and, after a few words, sent two bullets into her forehead, killing her instantly. McBride went to his boarding house, told the landlady what he had done and said he was going to kill himself. He has not since been seen.

GOLD IN THE OCEAN.

MAY THE WORLD BECOME RICH FROM BOILING SEA WATER?

A Neat Scientific Scheme—Millions of Tons of the Yellow Metal Held in Suspension in the Sea in the Form of an Iodide.

Forty-four years ago Malaguti and Durocher started the world by announcing that the ocean contained silver, but in such small proportions that it would hardly be profitable to attempt to gather it. The more important and far-reaching discovery has now been made that the waters of the vast oceans contain gold in solution in quantities that would make an output could be more than tripled if science finds a way of extracting the precious metal. In 1872 Sonstadt first demonstrated that there were traces of gold in the ocean, held in solution, but he never pursued his inquiries far enough to show that it was in any large quantity. It remained for later investigators, encouraged by the high prices for gold to determine the approximate quantity held in solution.

There is reason to believe that in the future more gold will be extracted from the salt waters of the ocean than from the mines now worked in the richest part of the world's gold regions. The vast size of the oceans makes the field practically inexhaustible, and while the mines of the land are yielding their thousands of tons the seas will produce their millions. Even though the gold is found in small quantities, the aggregate yield would be enormous. Extracting the gold from the ocean will also be attended with less risk and exposure to danger and the work will be not very much different from that required to obtain refined salt from the ocean. Professor Ramsey, one of the best gold experts and mineralogists in this country, has given considerable attention to the subject, and in speaking about it he gave some interesting facts.

"It seems almost like reviving the dreams of the alchemists in predicting that gold will soon be produced abundantly by ocean miners," he said. "Nevertheless, there is sufficient scientific data to warrant one in this speculation. It is no new thing to discover either silver or gold in salt water, but recent researches have directed more interest toward the subject by proving that the quantity is large enough to be of practical use. The exact quantity of a ton of ocean water contains depends upon local conditions, and varies all the way from one-twelfth to one-quarter of a grain. Even much higher proportions of gold may be found in portions of the ocean not yet investigated. The temperature of the water greatly affects the amount of gold held in solution, the warmer the water the less amount one would find, and the colder the temperature the more that would be held in solution.

"Taking the low figures given for the waters in warm climates—one-thirtieth of a grain of gold to one ton of sea water—and what probable yield of gold would one find? Why, it would be an enormous quantity—one that would completely eclipse our present product on the land. The average depth of the ocean has been scientifically estimated at 2,500 fathoms, with 498,000,000 cubic meters of water in this vast area about 1,837,000,272,000 million tons of water are deposited—an amount that is hardly conceivable when expressed in figures. Well, if each ton yielded the lowest quantity of gold obtained, the whole yield of the ocean would be about 10,250 million tons of gold.

"Just stop and think of that for a moment. Gold would be so plentiful with this amount of sea water that it would make furnishing the precious metal, and even build houses with it. A solid gold ring could be had for a few cents. Silver would be worth sixty times as much as gold. Instead of trying to put the currency of the world on a gold basis financiers would tumble over each other in their efforts to get rid of all gold money. We would think no more of the precious metal than we do now of iron or copper, and it would be no more desirable than iron. The amount of gold in the ocean with the total quantity that has been taken from the gold mines of the world during the last four centuries. The total output of the whole world from 1841 to 1894 approximated about 5,000 tons, and the present annual output is about 200 tons. What an insignificant quantity! And the reports are that the gold mines of the world are showing decided signs of exhaustion. This is not so, the ocean is held in solution by the iodine which is obtained from the iodate of calcium. If you mix gold with solutions of iodine it can very readily be reduced to a soluble state, and in this condition it can be prevented from dropping through the water to the bottom. Possibly the lower strata of water contains certain considerable quantities of precipitated gold that has never yet been reached by deep soundings. We know that it is frequently released and drawn up by the iodine, for this latter is absorbed by the seaweeds and plant growths of the ocean. Along the coasts of Great Britain, France and Sweden the "kelp" or seaweed is gathered and burned, and then from the ashes iodine is extracted. This iodine in its simple form in the water, before being absorbed by the plants, holds the gold of the ocean in solution.

"Formerly the iodine was in much greater quantities than to-day, and in past geological ages it abounded in every body of salt water. Occasionally experimenters have obtained traces of iodine from rain water along the borders of the oceans, showing that it has been taken up by the wind and sun. Every time this iodine liberates the gold it probably drops to the bottom of the ocean to form beds of gold for future generations. Should the ocean ever be raised from the Sargasso sea great veins of precipitated gold may be found there, for the vast forests of seaweed are continually absorbing the iodine and releasing the soluble gold. Unless arrested by other deposits of iodine the released gold would rain down upon the bottom of the sea in continued showers.

"The iodine which holds the gold of the ocean comes from the iodate of calcium. The amount of free iodine is not great in the ocean, but it is constantly being liberated by the iodate of calcium. As soon as this comes into contact with dead organic matter it becomes decomposed, and the iodine is formed. The amount of iodate of calcium in the ocean has been computed at nearly 5,000,000 of tons. This gives an enormous quantity of iodine in one form, and wherever free iodine is found there gold is held in solution in more or less quantity.

"The question of obtaining this gold from the ocean is the most important that concerns us to-day. If these vast reservoirs of gold could be opened up to commerce the world would be deluged with the yellow metal. No one could wish that the yield would be too large, for the depression of the metal would be so great that no one would be actually benefited by it. Besides the money centers of the world would be shaken to their foundations. Coin and currency of all kinds would be so altered in value that no man could tell rightly what he was worth. Governments would be bankrupt, and everybody who had their fortune in currency and gold would suffer. "But, of course, no matter how successful the ocean mining may prove, no such sudden supply is going to be thrown upon the world's markets. The whole ocean could not be raked over in thousands of years, and the discovery of the new sources of supply would result only in satisfying people that gold is plentiful around in the land and ocean to supply all future generations with it. The fear of a gold famine could no longer be entertained.

"The soluble gold can be readily precipitated from the iodine, and hence from the salt water, and at the rate of one-tenth of a grain to the ton it would pay a large amount to put up enormous vats to receive the gold from the ocean. A series of such vats could dispose of thousands of tons of water in a day. Before this is done, however, the question of location must be decided. It would not pay to put up expensive machinery along the coast where the yield was one-tenth of a grain when another part of the ocean would yield as high as one-quarter or one-half of a grain. The latter would soon drive the former out of the business. The northern latitudes so far have given a higher percentage of gold than the southern, and it is possible yet to discover places where the yield will be quite large. Off the Isle of Man the yield was found to be about one-thirtieth of a grain and the water from the Kristina Fiord yielded one-tenth of a grain. In the Southern Pacific the yield has run as low as one-fifteenth of a grain and off the Greenland coast the water produced a higher solution of gold than either of the other three places.

"From the results so far obtained we may judge that in a few years efforts will be made on a large scale to extract gold from the ocean for commercial purposes. The question has hardly yet left the laboratory of the scientist, but usually where there is money to be made the transition from scientific experiment to practical application is very sudden. This we may predict of ocean gold mining."

Mr. Stillman Does Not Know.

San Francisco, March 29.—T. E. Stillman, of the New York firm of Stillman & Hubbard, representing the Hopkins-Sears interests in the Southern Pacific and Central Pacific roads, is here to attend the annual directors' meeting early in April. In an interview Mr. Stillman said: "I do not know who will be the next president of the road. There is no programme. I don't know whether it will be Mr. Huntington or not. I have seen stated in one of the papers that Mr. Hubbard might be or either whether Hopkins-Sears interests are favorable to C. P. Huntington. It is said there may be a fight when it comes to the election."