

THE NEW EL DORADO

BY EDWIN MORRIS

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A STREET IN THE PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

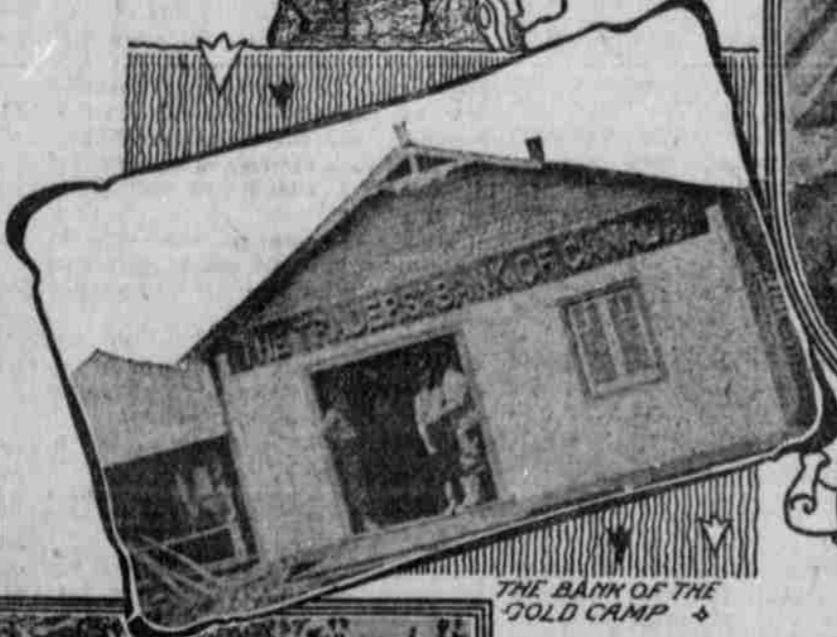


A HOTEL IN THE NEW EL DORADO

In the summer of 1909, when gold was discovered in the Porcupine Lake mining district of Canada, about 500 miles north of Toronto, the region was so inaccessible and the conditions of life were so hard that nothing except the lure of gold could have brought white men to the spot. Everywhere was a trackless, low-lying forest. Perhaps it would be more nearly accurate to say that everywhere was a great marsh filled with trees. In the winter the temperature dropped to 60 degrees below zero and the snow rose to the forest branches. In the summer there was a pest of insects. Poisonous black flies—almost invisible because of their smallness—buzzed all the day. At night the black flies laid off and the mosquitoes came on. There was never a summer hour, by day or night, when a human being could have lived at peace; when his face would not have been stinging; when his swollen features would not have made him grotesque.

But few had ever suffered, because there were only a few to suffer. Only an occasional trapper ever penetrated the wilderness. The prospector had not come, because the prospector, as a rule, goes only where mountains beckon. The prospector did not know that mountains, like teeth, may wear off until only their roots remain. Nor did the prospector know that, in the great dentistry of nature, these mountain roots are sometimes filled with gold and silver, nickel and iron.

Yet such is the fact. When the world was young a mountain range



THE BANK OF THE GOLD CAMP



A WINTER CAMP OF GOLD SEEKERS



THE DOME, 550 FEET LONG, 40 TO 80 FEET WIDE AND 20 TO 30 FEET HIGH

extended from Minnesota, across Ontario, to Labrador. Nobody but geologists make the statement with confidence. They say these mountains were the oldest mountains on the continent; that they were old when the Rockies were yet unformed; that the glacial drift and the disintegrating effects of untold millions of years of heat and cold have worn them away until only the "roots" remain; and they point to the roots as proof of their theory.

The roots are there. Anybody can see them. Some of them are below the surface, some are above. Over most of the roots are a few feet of earth, but here and there, a huge shoulder of rock thrusts itself above the surface; here and there a great ledge plows its way through the forests and then disappears in the marsh; and nowhere can one dig far without coming to rock.

A singular incident explains, perhaps, why these mountain roots were not permitted to remain untouched for another hundred million years. The incident had its inspiration in politics. The Ontario government felt that it was losing strength with the farmers. Wise men in the ministry looked around to see what could be done. The farmers in the "clay belt" had been clamoring for a railroad. The ministry decided that it would be good politics to give it to them. So it was decided to build a railroad from North Bay, on the shores of Lake Nipissing, to connect with the great transcontinental line, under construction farther north.

It was while this railroad was building that Fred La Rose, a member of the construction gang, blasted his way into an old mountain root, made himself rich, made Cobalt, made more than a score of multimillionaires and caused Canada, which had produced almost no silver, to produce 12 per cent. of the world's output. Two men, in six days, trundled out \$57,000 worth of silver with a wheelbarrow. As an indirect result Sudbury became the world's chief producer of nickel.

All of which seemed to be against the rules made and provided by nature. Canada had never been known as a silver country. Near Cobalt there was nothing on the surface to indicate that silver might be near. But no eye had seen below the surface. No mind had dreamed of the gold and silver filled roots of worn-off mountains. An explanation was required—and geologists who examined the formations gave it.

The geological assurance that the entire region might be sprinkled with precious metals quickly caused the country around Cobalt to be prospected. But prospecting in forest-covered marshes does not proceed rapidly. Not until the summer of 1909 did prospectors push 250 miles northward, to the region of Porcupine Lake.

There is about as much uncertainty with re-

gard to who first discovered gold in Porcupine as there is with regard to who discovered America. George Bannerman, however, appears to be the Columbus of the occasion. Bannerman, an old prospector, in July, 1909, scraped the moss from a bit of the surface of a projecting rock and saw wet flakes of shining gold starting up at him from the quartz. But the first great discovery was made by a gang of prospectors headed by Jack Wilson. Wil-

son, or one of his subordinates—no two reports on this point are alike—found the great "Dome" that bears Wilson's name. The "Dome" is a ridge of rock, 550 feet long, 40 to 80 feet wide, 20 to 30 feet above ground, and no one yet knows how deep, that is heavily laden with gold. Pull the moss from it anywhere and there is gold. Nothing in the history of gold mining better illustrates the eccentricities of gold miners than the discovery of the "Dome." The discovering party consisted of three men, headed by Jack Wilson. The expedition was financed by a Chicago man named Edwards, who was engaged in the manufacture of lighting fixtures. Edwards was to put up all the money in return for a half interest in anything that might be discovered. Wilson was to have a quarter interest and each of the other two an eighth.

For several weeks they prospected, first to the east of Porcupine lake, in Whitney township, then to the west, in Tisdale township. They found gold and staked some claims. But the great "Dome," although they camped, some of the time, within sight of it, almost escaped them. It was finally discovered, according to the story that is generally believed, only because one of Wilson's subordinates stumbled across it. He was not a miner, knew nothing about geology, but did know enough to scrape off moss. Also, he had eyes. When the moss was off he could not help seeing the gold. The great ridge that was henceforth to be known as the "Wilson Dome" had been found. Stakes were driven and claim laid to the huge boulder.

Perhaps the most remarkable story, however, that has come out of the Porcupine was told by a prospector named "Bill" Woodney.

A mining man whom I believe to be reliable told me that Bill came to him one day and showed him a remarkably rich piece of gold quartz, at the same time asking him where he supposed it came from.

"Not from anywhere in Canada," was the reply. "I thought you would say that," was the comment, "but you are wrong."

Then "Bill" told his story.

He said the quartz was given to him by a widow. Her husband had been accidentally killed a short time before she gave it to him. The widow told him that the quartz came from a vein near Lake Abitibi, a frigid sheet of water up toward Hudson's bay, 300 miles north of Cobalt. Her husband and two other men whom she named had found the vein. They had not staked their claims and registered them with the government at Toronto, because such registration would have been a notification to the world that they had found gold in the region. Winter was near when the discovery was made and they wanted to return in the spring,

prospect the country thoroughly and stake out everything in sight.

During the following winter the husband of the woman who was soon to become a widow was seriously injured in a mill. In a few days he realized that death was near. He sent for the two prospectors who had accompanied him to Lake Abitibi. They came.

"Boys," said he, "I guess I've got to die. I can't go back with you in the spring to stake the claims. I want you to promise me that if I die you will give the old woman a third of what we found last year."

The men promised. The wife heard them. But she didn't believe them.

The widow had told Bill who the men were. He knew them. He knew where they were working. Bill hid out in the same place. In the course of a few weeks one of them told him that they were going to quit at a certain time in the spring and take a long canoe and hunting trip in the country far to the north.

That was good enough clew for Bill. Two weeks before the announced time for the men to start Woodney quit his job, packed his kit and started for Lake Abitibi himself.

When he reached the lake he drew his canoe from the water, hid it in the "bush," as Canadians call a forest, and prepared to wait.

On the eighth day of his vigil, as he was peering out of the bushes, he saw the sight that he had waited so long to see. Down the placid river came two canoes, cutting their ways through the cool waters and leaving fatiron wakes in the rear.

Late in the afternoon Bill saw the two specks disappear in what seemed to be an inlet.

The first night there was no fire, but the next day Bill saw a blue spiral of smoke curling from the bushes back of the lake.

For five days and nights the fires burned. Then there was no more fire, day or night. Evidently the men had gone. Bill wanted to be sure, so he waited three more days. Then he went down to the lake where his canoe was hidden, put it into the water, took pains to observe that there was on the lake no sign of human life, then slowly paddled his way along the shore, looking for the inlet.

Bill was paddling as quietly as he could when, at the "knuckle" of the water finger—a point where the inlet was not more than 50 feet wide—he suddenly saw on the left bank—the two prospectors! The next instant one of them threw an ax at Bill's canoe that all but cut it in two and sunk it as quickly as a mine could sink a battleship.

Woodney doesn't know yet why he is alive. He seemed to have no chance to live. It was two against one and the one was in the water. So were his food, his weapons and his tools. If he were not murdered during the next second it seemed certain that he would starve during the next month. Not that he thought out all of these things while he was sinking. He thought out nothing. All he did was to act first and think afterward. A few strokes with his hands and a few kicks with his feet put him against the bank. No rabbit ever took a trail faster than Bill took to the brush.

The rest of this story can be told in short sentences. Hunger, within the next forty-eight hours, drove Woodney into the very camp of the men who would have slain him. He crept up to them, late at night, and stole their food. He could not steal much at a time, but he stole enough to keep him alive. He stole, not once, but three times. The next time he went to steal they were not there. They had pulled up camp and gone, bag and baggage. He took his life in his hands the next day and went down to see the claims they had staked. He didn't find a stick or a sign of a claim. He couldn't even find anything himself that seemed worth claiming.

The prospectors never returned. Whether they were upset and drowned in one of the many rapids; whether they fell to fighting and killed each other, no one knows. Nor have they ever fled a claim to ore bodies along Lake Abitibi.

PROMINENT PEOPLE

MEXICO'S WEALTHIEST MAN



Not unlike the mighty estates of the old patrons, who used to own tremendous tracts of land around New York and whose sway was more powerful than that of the most puissant feudal baron in Europe, is that of Gen. Don Luis Terrazas, "boss" of the state of Chihuahua, owner of more than half the land included within its wide boundaries and the richest man in Mexico. His wealth is estimated, at not less than \$25,000,000 gold and many estimate it much higher. Terrazas is of interest at this time, for many people are saying that he and his son-in-law, Enrique Creel, are responsible for the rebellion in Mexico.

Gen. Don Luis Terrazas has lived all his life in Chihuahua. His parents were small landowners before the invasion of Mexico by the French. When Mexico began to try for freedom from the foreign invaders Terrazas, then a young man without influence, starting with a small body of

vain followers, built up a force sufficient to drive the French out of the northern part of Mexico. Later when the French were defeated in the south and the empire overthrown with the death of Maximilian, Terrazas took charge of the portion of Mexico now comprised by the state of Chihuahua. Later came Diaz, and Terrazas lent his aid in subduing and forming the republic, receiving his reward "to have and to hold" the state of Chihuahua. Nominally he was elected governor. Really he was made the boss of the state, and while he has not held office as governor continually he has dictated the election of every one who has been chosen and mostly the mantle has fallen on the shoulders of some member of his own family. Therein lies the cause of the present rebellion. Citizens of Chihuahua who have taken up arms against the present government declare that Terrazas and his clan have gobbled Chihuahua; that they can only live there now as peons; that those in power are growing richer and richer every day, while the common people are growing poorer and poorer.

Short of stature, weakened and wrinkled, with his short, white beard and his Mexican cowboy dress, he walks the streets of Chihuahua today in spite of his seventy-eight years, calmly collecting his 12 per cent. and apparently unadvised that there is a rebellion in his realm which threatens to strip him of the power he has wielded for more than 30 years.

PASTOR TO HAVE BIG CHURCH



Rev. Charles F. Aked, who talked seriously of resigning the pastorate of the Fifth Avenue Baptist church—the Rockefeller church—in New York city because of the supposed failure of a pretentious building project on which he had set his heart, seems to have won his point. As a result Gotham is likely to have the greatest church on modern institutional lines in the world.

John D. Rockefeller has a plan under consideration for presenting his Fifty-fourth street home and his adjoining realty holdings as a site for the new home of the congregation. The trustees of the Fifth Avenue church have for three years been looking for a suitable site on which to build a church such as Dr. Aked desires, but the committee in charge failed to make a selection. Mr. Rockefeller has recently purchased a number of plots surrounding his home and it is believed that he is rounding

out his holdings so that they may become available for the new church site if the trustees fail to find one more suitable.

The Rockefeller house, though very large, is not strictly modern, and the owner prefers the Pocantico hills estate. It is understood that he will give up his city residence if the church trustees accept certain offers he is formulating. The plan, says Rockefeller and Dr. Aked, it is said, is to make the new church the greatest and most influential institution of its kind in the world.

MEMBER OF COMMERCE COURT



The successor in the interstate commerce commission of Martin Knapp, who was recently appointed to the new commerce court, is Prof. Balthuser Henry Meyer, one of the most prominent educators in the country and an authority of note on political economy and sociology.

Professor Meyer is a native of Wisconsin, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and the University of Berlin, and has been an educator since 1884, when he taught a district school in his native state. He has been a member of the Wisconsin railway commission and the new federal railway security investigating commission and has written many important articles on railway legislation and administration and other economic subjects.

The professor also served as expert special agent for the bureau of the census and interstate commerce commission.

WOULD SAVE ROADS BIG SUM



No man has been more in the public eye of late than Louis D. Brandeis, who not long ago declared that the railways could save \$1,000,000 a day by proper and efficient management. Mr. Brandeis first came into prominence in 1903, when as the head of the Public Franchise league of Boston he was involved in the struggle over the reorganization of the Boston gas companies. Largely through his influence legislation was put through which permitted the unification of the gas companies on a unique principle. The total capitalization of the new company was made the same as that of the valuation of the securities of the consolidated companies. The price of gas was set at 90 cents a thousand feet. On that basis the company was allowed to pay seven per cent. on its stock and one per cent. extra for every reduction of five cents a thousand feet in the price of gas. The plan worked successfully.

Mr. Brandeis next became prominently known through his share in enabling the savings banks of Massachusetts to write industrial insurance.