

A DRUMMER'S TALE.

How seldom we ever hear a "commercial drummer" relate any anecdote or incident that borders on the pathetic. The boys generally like to get together in the smoking car or in the stateroom cabin or in the slow going stage coach while en route, and vie with each other in telling tales more questionable than delectable. At home they are indulgent fathers, kind hearted husbands and liberal providers in things pertaining to the family that bring happiness to the home. Frequently we meet men of this last class who are foremost in trade, zealous for the interests of their firm whose large yearly sales will attest the vigor, the energy, the intelligence with which they pursue the restless dollar. One of these gentlemen was recently my companion on a tedious journey by stage through a desolate portion of western Montana. The country surrounding us was devoid of vegetation of any description. A forest fire had left a few blackened, charred pine tree trunks standing like grim sentinels over this region of solitude. Birds and insects, although it was midsummer, had given the locality a wide berth. Once in awhile we ascended a grade we could hear the laborious breathing of the four horses that hauled the lumbering vehicle. Even the driver seemed to be affected by our melancholy surroundings, for he looked his head around the side and looked into the windows and said: "Say, gents, ain't this just h—?"

morning and found my wife crying bitterly, with a few kindly disposed neighbors around her offering their sympathies. But, ah, why dwell on the sleepless nights and days of intense anxiety and suspense that followed? A house to house search was made in the city for Mabel. Copies of the photograph which I have now in my pocket were distributed among the police and city detective force. I offered a large reward for information of her whereabouts. In the personal column of the papers I intimated that any one who had kidnapped the child for the purpose of obtaining the diamond cross could keep the cross and return the child to any place and I would go after her and with questions would be asked; neither would I prosecute them. But all this was of no avail. I gave very little attention to business for some weeks, and was almost completely prostrated by the blow. To add to our troubles my wife became indisposed and finally lost her appetite and at last was seriously ill. During her delirious moments she would call piteously for Mabel.

HIS ARGUMENT.

"But if a fellow in the castle there keeps doing nothing for a thousand years, and then has—everything! (That isn't fair, but it's—what has to be. The milk boy hears the talk they have about it every where.)"

THE WONDERFUL ISLAND.

It was in October, 1859, that I shipped as second mate on the Starlight, which was then lying in the port of Honolulu. We left the port in ballast only, and were two men short of our complement. Capt. Wheaton was a Barnegat man, and the crew all English speaking people, and for the first fortnight no ship ever had better weather. At the end of the fortnight the fine weather was broken by a strong gale, which struck us during my night watch, and I was ordered to be called. We had a hard time of it during the first hour, and were finally compelled to lie to, and it was while we were bringing the ship to the wind that the captain was washed overboard by a heavy sea which boreled us. With me went one of the sailors, the boatswain, several square riggers and a lot of deck ruffia, and by the time the ship had shaken herself clear of the foam it was too late to render any assistance. Indeed, it was a serious question just then whether any of us would live another half hour. The storm did not break for nearly twenty hours, and the ship was so strained and knocked about that her life was ended. The gale had scarcely abated when she began to leak faster than the pumps could throw the water out, and on the seventeenth day of the voyage we had to abandon her. When we had been about for four days in the open boats we were picked up by the American bark Yankee Boy, bound from Boston to San Francisco.

making a start, hoping every day to sight a sail. He had a signal flying by day, and almost every night he kept a fire going, but rescue never came. One day, two weeks before he set out on his voyage, the captain made a great discovery. In a rough, wild place in the center of the island, where a mass of rock was thrown up in great confusion, he found a lump of gold as big as your fist. Aye! more than that, he found masses of it so heavy that he could not lift them. These chunks, he said, were as pure as his big nugget, and that I not only held in my hand, but saw the certificate of assay reading that it was 91 per cent. pure gold. He sold it at the mint in San Francisco for over \$15,000, and that in my presence. In the course of three or four days the captain piled up such a heap of gold on his island that he dared not estimate its value. There was enough to make a dozen men rich for life, and more to be had with picks and iron bars. Then the demon of avarice would not let him wait any longer for rescue. Indeed, he did not wait for rescue. He made his raft ready, cut branches and pulled the grass to hide his nuggets, and set sail with a fair wind to the northeast, hoping to get into the track of ships bound for the Sandwich Islands. He was picked up as I have told you, and was taken to the Sandwich Islands as a fugitive, and thence, with money found on his unknown island, he paid his passage to San Francisco. It was at this latter port he found me, and within two hours after meeting him I had his story. I had no reason to doubt its entire truth. Three or four others were taken into the secret, and we formed a syndicate to go after the gold. I had had a legacy of \$5,000 from an aunt, and five of us shipped in an equal amount and bought a schooner and fitted her out and named her. Something of Capt. Wheaton's wonderful adventure got into the papers, and there was great anxiety to find out where we were going. We had ten times as many men offer their services as we could accept, and when the story of the big lump of gold was whispered around two other craft fitted out to follow us. We went out of the harbor on a dark and stormy night, and two or three days before we were supposed to be ready, and thus gave them the slip. The vessel stood up the coast with men ready to come on board, and a color headed for the Sandwich Islands and was lost in a gale.

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