

# Oil and the Game

## A STORY OF MOUNTAIN RAILROAD LIFE

### By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

AUTHOR OF "WHISPERING SMITH," "THE MOUNTAIN DIVIDE," "STRATEGY OF GREAT RAILROADS," ETC.

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#### TWELFTH INSTALLMENT.

Little Helen Holmes, daughter of General Holmes, railroad man, is rescued from imminent danger on a scenic railroad by George Storm, new boy, who to young womanhood, Helen saves Storm, now a fireman, her father, and his friends. Storm, Rhinlander and Robert Seagru, promoter, from a threatened collision, Seagru's men employed by Seagru to steal the mine and survey plans of the cut off line for the Tidewater. Helen recovers the survey plans from Seagru's men, who are taken from her, finds an accidentally made proof of the survey blue-print property, and, having satisfied himself on this point, the miner details were easily arranged.

Seagru's sale to Rhinlander of the Superstition mine did not go through as smoothly as he had expected. Meeting Rhinlander at the office of an attorney in Las Vegas, the details of the transfer were arranged without much difficulty. Rhinlander's only care was to be sure that the conveyance should give him a clear title to the valuable property, and, having satisfied himself on this point, the miner details were easily arranged.

While the attorney was embodying these items in a supplementary agreement, Rhinlander wrote out a telegram to Helen telling her that he was completing the transfer of the mine and would come up on No. 8. When the final draft of the contract had been made in duplicate, and signed by the two parties, in due form, Rhinlander handed over a second check to Seagru, and putting the agreement in his pocket, left the office.

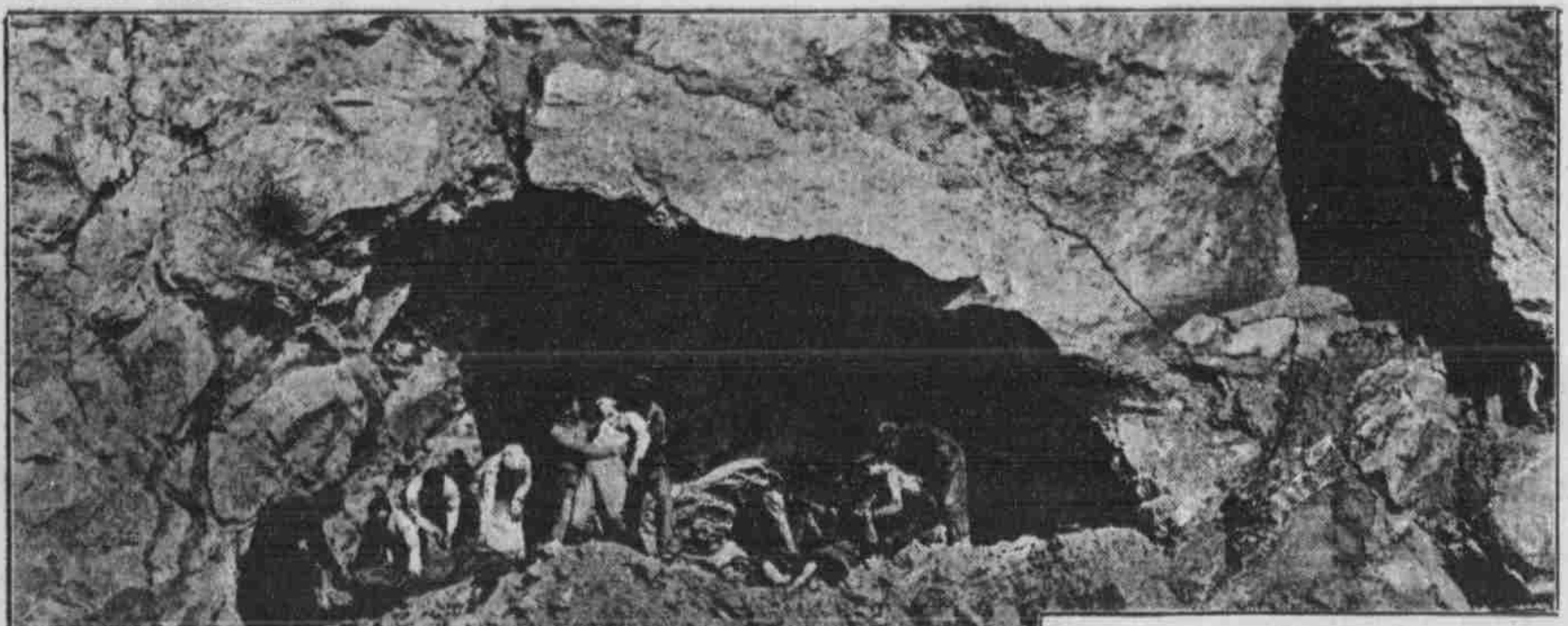
But, unexpectedly enough, opposition developed in an unexpected quarter, namely, among minority stockholders of the mine itself. Rumors flew thick and fast, and at Oceanide Seagru was openly accused of underhanded work in parting with the property. To afford a clear understanding of his position, a meeting of the stockholders of the mine was called and Seagru, when the time came, addressed the gathering in explanation of the sale.

"I have understood," he began, "that there has been some criticism of my action in disposing of the Superstition mine to the Copper Range & Tidewater people. Some of our stockholders have been unkind enough to hint that there is treachery in my part of the proceedings. I have called this meeting to explain without any mining of words why I was forced to act as I did on my own responsibility and to act quickly."

He related in detail the story of the sudden word received from the mine foreman, announcing the pending sale of the vein. In more veiled language, but still making himself plain enough to be understood, he disclosed the thought that had come to him of getting the mine ready for a sale by salting it, and of his subsequent success in unloading the property on to the Copper Range & Tidewater to any of the shareholders.

In spite of his explanation, protest was heard almost at once against his summary action in selling out without authority from the directors. Seagru met the criticisms firmly. "If I had stopped to ask the directors for authority as to what to do, the news of the failure of one principal vein would have been all over Nevada. It would have been too late to sell property at any price to anybody."

"If the vein could be recovered, what difference would that make?" asked one of the disaffected shareholders. "It would make the difference that you would be holding the sack instead of the other fellow," retorted Seagru, bluntly.



The Imprisoned Men Were Passed Out and Turned Over to the Surgeons.

The uneasy ones, "lies in keeping your mouths shut."

"It is a matter of no moment whatever," declared the stubborn chairman, "how much the thing is discussed. You know the men in this room, Mr. Seagru, well enough to know that we should all take the same position concerning what you confess you, yourself, have done in this matter. No matter what happened, we should never approve such proceedings."

"As things stand, I don't know what else you can do," said Seagru, sullenly. "You talk here as if you owned this mine. I want you to understand that I hold the control of it, and you will do as I say."

"No," declared one stockholder, jumping up, "I won't do any such thing."

"Then you may do as you wish," replied Seagru, loftily. "But I am through with the Superstition mine."

The heated discussion continued. Almost every one in the room took sides against Seagru. Finally, at bay himself, and realizing the trouble the minority stockholders could put him in, he made a further conciliatory proposal. "As we cannot agree," he said, "I am willing to buy your shares in the mine at their par value."

This seemed to pour a little oil upon the troubled waters. After some further wrangling, details were actually arranged then and there for the transfer of the minority shares, and the meeting closed in a better feeling than it had opened. At the mine, Helen and George Storm were talking together when the foreman joined them. Helen asked him about the work.

"If you'll come this way," he suggested, "I'll show you exactly where we're going to drill today."

A messenger handed Helen a dispatch. It was from Rhinlander, announcing the completion of the transfer and advising her he would arrive on No. 8.

"First, we'll go down and meet Mr. Rhinlander," said Storm to the foreman. "When we come back we'll see where you're working."

Rhinlander returned well pleased with the result of the trip. He explained to Helen and Storm the particulars of the transfer, showing them the agreement as he did so, and Helen told him about the incident of the stolen quartz.

"They walked over to the mine together and entered it. While they were talking, a man came to Mr. Rhinlander, saying that the foreman had asked to see him. Accompanied by Helen and Storm, Rhinlander walked down the tunnel to where the men were working."

The foreman turned from his work. "How are things looking?" demanded Rhinlander.

"Why, to tell the truth," answered the man reluctantly, "they are not looking as good this morning as they were yesterday."

"What do you mean?"

"We had trouble with this vein once or twice before," began the foreman, guardedly, "but it didn't turn out very serious. This time it looks as if the vein had pinched out on us. Just come over this way."

through the roof, cutting them off in an instant from the outer world.

Serious as their situation was, none of them lost their heads, and Rhinlander and Storm, in particular—neither of them unused to great perils—were calm. But what to do in circumstances so strange to them, the two could not tell. A hurried examination of the cave-in showed their exit completely cut off. This misfortune, however, did not paralyze their activities.

With the two railroad men encouraging them, the men worked hard to get through the obstruction in front of them. They toiled unremittingly, knowing how every hour within their prison would lessen their chances for life. One of the men, exhausted by the labor, picked up a water canteen. It was broken. A canvass was made of the situation and it was found they had no water. Gloom settled for a time on them. Thereafter, questioning the foreman carefully, Rhinlander picked a place where the aerial railway ran from the mountainside down to the valley below, stopped. It would take her fifteen precious minutes to run down the trail and those moments might mean life to the men imprisoned in the tunnel.

Spasmodic efforts were made to clear the opening. Men, losing their heads, rushed hither and thither, accomplishing nothing and adding to the panic that possessed everyone at the thought of the tragedy within the closed tunnel. Helen was first to regain her senses. Bidding a man to stop his useless efforts to tear away the fallen rock, she gave him directions as to what to do. "Telephone for doctors," she said hurriedly, "while I go over to the Neighbor mine for help."

Both hastened away. Helen, reaching the edge of the cliff, where the aerial railway ran from the mountainside down to the valley below, stopped. It would take her fifteen precious minutes to run down the trail and those moments might mean life to the men imprisoned in the tunnel.

She grasped the hook of the frail aerial carriage with both hands pulled the release. Like a bird on wing Helen shot far out from the mountainside and dropping at a sharp angle down the line sped toward the valley below and earth.

At a distance on the desert, the Shay engine stopped. Helen told of the disaster. Men ran in from all quarters, and their foreman an active fellow— gave directions about getting the stuff they should need to work at the cave-in. With the least possible loss of time, these necessities were assembled and the train loaded with men started back.

In the interval, the news telephoned to Las Vegas had stirred the town. At the hospital a motor car was placed in waiting, and doctors answering the hurry-up call jumped into the machine with their emergency bags and headed for the mine. One of the surgeons recalled that Earl Seagru was the owner of the Superstition. Halting on the way, he dashed up into Seagru's room and told him what had happened.

"The main tunnel of the Superstition mine has collapsed," he cried. "We're on the way out in a car. Rhinlander, Storm and a crew of the men are caught inside."

"Sorry to hear that," said Seagru, shortly. "Go on. Don't lose any time. I'll follow." He called to his servant for his coat and hat as the doctor ran out. Putting on the coat he hesitated, changed his mind, and decided not to go.

In the tunnel the men had been caught like rats in a trap. Without the slightest warning a great body of rock had shot

through the roof, cutting them off in an instant from the outer world. Serious as their situation was, none of them lost their heads, and Rhinlander and Storm, in particular—neither of them unused to great perils—were calm. But what to do in circumstances so strange to them, the two could not tell. A hurried examination of the cave-in showed their exit completely cut off. This misfortune, however, did not paralyze their activities.

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the rescuers redoubled their efforts. To the prisoners the sound of the pick and the dislodgment of rock was coming so close that Storm and Rhinlander almost felt they could see the work. In another instant a shaft of light, gleaming like a star, arched the staring eyes of the two men and they cried out together to greet the man on the other side. "Water," cried Rhinlander. "For God's sake, boys, push in a canteen."

Helen heard the cry. Half-dozen willing men ran for the precious fluid. A bottle of water was pushed into Storm's hand and the next moment the half-conscious men were being revived by him.

Nerved, despite exhaustion, to a final spurt of energy, the rescuers rapidly enlarged the hole until Helen, safer at the foreman's elbow, said she could get through, and against his protestations of danger crawled first through the cave-in, closely followed by the chief surgeon who, once inside, began to treat the most helpless of the suffering men.

The condition of the uncertain entrance called for the greatest care on the part of the rescuers. Great masses of rock, suspended by no more, it would seem, than a thread, hung threateningly over the ragged passage. But time was too precious to wait for further safety and the moment the men could be passed out, they were turned over to the hospital staff.

Rhinlander had refused to leave until the last of the miners had been taken out to safety. Storm followed him. Helen was the last to come through.

A crowd had gathered about the mine and as the imprisoned men were revived and the chief surgeon, covered with dust and debris, announced that no lives would be lost, cheers went up again.

Seagru, allowing his way through the bystanders, came up to Rhinlander, congratulating him on his escape.

Rhinlander smiled grimly. "That was a close squeak, Seagru. Helen," he exclaimed, addressing his words to her, "we came near losing out, girl, but we didn't—quite. I'm all right and so is George Storm, here." He laid his hand on his stalwart foreman's shoulder. "The rest of the men," he added, "will be as good as ever by tomorrow. But that isn't all, Seagru. We've relocated the vein!"

Seagru started. "What do you mean?" he cried.

"I mean, we have found the vein again," exclaimed Rhinlander, "and that we're going to take a million dollars in quartz out of the Superstition in the next three months."

Seagru refused to credit his hearing. He started for the tunnel and despite the warnings of those about him, crawled through the opening and made his way to where the final blast had disclosed the glittering vein. He picked up the ore thoughtfully and looked from it back to the rock wall. It was a vision to dazzle the sight of a prospector. Unfold wealth was symbolized in that great deposit. The stormy scene with his shareholders in the directors' room rose in the semi-darkness before his eyes. He stood a moment in deep study.

At the mine entrance the men were getting on their feet and telling listening comrades their experiences.

Storm was dismissing the men for the day and released from further toil, they slowly filed away. Turning from them, he joined Helen and Rhinlander. Together the three discussed their great new fortune.

Within the gloom of the tunnel stood Seagru. He had taken out his contract and was looking intently at it. Something it suggested seemed to appeal to him; some hopeful idea, perhaps, occurred to his mind, for he smiled.

(Continued Next Monday.)

## Student's "Fool Column"

By J. P. GREENE, President William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo.

The necessary expenses of a college education are enormous. Luxuries and unnecessary things make college life expensive.

For years I have advised our men to keep books with themselves—to write down in one column all they receive from home and all they earn, and in another all they spend. In addition to these columns, or pages, I have urged them to have another column, The Fool Column, and to write down in this one all unnecessary expenditures.

I fear that very few have followed my advice. It would require courage in any man to keep an honest Fool Column, and I do not expect most students to rise to the emergency.

One young man did keep this account for two years, junior and senior years, and had the courage to show it to me. He was poor. He earned every dollar he spent. I gave him work through which he earned his tuition and board. He was a fine fellow and a fine student—clean, industrious, capable—but a poor financier.

The results of his bookkeeping? At the end of the first year The Fool Column footed up \$34.50. I ran over the items: Carriage hire, ice cream, chewing gum, etc. He did not use tobacco. I said: "Isn't that a good deal of foolishness for a poor hard-working fellow like you?" He "acknowledge the corn," and declared that he would "buck the line" harder next year! He did. With evident satisfaction, a year later, he showed me his book: "Fool Column, \$2.45." I congratulated him, and told him that it was not necessary and hardly possible to do away with all foolishness, but that every fellow should try hard to be a reasonable fool.

Then I pointed out to him that one's desires are the measure of one's happiness. "Have simple desires. Cultivate plain tastes. Cast out all extravagant desires. They will make you unhappy. There is not enough money in the world to buy all that a man may desire! Poor people with simple desires can be happy. Rich people with extravagant desires cannot satisfy them. Now, what must be the misery of a poor man with extravagant desires? Keep a bridle on your desires, and use the severest bit, and hold them crooked to some soft, or they will run away with you and spill you out into the ditch!"

He learned the lesson. Soon after his graduation he got a good position with a good railroad. And he saved his money! Within three or four years he married a fine, cultivated woman. Her father offered to give them a house, but the young man would not accept it. He built his own house and paid for it. It is his firm conviction that the fool column made a man of him.

A young man should spend no more in

## Do You Know That

An old sponge which is almost worn out and falling to pieces can be made to last almost as long again if a bar is crooked of some soft, or white knitting cotton and the sponge placed in it, the ends being fastened.

It has long been a belief that marriage should take place when the moon is waxing and not waning.

The wedding ring is pre-Christian in origin. Its shape symbolizes the unending constancy of love.

In Greece the bridegroom is lightly sprinkled with water before leaving the home for the ceremony.

If a bride breaks the heel of her shoe in going to be married it portends a stormy married life.

Wedding presents were once placed in a "basin" or other receptacle in the church.

Wednesday and Thursday are accounted the most lucky days in Bulgaria for weddings.

No living specimen of the Great Auk has been seen for more than sixty years.

college than he could earn, if thrown upon his own resources, from \$25 to \$50 a month. Shall the four years in college accustom him to a manner of life that he cannot follow after his graduation? I knew a young fellow that spent \$15 a month in an eastern college. When he returned home and went into business his salary was \$50 a month, all he was worth! He and his mother insisted that the father should give him an allowance of \$7 a month! "He was used to \$15 a month and could not live decently on less!" A large food column became a fixture in that young fellow's life.

Who was to blame, the father or the college? Money will buy a great many things that a boy does not need, and with plenty of money it is easy for a sensible "chump" to become extremely foolish. Parents and colleges should at least discourage the student's foolish expenditure of money, for the student's sake!

Statistics are interesting even if they do lie occasionally. I should like for all our colleges to make an exhibit of the fool columns of their students. I do not know how we should go about getting the figures, but if we could get them they would show if a thing or two. We should be amazed at the sum total—and go on as we are now going! It is almost impossible to be a reasonable fool, in college or out of it!

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NEW YORK

—621—

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