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## FOUND GOLD BY CHANCE.

### BIG DISCOVERIES THAT WERE MADE BY MEREST ACCIDENT.

THE history of our western mining states is full of stories that illustrate the purely accidental and fortuitous manner in which the most important discoveries were made, and when the stories, repeated among the miners as they while away the long winter evenings in their solitary cabins in the mountains, are taken into consideration the devout belief of every miner in the potency of luck becomes much more intelligible.

One of the most productive mines in California was discovered through the accidental fall of the discoverer. He was one of a hunting party that had gone out from San Francisco during the Christmas holidays. While passing along the side of a steep hill on a narrow trail his horse suddenly slipped, and, with his rider, went down into the gulch.

Happening to be the last in the line and some distance behind the others, he was not missed for some moments,

The sliding horse had brought up against the ledge, and the restive animal, kicking vigorously in the efforts to rise, had struck off the moss from the rock and disclosed the fact that it was a gold-bearing ledge of unusual richness. The find was appropriately named 'The Christmas Gift,' and a valuable gift it proved to be.

The famous Comstock was discovered by a chance as simple as that which exposed to the eyes of the astonished Adams the gold blown up by the accidental explosion of his haystack. According to the story told, the ground on which the lode was afterward discovered was prospected by Comstock, who located a claim, but made up his mind that it did not amount to much and so abandoned it.

Shortly after this an odd character named Finney was hunting in the neighbourhood and shot a deer. The wounded animal struggled off, and while scrambling up the side of a hill dislodged some loose stones, disclosing signs of the presence of gold.

Finney washed a little of the earth in a pan and was astonished at the result, for from the small quantity of earth tested came \$10 or \$15 worth of gold.

When Finny and two of his friends were later working the mine along came Comstock and demanded to know

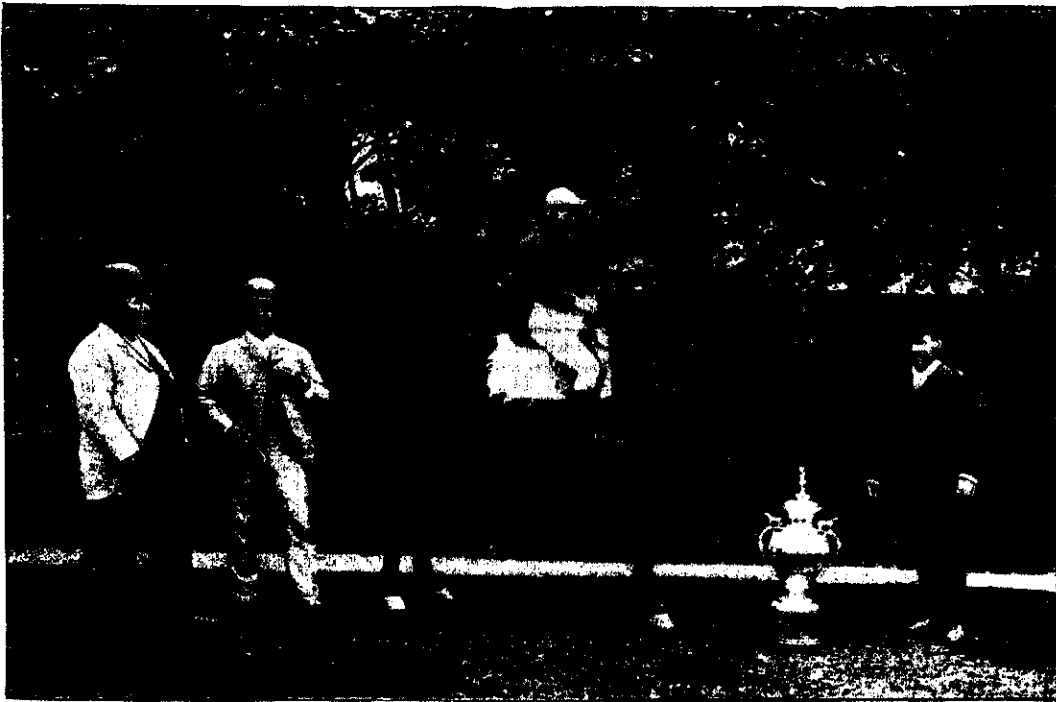
The men then immediately settled down and located claims. In a short time news of their success spread abroad. Hundreds of other miners flocked to the spot, and a mining camp of unprecedented richness was established.

The city of Helena sprang up on the spot, and it is said that one of the banks of that city is situated on a portion of the first claim located by the lucky quartette.

The famous silver mines of Potosi in South America were discovered by an Indian who was in pursuit of an antelope. He was climbing the steep slope of a hill and seized a bush to help himself up. The plant gave way and revealed a ledge of silver.

A few months after the massacre of Coster and his men a party of soldiers were scouting after hostiles in the Big Horn. The country was terribly rugged and broken, progress was very difficult, and after proceeding some days in the midst of the wilderness of peaks the guide was forced to admit that he had lost his way.

The captain seated himself on a ledge, while the guide lay down on the ground near by, holding the reins of the horses. An earnest conversation followed as to the proper course to be taken in order to get out of the hills.



Wrightsworth & Sons, photo. MR. H. TE KANE PERE'S RACER "MAHAKI."—SEE "OUR ILLUSTRATION."

but when his absence was noticed the party turned back to look for him, fearing some untoward accident.

He was nowhere to be seen, but the place where his horse had slipped and fallen over the bank, together with the traces of the fall, were plainly visible.

Following the tracks made by the horse and man, and when near the bottom the men suddenly came upon an interesting spectacle. Just behind a clump of bushes which the man and his steed had crashed through on their way down stood the horse apparently uninjured, while near by, on a slab of rock projecting from the snow, the man was cowering like an Indian at a ghost dance.

The first impression of the rescuing party was that the man had gone suddenly crazy, but as he caught sight of them he instantly ceased his gyrations and shouted for them to approach.

They came, when he showed them several lumps of almost pure gold he had hastily knocked from the edge with a stone for a hammer, and announced his discovery of a gold mine.

what they were doing on his claim. They were obliged either to kill him or take him into partnership, so they did the latter.

The mines which built the city of Helena, in Montana, were discovered by a party of four prospectors who were on their way to a well known camp in the Kootenai country. Learning that the diggings in that quarter had failed, they turned aside to prospect in another direction, and for some time wandered about, digging holes here and there, but finding nothing that they considered worth working.

About noon of the 15th day of July, 1864, they arrived at the site of the city of Helena, halted for dinner and to rest their horses. Dinner over, their horses were saddled, when one of their number walked down to the stream to get a drink before mounting.

From mere force of habit he began mechanically scratching the gravel with his hands, when to his astonishment he drew out a nugget as big as a gold dollar. A hundred dollars' worth of gold was taken out in about twenty minutes.

'You may say what you please, but I think we ought to go that way,' said the captain, and as he spoke he picked up a bit of stone from the ground and tossed it in the direction indicated.

The guide stared, then made a rush for the bit of stone. It was a piece of quartz so thickly stained with gold as to form a specimen of wonderful richness and beauty. The two collected a few samples, hid them and agreed to keep the matter a secret until they could return and take possession of the mine.

A few days later the guard was killed, and the secret remained with the captain. Time and again after his troop had been extricated from the mountains did he make efforts to relocate the hill of gold, but every effort was doomed to failure, it could never be found.

It is possible that it may have been the 'Lost Cabin' of this there is no certainty, but if not, it was a mine of such wonderful richness that nothing like it has ever since been discovered in the Big Horn range.