

winning policies were conceived. Among those who prophesied tragedy for the Coogan's millions or more was Fortunatus Greer. Indeed, Greer went still farther and invidiously determined to deal the crushing blow.

No one was so heartily glad as Coogan at Greer's sudden brace for the better. Slowly and surely the latter resumed his old place on the street. He affiliated much with Coogan. They helped each other and the past was forgotten. The nation was now enjoying a period of unalloyed prosperity. Money shrank from the vaults and the surplus earnings of speculators sought permanent investment. It is in such a period as this that the mineral bounties of Mother Earth are ransacked. Certain gold, silver, copper, coal, and oil companies were making almost incredible sums for their shareholders. The natural tendency in these busy times, and the tendency which resolved itself into a fact, was to launch new companies. Fifteen months had elapsed since Neiomath lifted the sinner out of the "Academy," and Greer was now on the high road to the summer castle, private yacht, and Hambletonian stage. He was also fighting clear of the "Academy" and dreaming of various ways to encompass the undoing of Coogan. The many interests of Neiomath netted big proceeds to this particular local agent, but there was one harrowing drawback. The Belgian had evidently forgotten the existence of Coogan and his grievance.

Two years before Neiomath ever heard of young Greer he had purchased at a ridiculously low figure a half interest in the Catalina Gold Vein company. Times were hard then, and the bluff manner of the Westerner who had discovered the alleged vein was considerably modified by the "frosts" of the East. (He was turned down repeatedly and harshly before he encountered the Belgian promoter, so that he had lost confidence in himself, and in the vein which he had once believed held a million for many and many millions for himself.) Neiomath had sent experts to Arizona for the purpose of looking up the Catalina claim. The agents returned, and having had in the beginning no inner knowledge, saw only a commonplace promise. They reported that while operations on the Catalina claim would likely prove a paying investment, there was no sign of an Eldorado in that vicinity. The despairing prospector accepted the Belgian's first offer for a half interest, bought a railroad ticket for Arizona, and invested the remainder of his capital in a whirl of popping corks—to regain his self-respect. He was really an excellent fellow, this Westerner, Mackey, but the East was hard pressed at the time and misused him shamefully.

Neiomath had dropped the matter until a more propitious season should offer. The time was now at hand. The whole country was "fadding it" in lines of mineralogy, and was willing to pay for knowledge on the subject. The Belgian unearthed his Catalina shares, put them on the market, and sent out wires and emissaries to find Mackey, but the Westerner had breathed once more the air of his mountains and recovered his spirit. He was not disposed to be man-handled again.

The instructions which F. Greer received from Neiomath in regard to the Catalina claim filled him with delight. According to the New York promoter the claim was an ordinary affair, such a one as "goes begging" in the big mining districts, one that might pay a couple of cents on the invested dollar—and might not. At all events the Belgian's half-interest must be sold on an Eldorado basis. The nominal capital of the company was 2,000,000 dollars—40,000 shares at a par value of 50 dollars each. . . . The first man Greer sought was Coogan, who laughingly dipped into his resources 15,000 dollars worth, and in return took crisp certificates representing 500 shares of Catalina at the "hard-pan" rate of 50 dollars per. And at this juncture Coogan complicated matters by going on a two weeks' fishing trip, ostensibly with his younger brother, Jerry Coogan, a mining engineer, capable of taking care of himself every inch of the road.

In spite of the temporary drawback, Fortunatus was in clover and joyfully commented upon the softness of mankind, Coogan's especially. With the exception of a few small lots of Catalina, he made little effort to sell during Coogan's absence, being hampered by a passion to heap a mountain chain of dirt upon the broad shoulders of the man he envied. . . . After whipping various silvan streams and pools for trout and grayling, Coogan dropped back into town one night, tanned and tough and happy. Certain wires in cypher had reached him from the Catalina country during his absence and the information fangled. He scurped over a bushel of accumulated correspondence, and found letters from the South-west.

The following morning Coogan bought 500 more shares of Catalina at a little harder pan—\$27.50 per share—and thereby amazed his friends and administered a heavenly application to the burning ambition of Fortunatus, who now thought that he had his antagonist "going." Catalina might not put Coogan wholly out, Fortunatus reasoned, but it would make him so groggy that the finishing touches might be easily added. Did Greer buy any Catalina for himself? Does a pool seller, head and shoulders in the inner ring, where races are run before the horses leave their stables, back one of the "outsiders" of a fixed event? Not if he's rational. Fortunatus was no longer rooming at the "Academy."

In the week which followed, Coogan doubled his stock of Catalina and began to understand many things. In New York Neiomath was battling with doubts. With the exception of Greer, his agents had found Catalina a hard proposition. Greer had sold over 5000 shares, or a one-eighth interest in the claim, practically to one man, Coogan. Neiomath knew that unless some frightful alteration had taken place in the mind of Coogan, Greer's plunging partner was not mad. Therefore, what did Coogan know? As for Greer, he was transported by the success of the delicate and masterful machine he had invented, and bewildered by his commissions in Catalina.

About this time Coogan received the following telegram in cipher from his brother Jerry in Arizona:

"Mackey is fixed and will keep still. He consents to travel East with me, and is itching to crumple the New Yorker. We start for you to-night. Gather in all the Catalina you can get. It's a world-beater.—Jerry."

Young Coogan had found the Catalina claim and concluded after careful examination that it was ordinary property. He was interested, however, in the intricate structure of the Catalina foot-hills, and lingered for a couple of days in the vicinity of the claim. Late in the afternoon of the second day Jerry was ordered to double quick out of the hills and to keep on going until he struck the prairie—all this by a fierce, black bearded stranger with a pack on his back and a gun at his hip. Now, young Coogan obeyed orders only when they pleased him or came from headquarters. Accordingly he parleyed, and in parleying charmed out of his knapsack a quarter bottle of Kentucky peace-maker. Had he known Mackey—for the stranger was Mackey—for a thousand years he could not have parleyed more effectively, the hills being hot and dry. Mackey proved to possess two passions—hate for the East, especially New York, and love for the Catalina Gold Vein, the trend of which only he knew.

"Once I owned the best gold claim in Arizona," Mackey reflected, bitterly, "and I got stranded in New York and had to sell half of it for a song—a big Dutch devil named Marrowfat, or something like that, got it, and now he won't operate. If the Catalina claim isn't scratched for twenty years more I'll never sell another share of my half."

"You mean a man named Neiomath?" Jerry whispered, huskily. Mackey referred to certain papers in his pocket, breathed fast, and

reached for the bottle. "That's the scoundrel," he muttered:

"My brother, John Coogan, of Blain, Coogan and Co." said Jerry, "recently bought five hundred shares of Catalina at thirty dollars per share. He sent me out here to look it up. If you can show me a good-sized pay streak I'll wire him to buy all he can get, and he'll do it. Moreover, he'll begin business right off, and he'll treat you white!"

It required three days for Jerry to influence Mackey that he was not an agent from "Marrowfat"; three days more to get at the secret of the Catalina golden heart, which was the secret of Mackey's dreams; and three days more to obtain Mackey's consent to travel East for the purpose of meeting Coogan. It also required many times three times three bottles of Peace-maker but Jerry had the stuff of his big brother in him, and he stuck to the task and won out. By the time the pair from the West reached the haunts of the Elder Coogan, one-fourth of Catalina, or ten thousand shares, was in the hands of Greer's "puerile-minded" enemy.

Now came a lull. Neiomath had sold altogether sixteen thousand of his twenty thousand shares. The remaining four thousand he raised to par value, or fifty dollars per share. Even Coogan refused to touch Catalina at that price, preferring to wait three months passed. The street remarked upon Coogan's lack of interest in local affairs. Greer thought he knew the reason—because his enemy had 300,000 dollars tied up in worthless paper and was lying low—a good reason indeed for Coogan's apathy. These were the happiest days in the life of Fortunatus Greer. He had rained mighty blows upon the nerve and upon the vitality of his enemy.

Coogan now saw the duplicity of Greer. The latter had represented that Neiomath owned the whole Catalina claim, thus covering the fact that he had not invested a cent in the property he sold to Coogan as a grand investment. The coming of Mackey and his ownership of half the claim accounted for every share. Greer would have bought had he believed that there was virtue in Catalina. The only inference remaining was that Greer had sold his Catalina, misrepresenting the facts and with malicious intent. Such a condition of affairs was forced upon Coogan. He was hurt and angry, and, above all, disappointed in Greer.

Neiomath refused to sell below par his remaining four thousand. The delay in operations, however, played havoc with the small stock holders, and many were eager to sell at a loss. To this portion Coogan stated facts, and if after that they

still desired to sell he was accommodating. Mackey, under the auspices of Blain, Coogan and Co., was having a grand festival, which modified somewhat his prejudices against the East. He declared himself ready to wait a year if the hated Neiomath might be frozen out, and though Coogan delayed operations six months the Belgian had his four thousand shares at par. He had made half a million out of Catalina, and was willing to run chances on future dividends. These dividends were based upon the sanity of Coogan, a chance which his agent, Greer, would not take into the reckoning.

And so it was that the Catalina Gold Vein Company became a fact and a factor in the mining world. What happened to the claim is public knowledge, and needs no further comment, except that it fulfilled Mackey's prophecy, and is the richest gold mine in Arizona to-day.

When the success of the Catalina became assured a peculiar thing happened at the "Academy." Greer was there, although his craving for rest had not yet reached the wormwood strata. Neiomath, in town on his quarterly Western trip, had just entered. He rested his big hand on Greer's shoulder, saying, gently:


"Come, come, dis vill not do. Dis capitalistic, Meester Coogan, he outwit us both. You are not to blame, my boy. Ve lose nodding. Ve vill try him again. See how much better you are den when I first met you here—"

The ponderous form of Coogan darkened the doorway. Neiomath sped forward toward the humorous millionaire, with hands outstretched, saying:

"Ah, Meester Coogan! I come all de way from New York to congrat mit you. You outwit me complete on Catalina, and I rechoise nit you, believe me. I bredict a great future for you, Meester Coogan—not here, mind you—but in de berg city, New York."

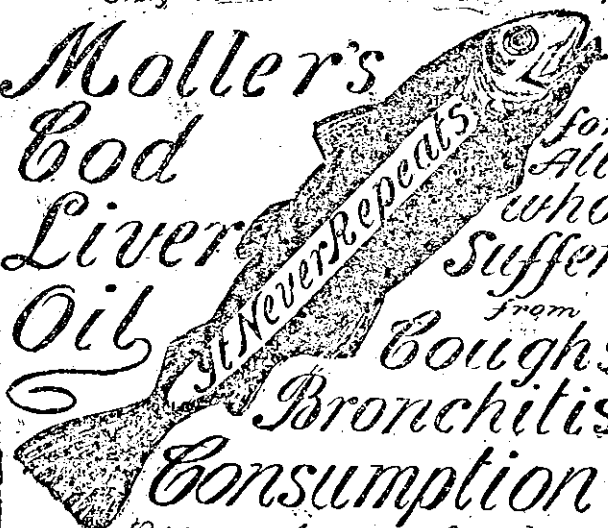
The worthy brother of Jerry and the worthy compatriot of the gold magnate, Mackey, gripped the extended hands and flushed happily.

Greer thumped upon the table.



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