

# THE STORY TELLER

## BILL'S NUGGET.

BY OWEN HALL.

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There were only three in our party. Tom and me had come to Coolgardie together, being old mates, and then we came across Bill on the field. He was a queer chap always, were Bill. Work? Well, I won't say as ever I knew a hand on any diggin's as could beat Bill for work, take him all around. Early and late Bill were there whoever weren't. He would work eating; he would work talking—though it weren't much talking you would get out of Bill, not a reg'lar thing anyhow. Why he seemed as if he worked of nights after he'd turned in did Bill, and it was all gold, every word of it. Yes, for the matter of that he was a reg'lar whale at work, and no mistake.

When Tom and me first come across him Bill was down on his luck. His tucker had just about panned out, and he hadn't a shilling left to buy water, which seeing how water were a pound a bucket at Coolgardie just then and scarce at that, were awkward. Yes, I reckon we were a Godsend to Bill, that's about what we were, Tom and me, when we offered to take him in mates. Not but what it was right enough for us to. Tom and me had a matter of maybe 30 pounds between us and we were pretty old hands at the job, but the place were new to us, and Coolgardie, like most fields, had ways of its own. We knew Ballarat in the deep leads, and we'd been mates at Palmer river, but this weren't like them—not a little bit. Now, Bill, he'd been here two months and he knew most all there was to know about the place, and so it come about as we went mates with Bill, and just then Bill was mighty glad to be took by anybody as could get a bit of tucker and a bucket of water—you bet.

After all's said let's be fair to Bill. He could work, and he did—never a man better—and if he didn't turn out not straight as mates had ought to be, well, after all Bill had temptations, I reckon. Bill wasn't to say big, but he was strong, and as wily as they make 'em. Tom and me was used to work, but bless ye, we weren't in it not alongside of him at his best. He was a good-looking chap enough too, was Bill, leastways all you could see of him, which wasn't to say much, being he was that hairy, and water being scarce, you couldn't say not exactly as to color, but his eyes you could see and Bill's eyes were out of the common. Look out they did from under his eyebrows eager and anxious like—always eager and anxious, as if he could see something rich just ahead of him.

Bill never talked much—not while he was awake, anyhow—and when he was asleep his talk didn't amount to nothing about himself. He might a been a dook in his time, but Bill, for anything ever he said to the contrary; and he might have been a most anything by his tongue—only one thing was sure, Bill hadn't always been a digger, no, nor yet for so very long, neither. No, he were a queer chap, were Bill, but take him all round I've met a sight o' worse mates in my time.

We stopped at Coolgardie for a month and it was long enough, too. Gold there was, I admit it, but it hadn't no sort of consistency. You might work till ye struck gold and perhaps get a nugget or two and thought ye had come on a good thing, and then, after you had broke your heart following of it up for days, you'd as like as not kick up a nugget with the toe of your boot as you was going to work right a-top of the ground. That was the worst of Coolgardie. Gold there was, and plenty at that, but a duffer was just about as likely to come across it as a digger, and a lazy chap that loafed about like a Chinaman, all eyes and no hands, had every bit as good chance as us that worked early and late to get it.

We were getting pretty near full up of this, though we were making tucker

We camped at last in a likely looking spot all by ourselves. Tom called it Dry-grass gully, by reason it was one sheet of some sort of short grass, as yellow as gold and as brittle as straw. There was no time to lose, for do your best you had to drink more or less, and there wasn't a sign either of water or of another party to be seen from the ridge of our gully. It looked like a race between luck and thirst, and the thirst were sure while the luck were doubtful. I can't say I liked the look of things, no more didn't Tom, but Bill he was just wild. Anyhow we'd come and we were bound to give it a trial. For three days we worked in that gully early and late and every hour the water got lower, and we grew more and more thirsty. Dry! Never in all my life had I known what it meant before—our throats burned and ached, our eyes sunk in our heads, our hands began to tremble, and work as hard as we might our skin got drier and hotter. We had found gold. It was no use trying to dig for it, but we had fished about over a good part of the gully and there was gold everywhere. But bless ye what was the good? That night when we knocked off there was only about a quart and a half in the keg. I looked at Tom, and Tom looked at me, and I could see that it was settled. "It's all up, mate," says Tom, "and a pity, too, for there's gold here and no mistake." I looked at Bill, but he said nothing. "Yes, Tom," said I, "it's all we'll do to get back on the water that's left unless we have the luck to fall in with some." Bill looked from one of us to the other, and at last he broke out: "Going back, are you? Going back when here's gold to make us rich, waiting for us?"

"It'll have to wait then, mate," said Tom. "Gold's good, but it ain't quite good enough." Bill looked from Tom to me and then from me to Tom, and his eyes shone like glowworms in the dusk of the tent. "You mean it, do you?" he said in a sort of a hoarse whisper. "Mean it?" An' says Tom, with a sort of a gurgling laugh seeing as how his throat were dry: "Mean it? I should say so, mate, raythur!"

Bill looks round first at one and then the other of us, and then without a word he rises and flings himself out of the tent. I lifts the flap a bit and sees him marching down the gully a-throwing his arms above his head in the moonlight, for it were full moon that night. "Bill's cranky, Tom," says I. "Looks like it, mate," says Tom. "Well, I reckon he'll come to his bearings by mornin'." With that Tom coils himself up on his blanket and goes to sleep, and after a minute or two I does the same, being just about worn out with work and want of water. It was daylight when I wakes and looks around. There were Tom lying where he dropped overnight, but I sees nothin' of Bill. "Hillo," I tries to say, but I couldn't say it rightly, my throat was that dry. So I sits Tom up with my foot. "Bill ain't here, Tom," I says. "No more he ain't," says Tom, sitting up, "the more water for you and me, mate." We scrambled out from under the tent and looks around. The sun were just up, but there weren't a sign of Bill, look where we would. "The devil!" says Tom sudden, looking hard at the tent, "he's been here, sure enough, and left this wrote. Here, Dick, you're a scollard; wot's this wrote on the tent?" I turns round, and there, sure enough, on the flap of the tent were wrote with something that looked like chalk:

"You want to go back to Coolgardie—you can go. I've found what I came for, and it's mine now. Good-by—Bill."

I read it out loud, and we stands and stares first at the writing and then at each other.

"He's mad, Tom," says I at last, "and he's gone without a drain of water—poor beggar."

"Mad or not, I reckon he's come across a nugget, and he means to keep it. Not if I knows it, mate, not by chalks. Fair does atween mates, is wot I says, an' wot I says I sticks to."

It were never much good arguing with Tom. It wasn't much that he'd say, but there was no turning him once he took a notion, and Tom was death on getting hold of Bill and sharing the nugget. At last I gave in and I risked it and started. It was easy to see the way Bill had gone, for there were his marks on the soft ground and sand, not clear, but as like as not the first steps that had ever been there since first it was made. He couldn't have gone far, Tom said, and we took the drop of water that was left, and started.

I'd have given it up hours before, but Tom held on like a bulldog. Now and again we sucked a few drops of the water that was left and then we went on again. Now and again we stopped and sat down for a bit when our legs trembled too much, and then, without a word, we staggered up and went on again. At last we had drank it every drop and still the sun poured down on our heads like white metal out of a furnace. We staggered as we walked and we could scarcely see for the light in our faces. Our tongues had swelled up so big that they seemed to fill our mouths, and our throats were so dry they made a kind of whistling sound when we tried to speak.

Hour after hour, and every hour like a month, and still we struggled on. We couldn't go back, and we couldn't say what we expected to get by going forward, but painfully, mechanically, doggedly, we staggered on. We had been trying for hours, or for what seemed like hours, to get to the top of a low range that seemed as if it went away from us faster than we could travel. We had been so long that the sun had gone down behind it at last. Suddenly I found myself in a blinding glare of sunlight once more, and then I knew, though I couldn't see, that I had at last reached the top. I put my trembling hand over my eyes, and little by little I began to see. At first it was gold, gold, only a great sea of shining, dazzling gold—then it began to grow clear and I saw. What was it I saw? Water. Yes, glittering, flashing, blazing, it was wa-

ter. Tom was behind me now and I tried to shout, but I could only point and wave my arms like a madman. In another minute Tom had come up—he was like me nearly dead beat, and staggered like a drunk, but he got there somehow. But where was Bill? I looked and Tom looked. There was the golden grass, and the low bushes, and the water that flashed and quivered in the low bottom where the sunlight made a yellow haze round the trees that stood here and there with drooping boughs along the course of the creek, but not a living creature in sight—not a sign of the mate we had risked so much to find.

We stood for a minute, and then Tom whispered hoarsely: "Look here, mate, wot's the odds about Bill? Here's water as is better nor nuggets." We staggered rather than walked down the slope with the level sun shining in our faces. It was hard work even with the sound of the water in our ears, but somehow we did it. We dragged one heavy foot after the other—doggedly, slowly, feebly, we did it, but somehow we did it. The sun sunk lower and lower till it seemed to rest like a great red circle on the top of a range that was far away in the west, and at last we were getting near the creek for we could hear the water rush and tinkle among the stones in the bottom. Tom had got a few yards ahead, and of a sudden Tom stopped. As I came up he pointed to one side and he whispered: "Look mate, Bill's there!" He was. Parched as we were we couldn't pace him. The gush and the whisper of the



WHAT WAS IT I SAW? WATER.

water was in our ears, but we couldn't pass Bill—could he hear it too?

We neither of us tried to speak, but we crept over to where he lay. He was half sitting, half lying against a boulder, and he was looking the other way so that we couldn't see his face, but Tom had been right. A big, rough, shapeless mass of almost pure gold was lying on the sand beside him—his hand lay beside it on the ground—his fingers somehow looked as if they had been stroking it.

"Bill!" I said, as loud as I could—"Bill!"

He never turned his head—he never moved. I went closer—I looked in his face—then I knew. Bill was dead. His hollow eyes stared out straight before him; his head was bent a little forward as if he was listening. With the sound of the water in his ears, with his hugget on the ground at his side—Bill was dead.

We looked at him, but we said nothing. Then we staggered down to the creek—it wasn't fifty yards off from where he lay. There we drank and drank again. There we let the water run over our hands, and dipped our dry faces in the stream. At last we went back to Bill.

We stood and looked at him, did Tom and me. "What's that in his other hand, mate?" said Tom, in a whisper. It was a letter, worn and brown, and frayed along the edge. "Let's bury it with him, Tom," I said. "Not us, mate. Fair does atween mates—that's wot I say—mayhap it'll tell who it belongs to. Read it, mate; it can't hurt no one now."

I read the letter as well as I could. No need to say what it said, but when I had read it both Tom and me looked in Bill's dead face, and then we understood. It wasn't a new story—I had heard it often before—a story of a young and delicate wife and her little children brought to want and disgrace by a thoughtless husband and father, and yet seeming to love him all the more. No wonder Bill was eager to get gold—no wonder he looked anxious and eager.

"What's the address?" Tom asked me, after a bit. I told him what was on the letter. Tom stopped and lifted the big nugget in both hands. "Right you was, mate," he said, "I reckon there's enough here to give them a start." Not another word was said. So Tom gave up his share; so Bill got his nugget after all.

Bad for the Eyes. Don't sleep with eyes facing the light is a caution given by all oculists. A test by closing the eyes when facing the light quickly shows that the strain is only lessened, not removed, and the interposition of an adequate shade is as grateful to the shut eyes as when they are open. It is sometimes necessary in a small room to have the bed face the window, but even then by means of shades rolling from the bottom instead of from the top the window may be covered to the few inches left free for the passage of air.—N. Y. Times.

Bread Crumb Omelet. This is very excellent if served with roast lamb or veal. One pint of bread crumbs, a large spoonful of parsley, rubbed very fine; beat two eggs until very light, add a teaspoonful of milk pepper and salt liberally, and a teaspoonful of butter. Mix all together and bake in a slow oven on a buttered plate when light brown turn it out and serve at once. Cold ham minced fine and mixed with this omelet will give it an extra relish.—St. Louis Republic.

## FARM AND GARDEN.

### DRAINAGE OF ROADS.

It is of the Utmost Importance to the Preservation of Highways.

With wet or clayey roadways, surface drainage alone is not sufficient. Without underdrainage the crown of such roadways will dry only by slow process of evaporation, during which time the topping becomes more and more rutted by the passing traffic. A subdrain in such soil will not prove efficient for more than about 12 feet on each side; hence, two lines of longitudinal subdrains are needed on those parts of our country roads that pass through wet places, low-lying lands or clayey soils. They should have an average fall of about one in one hundred; minimum fall, one in one thousand. At short intervals, say from 36 to 100 feet apart, are placed cross drains to discharge the water into the side ditches. These cross drains receive a greater fall, say up to one in thirty. Generally two and one-half to three-inch pipes are sufficient. It is advantageous to bed these tiles in well-drained brick fragments and to cover them with road metal. Be certain that the tiles are correctly laid and that nothing interferes with their free discharge. As said before, unglazed round tiles, about three inches in diameter and, under certain conditions, jointed with loose collars, are most suitable for subdrains. The bottom of the tiles should be laid both to the proper grade and below the frost line, after which the tile trench is filled up to subgrade with clean gravel, small field stones, road metal, or broken bricks. The cross drains are also made of unglazed tiles, with the exception of their outlet sections, which should consist of vitrified culvert pipes. Regular branch pipes should connect the longitudinal and cross tiles. On level reaches the lateral roadway slopes for surface drainage should not be less than one in twenty-four, and side ditches should be provided, if necessary, as previously indicated. Finally, a rapid discharge of the side ditches, if required, through adjacent lands, is of the utmost importance to roadway preservation.—Gen. Roy Stone.

### SHAKESPEARE ANSWERED.



"What's in a name?" There isn't much. But what the facts explode! For instance, some call mud-holes such as shown above, a "road."

### THEY GO TOGETHER.

Better Roads and Wider Tires Are Needed Everywhere.

Farmers have more reason to agitate for good roads than any other class, not even excepting bicyclists. Good roads to the former mean economy in reaching markets; often better markets, because they could be reached at the right time; advantages of social life in the winter and early spring; saving in time and in the wear and breakage of wheeled vehicles, and a general advance in all that pertains to a higher state of civilization.

Bicyclists are doing much to promote good roads. Now is the time for our farmers to make a positive move in cooperation with them.

One improvement must go along with that of better construction and drainage of the roads. The wheels of all vehicles should have wider tires. In France the width of tire is from three to ten inches, with the bulk of four-wheelers six inches. In Germany every wagon for heavy loads must have at least a four-inch tire; Austria requires a tire of 4 1/2 inches wide; Switzerland requires all draft wagons to have a six-inch tire. If we were to build good roads our wagons, as now constructed, would speedily destroy them. They are road-destroyers as certainly as if built for the purpose. Go on and build the roads, and begin at once to reform the wagon wheels.—Western Rural.

### Hogs on a Dairy Farm.

The Indiana Farmer says: "A gentleman who grows and fattens 75 to 100 hogs in connection with his creamery, says that in this way he utilizes all the product, except the butter, and makes the business pay him largely. He never has any hog cholera, for he keeps everything clean in connection with his pig feeding, and the milk with bran and meal makes a succulent ration that keeps the pigs very free from feverish conditions, and therefore very healthy. The milk and buttermilk with the bran, meal, etc., makes them grow rapidly, and at eight months he has 175-pound pigs to put on the market. He says by combining the two branches of business he finds it very profitable."

### Feeding Peas Meal to Hogs.

Pea-meal is rich in protein, which, when peas are fed to hogs, goes to build up the muscles or red meat. The peas should be ground with oats or corn, using two parts of the former to three of the latter for pigs and shoats, and one part peas and four of corn-meal for older animals. To build up the lean meat of the hog to give strong bones, shorts should be fed. Bran, mixed with corn-meal, shorts or some other similar feed, will prove excellent for breeding or stock hogs, but it is too coarse and chaff-like for use in large quantities in hog feeding.—Dakota Field and Farm.

The milking should never be hurried, but the milk be drawn steadily and as it flows.

## MARKETING BUTTER.

It Pays to Put It Up in Neat and Attractive Packages.

Whether sales are made to stores or regular customers, it pays to send butter away in as good shape as possible. Some customers prefer their butter in rolls containing one pound. A deft hand of the ladle will readily apportion and shape the proper amount, after some experience, and affix her stamp, which should be uniform and as simple as is consistent with true elegance, as a fern leaf, for example. If the butter maker is inexperienced, or has no scales (with which every housekeeper should be provided), then procure a "butter-cutter," which cuts the butter into rolls or brick-shaped blocks containing one pound, and also affixes a stamp. We believe these cutters can be procured at most stores.

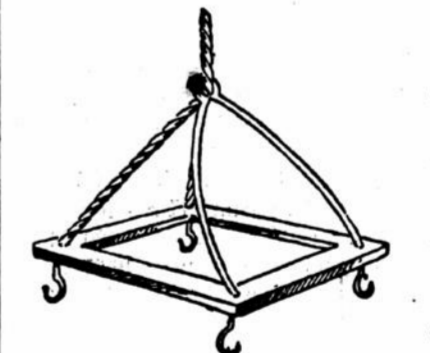
While the nice tact of most women will discern what is proper, and so supply dainty and nice surroundings for their butter when sending away to market, yet we have known some who were careless in this respect, and sent a really fine article away wrapped in any odds and ends of muslin that came to hand. We have even known butter to be sent to "stores" wrapped in pocket handkerchiefs, and the lady who so appeared it thought she was doing the genteel thing, too. In these days of cheapness there is no excuse for any housekeeper, no difference how limited her circumstances may be, not providing herself with at least two or three napkins or towels of linen, which should be set apart for butter alone, and not be made to do duty as a bib for baby, or to polish table ware. If no better can really be afforded, rather than depend upon "fragments" of apparel, save the sacks of this muslin that dairy salt is sold in; rip apart, hem, laundry nicely, and after wetting in brine, wrap one around each roll. Never wrap butter in paper, unless parchment paper is used.

If your butter is to be sent to a distant market, use wooden buckets or tubs, which should be soaked in brine before the butter is packed in them. If you desire to pack your butter and await a rise in the market use stone jars. Have them perfectly clean, sweet and cold; sprinkle salt lightly in the bottom and on the sides. Be sure that all buttermilk is worked out. Place the butter in the jar, and with the wooden potato masher, previously scalded and rinsed afterward, press evenly and firmly; have a cloth (an inch larger in circumference than the jar) wrung out of cold water, lay it over the butter and press out all the air, cover with an inch of salt, spread evenly, and press the cloth close to the side of the jar. When the next lot is ready to pack, take off the cloth, salt and all, and lay it in a dish to be used again. The cloth and salt are to exclude the air. Proceed in the same manner as before until the jar is within an inch of being full; then cut a cloth that will just cover the butter, press so as to exclude all air bubbles, then cover with brine, strong as can be made. It does not matter if it be thickened with salt. Tie up with another cloth, three or four thicknesses, and cover all with a plate or wooden cover. When wanted to use, remove salt and brine; rinse, and work out into rolls. Butter so prepared will keep almost indefinitely and preserve its flavor.—Mrs. A. C. McPherson, in Ohio Farmer.

### A DAIRY CONVENIENCE.

Simple But Excellent Device for Hanging Milk in Wells.

Where ice is not at hand, the custom of hanging milk cans in the well, for coolness, is often practiced. The illustration shows a device for holding four cans securely within the well, with a chance to draw up water between the cans, the curved iron rods affording this



FOR HANGING MILK IN WELLS.

chance. If the well is not large enough for a square frame, a stout hoop can be used, thus economizing space. It is surprising how nicely milk and many other articles can thus be kept in a deep well, even in extraordinary hot weather. It is equally surprising how many families fail to use this simple device, which is so easily made and so very convenient.—Orange Judd Farmer.

### THE ROAD MOVEMENT.

Bicyclists Should Tax Themselves Willingly to Inaugurate It.

That the "good roads" plank suggested by the League of American Wheelmen was not incorporated in the St. Louis platform was not due to any lack of interest in the good roads movement. It is not probable that a plank of this kind will be incorporated in the platform adopted at any national convention.

A more direct way to accomplish practical work in this direction is to go before the various state legislatures with carefully matured plans for instituting a system of road building that will commend itself to the country lawmakers and secure favorable action.

A tax of one dollar per year upon each wheel would yield nearly \$200,000 in Chicago alone and would be opposed by very few wheelmen if it were applied directly to roadmaking. This is merely one of the numerous plans suggested for inaugurating the movement in Illinois. A dollar a wheel would build more highways than 1,000 "good roads" plants in national platforms.—Chicago Times-Herald.

Butter once thoroughly warmed through will lose its flavor.

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18 TO 1.

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TEACHER—"For what is Nantucket noted?" JOHNNY—"For slippers." "Why, no; it's noted for whaling." "Well, I knew it had something to do with slippers."

### Homeseekers' Excursions South.

On the 15th and 16th of June, also July 6, 7, 20 and 21st and several dates during August, September and October, the Chicago & Eastern Illinois R.R. will sell first class round trip tickets, good 31 days from date of sale, for one fare plus \$3.00 for the round trip, to all points in Florida and the South. Tracks, trains, time, all the best. For further information address C. W. Humphrey, N. E. A., St. Paul, Minn. City Ticket Office, 122 Clark St., or C. L. Stone, G. P. & T. A., Chicago.

HALF the misery of human life might be extinguished by mutual offices of compassion, benevolence and humanity.—Addison.



## Gladness Comes

With a better understanding of the transient nature of the many physical ills, which vanish before proper efforts—gentle efforts—pleasant efforts—rightly directed. There is comfort in the knowledge, that so many forms of sickness are not due to any actual disease, but simply to a constipated condition of the system, which the pleasant family laxative, Syrup of Figs, promptly removes. That is why it is the only remedy with millions of families, and is everywhere esteemed so highly by all who value good health. Its beneficial effects are due to the fact, that it is the one remedy which promotes internal cleanliness without debilitating the organs on which it acts. It is therefore all important, in order to get its beneficial effects, to note when you purchase, that you have the genuine article, which is manufactured by the California Fig Syrup Co. only and sold by all reputable druggists.

If in the enjoyment of good health, and the system is regular, laxatives or other remedies are then not needed. If afflicted with any actual disease, one may be commenced to the most skillful physicians, but if in need of a laxative, one should have the best, and with the well-informed everywhere, Syrup of Figs stands highest and is most largely used and gives most general satisfaction.

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