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## THE GRUBSTAKE MINE

**P**RISONER gives his name as Jones," said the officer, chuckling. "He's ironed hand and foot, for fear of accidents; but mind, if he goes for you, yell, and I'll let you out."

So the policeman threw open the grated door.

"Prisoner, here's yer lawyer; and I warn you if you smash him up you won't get another."

The door swung to behind me, but so dark was the cell that at first I could see nothing of "Mr. Jones."

"Good afternoon—ahem!" said I, feebly. One never knows what may happen in the Bitter Root City Jail.

"I ain't going to hurt you," growled the prisoner. "Sit down; make yourself at home."

The voice was manly, resonant; the man was a young athlete; I could just see that his boots were the dainty, high-heeled Wellingtons of a cowboy; while the rest of his dress—a sombrero, shirt, overalls, a broad web belt, and silk handkerchief round the neck—bore out the character. The man's presence already brought up some faint memory; indeed I felt that I knew him, but not under the surname of Jones. Surely this sunburnt young frontiersman was some old friend.

"I can't offer you any refreshments, Mr. Lawyer," said the boy, drowsily. "The accommodations, in fact, are slim—very slim. 'Why,' he woke up, 'what the deuce are you staring at?'"

"Jack Brancepeth," I ventured, "don't you know me?"

"What? Williams, major? Hurrah! Shake, you duffer!"

It was not easy to shake hands, for my old schoolfellow was shackled spread-eagle fashion to the bed.

"Yes," he laughed, "they've got me roped for branding, and then they'll clip my ears and coral me all to myself, lest I corrupt the good manners of the other victims."

"Well," said I, frankly, "it jolly well serves you right. A fool who amuses himself shooting the stockbrokers on 'Change ought to be—"

"Smacked," said Jack. "I knocked out three deputy marshals, damaged one sheriff, bored a few holes through things generally. I wish I could chew up some more police by way of dessert. I feel as happy as a chip."

"Look here, we're civilized people in Bitter Root City; we're not used to cow-punchers."

"Well, you don't amount to shucks, as you say. Look here, I want you to let down the bars of this corral—I've been lonesome."

"How can I get you out? Don't you see these stockbrokers are not used to being shot at?"

"Yes," he groaned, "that's what's the matter. I've offended their little local prejudices. But that's all right!"

"All right for State Prison," I explained. He only chuckled.

"Well, I did ruffle 'em up some. But, as I say, that's all right. I'll tell you the straight yarn—then you can turn it into the right kind of lies, and have them sworn to. See?"

"Go on," said I.

"Well, to begin with, I got me a tract of meadow land up Wild Creek, back of Branchville, Idaho—do you know the place? No? Well, I stocked the ranch out of what I'd saved, with a shorthorn bull by Climax, together with thirty-nine head of scrub cattle, and a band of ponies. Since then, whenever I've happened upon mavericks—unbranded cattle, you know—I've adopted the poor orphans, clapped on my little Q—that's my brand—and turned 'em into the pasture. There's been some satisfaction in annexing old Silas Hewson's calves, but even then it ain't over and above square dealing, besides which it's slow work building up wealth out of strays. So I suppose a hundred head all told would make up the sum of what I had last fall, though since then I've been laying by my thirty dollars a month cow-punching for the 'Square Triangle' outfit down Boise way, which money I've put into improvements on my Wild Creek ranch."

"You seem to have been on the make?"

"Yes," Jack heaved a great sigh. "But it came deuced tough. 'Why,' I've sworn off poker, quit getting drunk, even tried to worry along without cussing."

"But why all this virtue?"

"Why, don't you see, you loon—you pilgrim? I'm in love!"

"Oh!"

"It was all for Kitty's sake."

"Who's Kitty?"

"She's my girl. Say, do you know old man Hewson—down to Idaho Flats?"

"What, the capitalist who floated the Grubstake mine?"

"The same. A right smart hole in the ground is the Grubstake. 'Why,' I guess the old man must be worth his cool five millions now. Any way, he's got six head of young fillies, that there ain't the like of west of the Bitter Root Mountains, calkers, and away up at that."

"Bleeded?"

"I should smile. Out of the very best Virginian. There's Kittie, Saph, Matred, Nehusta, Zebudah and Mehitabel, all raised on the ranch, all tended the same school at Wild Creek."

"School?" I howled; "do you mean the man's daughters?"

"Well, rather! You see a man needs lots of wealth to pretend to any of these girls, for Silas is like them Old Testament chiefs who'd se lords and dukes sniffing around the lodge, and let the dogs at 'em, because they ain't kings. She's too good, any way, for a common scrub cowboy like me. Oh, man, but you should see her sit a bucking horse! She's like the west wind riding a cloud, with the bright hair flying around her head and her eyes like stars. The broncho tears up the ground, but she laughs as she drives home the spur, and there's no fear in her. I've fought two men for fooling around her, already—one with rifles on horseback; he's in the hospital; the other, shooting at sight with guns, but I hunted him out of the country."

Jack Brancepeth always was handsome, but now as he laughed in triumph I felt that Miss Kitty had no need to rue her choice, for this gallant, strapping, boyish lover had the face of a Galahad.

"Yes, that's why I've been trying to keep straight. 'Why,' I'd be a mangy hermit if I could make myself good enough for her. But, as she said, the old man would never let me have her unless I'd lots of wealth. I tried hard enough, but then we'd been engaged more or less for two whole years without my making my pile."

"But," said I, "this doesn't seem to have much bearing on the present trouble?"

"It hasn't, eh? Well, you reach your hand into the left pocket of my belt, and you'll find her letters. There, that's right; now read the one on top."

So I found myself glancing over the first of a batch of letters in a fine round school girl hand like a stringful of knots. The letter read:

"Dear Jack—If you want me don't be a fool. Here's Pa favoring Daddy Longlegs, who wants me awful bad. He's given Daddy Longlegs a straight tip how to make his fortune. Pa told him that they've just found a tremendous lot of ore in the Grubstake mine, but the principal owners are lying low, and saying bad things about the mine until they can rope in all the stock, whatever that means. Any way, they've broken down the pumps on purpose to let the works get flooded, so as to hide what they've found. Daddy Longlegs has sense enough to speculate in Grubstakes; you haven't."

"KITTY."

"Yes," continued Jack, "Kitty's pretty straight goods, and when she says a thing she means it. If Daddy Longlegs had a thousand dollars, I was worth two thousand; at least that's what I realized in hard cash by selling my ranch to a tenderfoot. So I rode down here to Bitter Root City, went to Kitty's uncle, Hi Hewson, the stockbroker, planked down my roll of bills, and said: 'Buy Grubstakes.'"

"You hadn't ought to buy outright," says Hewson; 'you should margin.'"

"What's that?" said I.

"It means," said he, "that you plank down your money; I run the show; if the stock goes up, I sell out when you think you're pretty well fixed for life; if the stock goes down two thousand dollars' worth, you lose all you have got."

"I'll gamble," said I, "with all I can hold down by sitting straddle."

"Well, you should have seen the brokers guying Hi Hewson in the Min-

ing Exchange, and afterward I heard them talking among themselves in the Coffee Palace.

"What," says one smart Aleck, 'you think Hi Hewson's working for Silas, eh? You must think Silas P. Hewson's gone loco! The old man confessed only last week to a friend of mine that the mine's played out. 'Why,' the works are chock a-bloke with water, and no tunneling facilities to drain it; the pumps have broken down and of real pay ore there isn't a dollar in sight."

"A level head has old man Silas," says another; 'as to Hi Hewson, he's roped in a sucker who thinks he can gamble—some fool of a cowboy, he says.'"

"There was another sucker last week," says smart Aleck; 'Daddy Longlegs they call him—planked down a thousand dollars on a falling market, he, he! Well, he's busted now; margin all run out.'"

"At that they all drank a toast, 'Long live the suckers,' but—well—I laughed. 'Now read the second letter,' said Jack."

"You're a daisy," I read. "Daddy Longlegs has come back dead broke; and his language is just disgraceful. Hold on, keep right hold, Jack, for pa says he'll soon be letting the cat out of the bag, so if the stock goes down any more you must keep a good heart and hold on."

"KITTY."

"That's all right," said Jack, "but by the time I got the letter on Monday morning my margin was running out, too. Says Hi, 'It's all your own fault; you never took the trouble to ask my advice, or you wouldn't have bought until to-day,' but that was poor consolation, for I was like to be as big a fool as Daddy Longlegs. When the Exchange closed on Monday the Grubstake was quoted at forty-three, and if it went a point lower my two thousand dollars would be lost. Read the third letter."

"Hold on to the stock," I read. "You needn't have been jealous of Daddy. He ain't in it, never was, for I love you, old boy. On Wednesday morning the news will be in all the papers that the Grubstake was flooded on purpose to keep the secret of a great bonanza; your stock will be worth a fortune. Hold on for my sake, darling. Hold on for all you're worth."

"At that I plucked up courage," said Jack, cheerfully, "sold my horse, saddle, rifle, coat, 'shaps,' lariat, spurs, watch, everything; and planked down the cash with Hi Hewson. I could hold on now, he told me, till the stock dropped to forty and a half; but if it went below that I was lost."

"On Tuesday I went to the Mining Exchange Building with my heart in my mouth. The stock opened at forty-three, then a little was sold at forty-two, and at noon it stood at forty-one and a half. Scared almost crazy, I grabbed hold of a reporter, stood the drinks, and loaded him up with news. I told him to say in his paper that the Hewson outfit was bearing down the market, that Silas had flooded the mine to hide his bonanza until the moment came to shout. But the reporter made out that the next edition came out at four o'clock, and the Exchange closed at half-past three."

"Get out the posters early," I told him, 'bribe the printers, work the ropes somehow, and if I win my game, I won't forget you.'"

"The reporter winked, and started to write out his news; but when the market opened again in the afternoon, there seemed to be no hope left, for the stock was at forty-one and a quarter, with only three-quarters of a point between me and perdition."

"From where I stood in the public gallery, I saw the brokers whispering, for a rumor had got wind from the printers that made them crazy. Some of them were offering forty-three, forty-four, even up to fifty for Grubstake stock; but there wasn't a dollar for sale. 'Twas old Hewson's broker that started the counter rumor making out that the newspaper yarn was some fool's canard—or else a tale gotten up so the holders could sell out in a hurry. I was paralyzed when the bidding stopped short; I didn't know one more move that could save the game; I was ready to kill myself."

"Hi Hewson sent up a clerk to say he hated to see me ruined—I'd better sell. It was decent of him, but I told the clerk to go to blazes and further, before I'd throw up my hand like a white-livered coward."

"At three o'clock came a telegram from Kitty that said:

"Be brave. Pa has bought all the stock he wants, and wired his broker to quit 'bearing.'"

"Oh, man, but she was worth fighting for. She's an angel out of heaven, and

I'd rather have died than broken faith with her."

"The clock was going so slow that it seemed to have stopped. Five past three, ten past, quarter-past three; the stock at forty-one! Twenty past three, twenty-three past! I was saying my prayers with my revolver ready in my hand for death if I lost in the game. There was a commotion down in the hall—a rumor was spreading through the crowd, till it rippled up into the gallery, and I heard the news—the Grubstake syndicate bankrupt!"

"I knew it could only be a lie gotten up by old Hewson's broker. I knew that in another moment the newspaper posters would be fastened up at the door. I knew that if the market held still another three minutes I'd saved my game."

"The fool at the blackboard was marking the closing prices on Tigers, Poorman, Coeur d'Alene, Eagle of Murderer's Bar, Grubstake. He'd wiped out the old figures to write down Grubstake at the price of a bankrupt mine; the brokers were yelling like demons; the place shook with the uproar; the clock ticked at twenty-nine past; the fool was writing the figures that meant ruin—despair—death!"

"Raising my gun, I fired right at his fingers, missed, fired again, but the fool was gone. I fired again and again, then once again, and flung my revolver at the blackboard across an empty hall. Yes, I'd stamped the brokers, I'd stamped the whole confounded outfit—the rack of them was screeching with panic against the doors—and I stood alone in the gallery. The game was won!"

"What matter if I did get excited? What matter if I did knock a few deputy marshals out of the gallery? What matter if I did damage a city official—or a dozen—or scores?"

"The news is out; I've won me a wife and a fortune; I'm boss of the range; and Kitty shall live like a queen because I love her—because I've loved her like a man—and she's mine!"—Waverley Magazine.

### Corporation Banks.

The largest banks in New York are, for all practical purposes, corporation banks. Some of them frankly state that they do not care for small customers, by which is meant depositors whose accounts average from one to twenty thousand dollars; and all of them cultivate principally the business of the larger corporations and of out-of-town banks. These features of their policy entail certain important results. It is a well known fact that deposits of a small or moderate size are more stable than "millionaire" accounts, which are likely to be drawn down very rapidly when money is high. Only a short time ago one of the big banks was notified, an hour before closing for the day, that a check for \$5,000,000 had been drawn against a large account. With "a little skirmishing," so a reliable financial paper states, "the situation was met in a few minutes;" but the incident illustrates the conditions under which the operations of such institutions must be conducted. The same tendencies exist also in the case of the deposits by country banks. At the approach of anything resembling a panic these are withdrawn with great rapidity; so that they have been justly called the "explosive element" of our banking system. It is evident, therefore, that more than ordinary conservatism will be required if the largest banks are to exercise a steady influence in times of actual or impending danger.—Atlantic Monthly.

### The Bible Brick.

E. G. Acheson, of Niagara Falls, while he was searching for the best clay to make crucibles, read the statements in the fifth chapter of Exodus about the use of straw and stubble in the manufacture of ancient Egyptian bricks. He procured some straw, had it boiled and mixed the dark red liquid thus obtained with clay. He found that the plasticity was greatly increased. Investigation showed that the tannin was the active agent, and when he treated over clay with a solution of tannin in water he obtained surprising results. The strength and plasticity of the clay are increased and the tendency to shrink and warp is greatly reduced. In this process sun drying is far superior to burning, and in ten days the clay is better tempered than in months or even years by the old process.

The peat bogs of Ireland could give an annual output of 100,000 electric horse power for the next 1250 years.

In Southern India the schoolmasters have forty-two different kinds of punishment for naughty boys.

### SIGNS OF RAIN.

"Twill surely rain  
If the soot falls, the squirrels sleep,  
The spiders from their cobwebs creep,  
Loud quack the ducks, the peacocks cry,  
The distant hills look clear and high,  
And restless are the snorting swine,  
While busy flies disturb the kine.  
Puss on the hearth, with velvet paws,  
Sits wiping off her whiskered jaws;  
The dog, quite altered in his taste,  
Quits mutton bones on grass to feast;  
From all these signs I see with sorrow  
Our work must be put off to-morrow."



"Scribbles, the poet, now has twice the number of readers he had before."

"So? Whom did he marry?"—Life.

To bet on the market—  
He thought it a joke.  
He went to a broker.  
And now he is broke.  
—Washington Star.

Nell—"Yes, we're engaged, but I took my time about accepting him." Belle—"Indeed? Waited till he actually proposed, did you?"—Philadelphia Ledger.

She—"I am afraid I cannot marry you, dearest." His Lordship—"Oh, why not?" She—"Papa would never forgive me for being so extravagant."

Life.

Foosle—"Do you think it wrong to play golf on Sunday?" Niblick—"I think it wrong to play such a game as you do on any day of the week."—Boston Transcript.

Myer—"Did you ever see a man-eating shark?" Gyer—"No, but I once saw a man eating catfish." Myer—"Indeed! Where?" Gyer—"In a restaurant."—Chicago News.

Lives of all great men remind us  
We could make our lives sublime,  
If we only had the money,  
Brains enough, and lots of time.  
—Indianapolis News.

She—"I'll never forget my feelings when you asked me to marry you." He—"Why, was it such a hard thing to answer?" She—"No, but you were such a soft thing to answer."—Philadelphia Press.

"Your husband," said Mrs. Oldcastle, "seems to be so altruistic." "Yes, I know it. But Josiah always was a great hand to overeat, and I think that must be what gives it to him."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Returned Traveler—"I wonder what ever became of Bryton. I used to have a great admiration for that man. He was such a finished scholar." Native—"He is now, anyway. He went into politics."—Chicago Tribune.

"Language was given for the concealment of thought," quoted the wily citizen. "That is perfectly correct," answered Senator Sorghum; "if every man voted the way he talks we'd have all kinds of reform in no time."—Washington Star.

Fidgett—"Do you ever take any notice of anonymous communications?" Midgett—"No; not unless the writers' names are signed to them." Fidgett—"Yes, I suppose that does make a difference; I never thought of that."—Boston Transcript.

"What do you think of our author friend's success?" "It's the irony of fate. After he has gone on record to the effect that the public is totally lacking in artistic discrimination and wants nothing but trash, he gets out a book that makes a universal hit."—Washington Star.

"Some men are so fortunate in securing good wives," remarked the man who wanted to be sympathetic. "Yes," replied Henpeck. "Now, my wife is just like sunshine about the house." "Indeed! Well—er—really, I'm surprised—" "Yes. She's never there at all at night. Woman's right meetings and all that, you know."—Philadelphia Press.

### The Hard-Working Human Heart.

Some one with an aptitude for statistics has been doing a little calculating on the subject of the human heart and its activities. The normal heart, it appears, beats about seventy-five times in a minute; so that an hour's record would be something like 4320 beats. Supposing that a man lived to be fifty, his heart would have beaten 1,821,600 times. If a son of this man, more robust than his father, should fill out the Scriptural allotment of threescore years and ten, his heart beats would number 2,649,024,000. It is easy to understand, after such a computation, why this hard working servant of the human bodies so frequently wears out.

—Harper's Weekly.

Great Britain spends \$112,500,000 a year on the support of the poor. This does not include private charities.