

BOUCUSED.

'OLD NOB'S' bark shanty stood on the flat between 'Dead Man's Gully' and 'The Crabholes.' The gully, despite its ominous name, was the centre of a rich reeling district. Tall poppet heads and great mounds of tallings made the hillside resemble a vast ant-bed. The thunder of the stampers ceased not by night or day. All the long days and far into the nights 'The Shamrock'—as 'Old Nob's' house was named, in eccentric letters burnt into a piece of gin case over the door—resounded with the clinking of glasses, the rattle of dice, a babel of voices, and lurid blasphemy. From the rising of the sun until midnight the long bar was crowded with miners in all kinds of garb and every stage of intoxication. Adjacent to the bar was 'The Shearing Shed,' a slabbed partition, surrounded with well-worn couches, on which booused diggers, sleeping off their drunken stupor, were robbed of their money. At the back was a specious room where the miners danced with bedizened and painted nymphs to the cracked strains of a boozey German band. Enough that 'The Shamrock' was conducted on highly moral principles. Even the commissioner, who had an intimate knowledge of the house and its inmates, and the troopers who paid long visits of inspection after closing time, could vouch for its respectability.

But one night 'The Shamrock' narrowly escaped losing its reputation. The boss chucker out, a retired pugilist, was putting the finishing touch to his duties by projecting the half-dazed occupants of the rickety couches in 'The Shearing Shed' into the outer darkness and mud. All at once he struck a snag. One of the 'fly-blown' reentered the rude disturbance of his dreams. When he shook himself up, he stood over six feet. He grabbed the chucker-out by the collar and seat of his pants and wiped the floor with him. Then he snatched up various articles of furniture and made things lively. But the troopers in the adjoining room threw down their cards and the obstreperous digger was scrubbed to the lock-up, fighting all the way and swearing he had been robbed of a hundred pounds. The charges against him next morning were 'drunk and riotous, attempting to break into an hotel, to wit 'The Shamrock,' violently assaulting the police in the execution of their duty, and bearing their uniforms.' The bench sentenced him to a month's hard labour, and ordered him to pay for the damaged uniforms.

But in the scuffle and confusion one of the inmates of 'the shearing shed' had been overlooked, and next morning when the sweeper went to pick up the botom and jeteam, he found a corpse. The coroner's jury found that 'Carrotty Bill' had died of heart disease. No one com-

mented on the fact that the chief witness happened to be the regular medical attendant in 'Old Nob's' establishment.

As the months wore on the shindy at 'The Shamrock' was forgotten, and the remains of 'Carrotty Bill' were mouldering away in a nameless grave. 'Old Nob' had been made a J.P. as a reward for political services in the last election. The dance-room and its adjuncts still flourished, and 'The Shearing Shed' was always full. But 'The Shamrock' had a new doctor, the other man having kicked out in a howling fit of *delirium tremens*.

One night a red-haired stranger reeled up to the bar. His clothes were stained with the colour of clay, and his nose with the delicate purple and pink of rum and tobacco and blue-stone. He propped himself up against the counter, fumbled in his pockets, produced a roll of bank notes, and peeling off a fiveer from the outside flung it on the bar with the recklessness of a mad millionaire.

'Washyer poison, boys? Give it a name,' he stammered in a voice husky with boezy emotion.

'Old Nob' and the presiding Hebe exchanged significant glances.

The red-haired man seemed to be afflicted with an unquenchable fiery thirst. Whisky after whisky vanished with the rapidity of sleight of hand.

'The hardest case, I ever see,' whispered the barmaid confidentially to 'Flash Ned.'

Even 'Old Nob' could not repress a feeling of admiration mingled with fear lest this man with the cast iron throat should escape his benevolent designs.

The man reeled round, clutched the counter, and collapsed over it with his head in a pool of beer. With tender solicitude 'Old Nob' and the chucker-out led him to the 'Shearing Shed' and laid him on a couch.

Left to himself he buried his face in the cushion and sniggered.

Four men came in and played euchre at a round corner, and the slumberer set up a stentorian snore.

'Poor—— he'll lose his stuff,' said one of the gamblers, 'put your blanky ace on that.'

'What the blanky Hades is that to us?' said another, 'play to the left bowler.'

'Euchre!' shouted a third, flopping down the joker with a blow that threatened to split the table.

'Halloo! There's "The Sultan's Waltz,"' exclaimed the fourth, 'I'm down for this dance with Milly Smith.' As the four men left the room the red-haired man rolled over, opened his eyes and

glanced towards the door. But he shut them again with a snap and resumed his stentorian breathing as he caught a glimpse of a pink dress. The girl entered on slip-tops, listened attentively for a moment, and signalled to someone outside. Then the evil covetous face of 'Old Nob' peered in.

'Quick!' said the old reeve in a husky whisper, and in the twinkling of an eye her long slender fingers abstracted the roll of notes. The man never stirred.

For hours he slumbered on. Fresh victims were gently deposited on the other couches. One rolled in a heap on the floor and vomited like a dog.

The red-haired man staggered to his feet, and reeled out into the black night. A hundred yards away he straightened himself and walked erect.

'Old Nob' is a man of business-like habits. Fortunately at half-past ten o'clock next morning he deposited his takings of the previous day at the local branch of the Bank of New South Wales.

The receiving teller was unusually chatty. As he leisurely counted the large roll of notes he commented on the leading items of news in the *Miners' Advocate*.

'Old Nob' was so charmed with the young gentleman's affability, that he was unaware of the entrance of a tall, neatly-dressed man, who stood looking over his shoulder.

The clerk nodded to the newcomer, and the old man turned round. There was something in the man's appearance that caused the publican's face to blanch with the paleness of death and his limbs to tremble as if palsied with sudden terror. The hair was black instead of red, and the hue of the face had changed to a deep bronze, but the features could not be mistaken.

'I want you for passing counterfeit bank notes,' said the man, clapping his hand on 'Old Nob's' shoulder.

'Who are you?' cried the astonished publican.

'A detective from Sydney, and allow me to present my card,' replied the officer.

'By God if they're counterfeit,' hissed the wretch, completely off his guard, 'I got them from you, you devil!'

Once too often, rejoined the smiling detective. 'You know you went through me six months ago. But I've picked up a few wrinkles in the police since then, and now it's my turnings. I'm not going to shop you for that old affair. You'll get a bigger dose for this. Come along quietly, old chap, or I'll have to slip the bracelets on.'

Five years hard labour was the penalty.

A year or two later an unfortunate woman was consigned to a lunatic asylum. In her paroxysms of madness she raved of dark deeds of poisoning and murder. During a brief lucid interval before her death she confessed to a female warder that while a barmaid at 'The Shamrock' in 'Dead Man's Gully' she had poisoned a man to death. She said her hand trembled and she put in an overdose of the stuff.

This is a true story, but the names and places have been disguised. The chief actors in the tragedy have long ago followed their victim.

C. O. MONTROSE.

A good old lady said to her nephew, poor preacher: 'James, why did you enter the ministry?' 'Because I was called,' he answered. 'Because I was called,' she answered. 'Because I was called,' he said, 'and as she looked up from wiping her spectacles, "are you sure wasn't some other noise you heard?"'

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X.—If the young lady insists upon having SURATURA TEA it is evidence of thrift.

TAXPAYER.—It is a simple calculation. If 1lb of SURATURA TEA at 1s 10d per lb lasts you four weeks, while 1lb of tea you mention at 1s 10d was used in a week, it stands to reason that you pay in four weeks for the tea you have been using—4s at 1s 10d, 7s 4d; as against 1s 10d, a saving of 5s 4d in a month by using SURATURA.

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If you suffer from any, or many, of the following symptoms, don't delay a moment. Write and receive prompt reply—Depression of spirits, headfuzziness, inability to look frankly into the eyes of another, headache, hair coming out, dim sight, sores in the head and ears, weak memory, forgetting dates, persons, names, places, etc., loss of voice, hoarseness, sunken eyes, pimples on face, paleness of face and lips, look old for years, started in growth, palpitation of heart, pain in or tender breastbone, shortness of breath, indigestion, with oppression after food, constipation or irregular bowels, Stomachy, gravel, weakness or pain across small of back, loss of muscular power, gloomy, remorseful, fearful of something coming to happen, disturbed sleep, moaning, walking, grinding teeth, fearful or want to laugh.

I have known instances in which most of these symptoms were present in one patient. As a rule a great many are present. In no case are many absent.

DR. WALLACE 91 PITT ST., SYDNEY, OX, BOX 59, PARK ST. P.O.