

Winning-Out Stories

By CY. WARMAN

The Power of the Press

IT was in 1858 or '59 that an English gentleman arrived in Australia to find a fortune, as he fondly hoped, in the new gold fields. The world had seen no more exciting times than these in Australia. More than a hundred ships lay idle in Hobson's Bay, deserted by their crews who, gold-mad, were rushing hither and thither in quest of rich "Patches." Many found little fortunes, but the English gentleman, being a "new chum," as tenderfeet were called then, found barely enough to keep his family in food. As the good picking petered out the price of living rose until the simple necessities of life were beyond the reach of the unfortunate ones who had failed to find gold. The Englishman watched his wife in her heroic efforts to dispute hunger, and find something upon which their one child, out of arms, might feed.

The boy grew thinner. Even the babe, still at its mother's breast, ceased to grow.

One day a half starved Missionary called at the hut, begging for food. The man's wife made tea—that was all she had to offer—and set it before the stranger. The hut stood at the edge of the never-never country, where the earth lay dead and Death seemed to brood on the desert sands.

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The last crumb and crust had been eaten and now the Englishman sat, his elbows on his knees, utterly crushed.

The starved crews were returning to their deserted ships and a few were lifting anchor, but the Englishman had no money for fare to Old England for which his sad heart yearned, and toward which his wife's weary eyes turned, brimming with brine.

The pet dog had long since died of starvation. The children were crying for food, and the sound of their voices, the saddest, the most melancholy sound that ever smote a mother's ear, was crushing and killing this patient, starving mother.

One evening the father fished a ha'penny from his pocket and gave it to the boy to buy a candle. That was the last bit of money they had.

When the boy came back from the shop he carried a short candle done up in a dirty scrap of a London newspaper. The man took it, unwrapped the candle, lighted it and then began, slowly, to smooth out the wrinkles in the scrap of paper. Newspapers had long since passed under the head of luxuries, beyond the reach of the starving. The printed lines on the soiled scrap seemed to fascinate him strangely. By the dim light of the dip the man began to read. This particular bit happened to be torn from the advertising page, but no matter, it was reading, printed in England, and he read, one after another of the advertisements. Suddenly he sprang up, clapped a hand to his forehead, and called excitedly, "Wife! Wife! here, quick. Read that," he cried, pointing to a paragraph on the torn sheet.

It stated briefly that someone and somebody, solicitors, of London, desired the address of a certain Englishman who had gone to Australia in the latter 50's and the name of the man who was wanted, and who was asked to communicate with the aforesaid solicitors, was the Englishman's name.

They borrowed money and wrote to London, and then they sat down and starved and waited weary weeks for the answer.

It came, at last, as the wife and mother lay starving

in the never-never country. They carried her aboard the ship and the ship's doctor nursed her back to life.

Of course the others could eat now, for the ship brought the news that the luckless Englishman was heir to twenty-five thousand pounds.

Held for Taxes

A bit of Western History that is being repeated in Winnipeg at this moment

DENVER, at the mouth of Cherry Creek, on the Platte, had been struggling up through cactus, tin cans and common disturbances for something like ten years. The Civil War brought fresh excitement, for there was good fighting in the foothills.

But when the war was over and the Indians quieted down the dull monotony of the camp became killing to the plainsmen.

Once or twice during the second decade of her history the camp made faint efforts to rise, but the Panic—or was it the "Crime"—of '73 put the death-rattle in her throat.

Among her leading citizens, Denver boasted one Mr. Brown who owned so much city land that he was unable to pay the taxes. He wanted to side-step, but he knew not how.

It never occurred to him to suicide, but he would do the next best thing. He would hide out. But despite his best efforts the tax gatherer would ferret him and urge him to pay up.

Finally, in sheer desperation, he packed his "bundle" and slid down the back banisters. He stole down a side street and entered the depot by a door used for the entrance of baggage. He took a ticket for the one train on the one railway that would take him out in the only direction a man might then journey by rail from Denver City. But there's many a slip twixt a plan and a trip, and just as Mr. Brown was about to board the train the tax man had him hooked. Of course he was helpless. Like a man about to jump a boardbill he could only stay and board it out, and so he sat down and waited. To be sure they might have sold the land for taxes, but nobody would buy. In fact there was a lot of land all about Denver at that time that nobody was using.

However, by and by the town began to stir. Tabor found the pay streak in California Gulch that made Leadville.

Denver began to grow. Brown got up, sold a few town lots, and paid something on account.

Denver began to boom. Brown borrowed some money from the First National, built some houses and rented them out.

The Panic was followed by a long period of prosperity. Brown, in a little while found that he was the largest individual tax-payer in Denver.

The spring of 1890 found him full of years and money in the bank. He glanced about but saw nothing that would bear his name down through the years, save his sons, stalwart young men who promised to do something off their own bats.

And so the old man made up his mind to build a monument unto himself and he built the Brown Palace Hotel that cost him considerable more than a million in money. He could do this and die, but when the great task was finished he changed his mind. As he walked, widowed, in the wan light of old age, a bright face flashed before him and he fell. But he did not die. He got married, and, for what I know, lived happy ever after.