

THE "OLD SOMERSET" DEAL

"Aw—I'm with you there," replied Mr. Craven. "I have not lunched yet."

The upshot of it was that the two men adjourned to an hotel near by, where Mr. Wenter engaged a private room. After the meal he plied his guest assiduously with wine, though he himself drank but sparingly. The result was that he obtained in writing a promise from Mr. Craven to buy the Old Somerset Mine for £28,000.

"Of course, Mr. Craven, business is business," said Mr. Wenter. "I ought to have some guarantee for this."

"I am not accustomed to your word doubted," began Mr. Craven, with a drunken attempt at dignity.

Wenter instantly began to pacify the injured aristocrat, and eventually learned that £30,000 was lodged at the International Bank in the name of Vernon St. John Craven—a fact that he verified during the afternoon.

"Very well, Mr. Craven," Wenter said. "I will call at your hotel with the necessary documents as soon as I can get them in order."

Mr. Wenter's first duty on reaching his office was to turn up an English Peerage, by which he found that Vernon St. John Craven was the third son of a duke. He also saw Mr. Craven's name in the list of saloon passengers on the R. M. S. Denbigh Castle.

"That means eleven thousand for me," he muttered, rapturously. "Another deal like this and I can retire."

He called on Mr. Gregory that afternoon and told him that he could not find a purchaser for the Old Somerset Mine, but that he was willing to buy it himself.

"I cannot give more than fifteen thousand," he said.

"Then you can reckon the deal is off," remarked Mr. Gregory, calmly.

Then followed a period of haggling. Slowly Mr. Gregory's limit was lowered and Mr. Wenter's price was raised, until they cried quits at £18,000. An appointment was fixed for the following afternoon for the title-deeds to be transferred to Mr. Wenter's name, and then the wily scamp withdrew.

"Hang him," he muttered, vindictively. "That only means eight thousand now. Well, I'll make Craven weigh out for expenses, anyway."

On the following afternoon Mr. Wenter entered the office of Mr. John Rankin, a solicitor, and found Mr. Gregory waiting. With him was a gentleman whom he recognized as Judge Witmore, a magistrate, who lived some miles out of Sydney and who was much respected.

The transfer was made and the title-deeds handed over, Judge Witmore signing as witness. Then, as though he was tearing out his heart-strings, Mr. Wenter produced notes for £18,000 and handed them over to Mr. Gregory.

Following this transaction Mr. Wenter sought Mr. Craven, but was informed that the latter had gone away for the week-end and would not be back until Monday afternoon. So Mr. Wenter was forced to wait, but he wrote a note to his client stating that he had secured the mine for him, and that he would call and see him on the following Monday. He carried out this promise, but on arriving at the hotel was presented with a letter

from Mr. Craven, in which the latter said he had forgotten Mr. Wenter's address, but would Mr. Wenter go on to Limbula, as he (Craven) had gone to see the mine.

Mentally confounding the one of his client, Mr. Wenter set for Limbula and arrived at mine at about seven o'clock. W had ceased for the day, but there were several miners standing around the Old Somerset shaft.

"Is there a Mr. Craven anywhere, do you know?" he asked.

"Best ask Jack Gregory," replied the man. He knows most everybody about."

"What can he be doing here?" Wenter thought as he hurried at he had no right still to be taking out gold. He rapped at the door and a voice bade him enter. A brawny man sat before a table piled up with nuggets.

"I'm looking for Mr. Jack Gregory," said Wenter.

"Then you needn't look nother, for you're looking at him," "Eh?" gasped Wenter.

"He's here, I suppose. I want Mr. Gregory who owned the Somerset Mine."

"Well, I'm Jack Gregory," owns the Old Somerset."

"You own it?" cried Wenter.

"Why, it belongs to me."

The man gazed at him critically. "You look as though you're sober," he said, "but you talk as though you're silly drunk. I own the Somerset, and it'd take a blooming millionaire to buy it."

"But, man alive! I bought last Friday," shouted Wenter. "Here; here's the title-deeds."

Jack Gregory examined them, laughed contemptuously.

"Forgeries," he remarked, calmly. "That's what they are. They're darned good ones, though. Here he went on unlocking a small safe—these are the real title-deeds. No, you don't—this, as Mr. Wenter made an excited grab at the safe. Then Mr. Wenter began to alternately rave, implore, and threaten. In trembling tones he told the story of the purchase of the mine.

"Was it last Monday week?" "Saw this chap?" Jack Gregory asked.

"Yes," cried Wenter.

Then Gregory gave an apt description of the "Mr. Gregory" who had called on Mr. Wenter. "That him?" he asked.

"Yes, to the life."

"Lor' bless you, that's my manager; at least, he was. Now I remember you. He brought you down one day last week; told me he wanted to show a friend over the mine. And you sold my mine to this Mr. Craven. Snakes! but that's the funniest thing I've ever struck about a merchant who recently Say, was this Craven a tall chap with an aristocratic dial?"

"Yes, yes!"

"That's my manager's old chestnut! My word! they've done you for nothing. You paid up; has Craven paid?"

"Not a cent!" Mr. Wenter screamed.

Jack Gregory went into a paroxysm of laughter, which so maddened Mr. Wenter that he made a dash for the mine-owner's office, where he was knocked down for his pains.

"None of your monkey tricks now," Gregory said.

"I'll have the law on you," cried Wenter. "Where's your manager? What's his name?"

"He's left, and you can find his name somewhere else. We call him Smith, but that's not his proper name," said Gregory. "Now hook it, while you're safe."

Mr. Wenter, tears of rage and fear pouring down his face, gathered up his useless papers and fled. He reached Limbula to find the train gone. He raved like a madman, and was within an hour of spending the night in jail. For length he spent a sleepless night in the only hotel at Limbula.

CONSUMPTION'S STARTING POINT

Lies in Weak, Watery Blood. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Make the Blood Rich and Red.

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A PREFERRED CREDITOR.

We have just heard a good story about a merchant who recently failed. He called all his creditors together, and offered to settle with them at 10 per cent., giving them notes payable in thirty days. As most of the creditors had little hope of getting anything, they eagerly accepted the proposition. One man, however, stood out for better terms, and all efforts to get him to agree were futile. Finally the bankrupt took him out into the hall and said:—"When you come in and sign with the others, I will make you a preferred creditor."

"All right," said the objector. "Under those circumstances I will agree to a settlement."

The papers were signed, and all the creditors left, except the one who had been told he was to be a preferred creditor. "Now, are you waiting for?" said

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