

ONLY TWENTY MINUTES.

“I will tell you the greatest vexation of my life,” said an Australian colonist to me one day.

“In the year 1849 I went up to B——when gold was being found in large quantities. There was a great rush. I discovered a very promising spot, and went in all haste to secure the claim. On my way I met an old chum whom I had not seen for years. He was in great spirits, and insisted on my returning back to have refreshments and smoke a cigar just for old friendship’s sake. Most reluctantly and with many misgivings I went with him. We had our refreshments, and parted.

“I went to secure the claim, and found myself twenty minutes too late. Disappointed and vexed, I looked out another spot, which, however, was not to my mind. The man who had secured the first claim made a handsome fortune from it in a short time. While he was turning out immense nuggets, gold almost in shovelfuls, I was breaking my tools, my health, and my heart amongst useless rubbish, till at length sick, despairing, and penniless, I gave it up and came away. It is now more than twenty years since : I have worked hard for a living ; I am a poor man to this day, and shall end my days in hard work, a poor man. For a friendly chat and a cigar I lost the one opportunity of my life. That opportunity came and went in twenty minutes. When I am weary and hard pressed, the remembrance

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