

"Two thousand dollars," said Gadgett. They went below to bargain, and in five minutes, anxious to be done with the fools and get away, Gadgett came down to five hundred dollars.

He knew well that not only was the place stripped by him, but that lately it had been giving out. Oysters are among the most mysterious denizens of the sea, and shell lagoons "give out" for no known reason. The oysters cease to breed—that is all. Gadgett would have sold the remains of his lease for five dollars, for five cents, for a cent. He would have given it away—to an enemy.

He got five hundred dollars for it and reckoned that he had crowned his luck.

Harman went below and examined the lease. It included all rights on the island above and underground, and all rights to sea approaches and reefs.

Gadgett had a government stamp for the new contract. He was a man who always foresaw, and in five minutes Harman and Blood found themselves in possession of