

HIS LUCK PENNY.

It is Saturday night on an Australian goldfield. The bar of the Jolly Diggers is crowded.

News has gone abroad that Dog Kellarey has broken out again, and as he always takes care to have his little bouts remembered, a crowd soon collects.

On this particular Saturday, he has set himself to try conclusions with Kangaroo Jack of the Midas claim. It is a gorgeous struggle—even old Wall Eyed Bill, who is exacting in such matters, is compelled to admit that. They fight anyhow and everywhere, under tables and under chairs, while the lamps flare, the dogs bark and the crowd expresses its admiration in language full of picturesque detail.

Kangaroo Jack tires after the twenty-sixth round, and his friends carry him to his tent minus one eye and plus concussion of the brain.

Then when Dog Kellarey counts his broken fingers, every one suddenly remembers the unguarded state of his tent, and vanishes into the darkness, not to reappear until the sound of the coach horn is heard on Portugee hill.

The arrival of the weekly coach, bearing Her Majesty's mails, is an occasion of great importance, and ranks even before new finds or wardens' decisions.

About 11 o'clock, the coach creaks and groans up the street, to pull up before the flaming lights of the Jolly Diggers. It is a curious, lumbering old construction, riding on leather springs and drawn by five strong horses—a sort of badly brought up cross between an antique mourning coach and a di'apidated Indian ghari.

The driver, to whom is intrusted the lives and hereafters of the half dozen passengers, travels the 240 miles between the goldfields and civilization twice weekly, and is always preternaturally thirsty. Custom, however, forbids his leaving the box before he has seen his horses unharnessed and led away and exchanged the usual pleasantries with his own particular admirers. When in due time he does descend, passengers, diggers, loafers and dogs escort him into the hotel, and in half an hour the excitement is over.

On this occasion, however, it is destined to last longer. Dog Kellarey advances, invites the driver to take refreshment.

After complying with the request, that individual gets out to the vehicle, to return with a bundle. Then unwrapping the shawls, he places on the table a baby girl. She cannot be more than two years old, and is fast asleep, her little head and its pretty curls pillowed on one tiny arm.

Every one presses round to look with the exception of Dog Kellarey, who has no curiosity in the matter of babies. Then questions pour in thick and fast: "Whose

is it?" "Where'd you get the kiddy, matey?" "Whose youngster is it, Bill?" etc.

Any other man would be bewildered—not so Bill Burns. He says slowly and solemnly, as if aware of his unique importance, "For Dog Kellarey."

"What!" shouts that gentleman. "That's a lie, you Bill! Who says the kid's for me?"

"I do," replies the driver. "Poll Wai es, of Wild Dog, shoved it aboard along with its duds for yer. The little un's father pegged out on Saturday—'Flash Dick,' of Wild Dog Creek. 'Is last words was, 'Send the kid to my old mate, Dog Kellarey,' an so I fetched it along, an the passengers made up the fare among 'em, so there's nothin to pay—there!"

"Old Dick pegged out!" the Dog mumbles slowly. "Old Dick pegged out and sent 'is kid to me."

The crowd is so tickled with the idea that it ventures upon a laugh.

The laugh decides him, and stepping up alongside the sleeping child he sings out: "The kid's mine, an the man as laughs agin 'er laughs agin me. Now let's see 'im as is game to grin!"

He has evidently gone home, for no one answers.

Sunday morning, and Dog Kellarey's claim is the centre of attraction. The little arrival of the previous night plays about the tent door. The Dog, fearing harm to her from his crowd of visitors, carefully defines his boundary, and threatens dire penalties on the head of any man who crosses it.

News, news!—great and glorious news!

News which runs like wildfire through the field, which flies from tent to tent—from the police cells on the hill to Dutch Joe's across the flat, past the Eureka, down to the Day Dawn—never stopping until every one has heard it.

"Dog Kellarey's proverbial bad luck has turned at last—he has bottomed on the lead; the new claim has turned up trumps with a vengeance."

It is full of gold—specks, specimens and nuggets. Not nuggets as small as peas, but large as teacups. Not here and there, but in a big deep lead, a fortune at every drive of the pick.

The luck penny, who has been sleeping in the shadow of the tent, watches and chuckles at a piece of glittering mica. In his excitement, the Dog sings out:

"Boys, 'tis 'er 'as done it. There's the lass that brought me luck!"

Three p. m. More excitement!

A nugget weighing 50 pounds! The monster of the field, a wonder of the country and a fortune to its finder.

Picks and shovels are thrown down, the roar of cradles and sluicboxes stops as if by magic, and the excited crowd starts at a run for the claim.

On their arrival Dog Kellarey says nothing, but for the second time he carefully points out his boundary. He places his revolver on the cradle, ready to his hand, and, bless you, the crowd understands what he means by that.

The luck penny sucks her thumb and crowds contentedly. Womanlike, she knows she is the centre of attraction.

When the last visitor has departed, the dog picks her up and says emphatically:

"Kinchin!" It's you as brought the luck to the old man. Now, look here, three parts of that claim belongs to you, it does!"

And he meant it.

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1892.

A bright, fresh morning, with a few white clouds scattered about the heavens, the better to enhance the blueness of the sky beyond. A happy spring breeze dashing round corners and playing the very mischief with silk hats and dainty skirts, whistling through telegraph wires, and covering the harbor with a coating of continuous white foam. A morning on which to feel thankful for exis ence.

It is easily seen that something unusual is affecting the inhabitants of Potts Point, that fashionable suburb of luxurious Sydney.

At St. Mary's church door I find a large crowd assembled, representing all ranks of society, and for the first time obtain some dim idea of the event I am about to witness. In order to make doubly sure I question an ancient lady, whose dress suggests connection with some charitable institution.

At first she seems inclined to trust my thirst for information with contempt, but finally a desire for gossip overcomes her reticence, and she condescends to tell me all in one breath that "this 'ere is to be the weddin o' Miss Athelwood. Not but that 'er name ain't Athelwood, but Kellarey. 'Er es dow'd the am's'ouses down the street—which times bein bad an a lone widder as 'ad no 'usband an whose son is doin 'is last stretch, bein as innocent as a babe unborn. An rheumatiz bein that bad, she could curse, only she wouldn't. An Miss O'Sullivan, as lives in No. 9, said as 'ow Miss Athelwood was worth well nigh a 'alf million of money if she was worth a penny—not but that she shouldn't be, seein 'is 'ow she had been born on the gold diggin's, an every one knowed them was good times. An a prettier an better lady never stepped, beggin 'er pardon for sayin so."

The old woman, once started, was hard