

MONOPOLY GULCH

GOLD IS GOOD, BUT WATER IS BETTER

By A. H. Broomhall

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"Pard, we've struck it rich at last—just look at them hens' eggs. Here is a dead cinch on a million. Think of them babies away back in the States!"

The speaker was a tall, lank individual, with a reddish beard, pale blue eyes, and a countenance brown and drawn from hardships and exposure. By his side stood a sturdy man of 35; a matter-of-fact individual, who was not fluent of speech, but his eyes shone with the keenest satisfaction.

"Yes, Bill, it seems too good to be true. There's thousands in sight, but if we had all the gold in the hills it would do us no good unless we could find water near by. Shake your bottle and you'll find it empty, and it's miles and miles from here to the nearest drop."

At sunrise Hez and Bill began their search for water, but not a drop could they find. They climbed the steep and rugged sides of the mountain in vain, and were about giving up in despair, when Hez said he believed there was water near but it flowed down the other side of the hills. After a long search his judgment was verified, for on the other side they discovered a limpid stream, which leaped out of a crevice in the face of a perpendicular rock, fell twenty feet or more, and ran swiftly away across a little plateau. This afterwards proved to be the only water within many miles. Each took a drink, filled his bottle, and sat down to rest.

"Well," said Bill, "gold is good, but water is better—hey, boss?"

"Yes," replied Hez, "gold is good for what you can get for it, but when there is nothin' to get it's worth nothin'."

"Let's walk down the creek a bit."

Suited the action to the word, he rose and followed the stream a few yards, when he started with surprise, and shouted to his companion to follow him. Bill hastened at the word, and they were soon together contemplating a remarkable freak of nature.

The stream disappeared as abruptly as it appeared. There was a rift in the surface of the plateau, into which the creek fell and was lost.

"Well, I'm glad that she stayed up long enough to breathe," said Bill. "But enough is enough, so let's get back to the Gulch and stake off our claims."

Hez and Bill got on swimmingly; true, they had to "tote" their water from Minute Creek, as Bill had dubbed the stream, but they kept piling up the nuggets, and were more than happy.

After they had been in the Gulch a couple of months, a stranger on a good horse rode down the mountain to their shanty and said: "Good morning, gentlemen." He was of medium height, slender and active: his face would have been handsome but his eyes were so close together, and his lips so closely set. It was apparent that he was a man of education and nerve. He looked like a pick-axe and shovel were strangers to him, and that he would refuse an introduction. Hez and Bill cordially told him about the richness of their claims, and that there were more good claims in the Gulch. They also told him of the difficulties in getting water, and of the peculiar appearance and disappearance of Minute Creek. This interested the stranger very much, and he asked if Bill would show him the creek next day.

"Certainly," said Bill, and at sunrise they stood upon the plateau beside Minute Creek. It was a beautiful spot. The little park sloped gently towards the south,

contained about one hundred and sixty acres of good land, and was altogether desirable. While they strolled about, Bill did the talking, and when he suggested that they go back, the stranger declined, saying he believed that he would stay there that night. Bill urged him to come down to the Gulch and stake off a claim. "There's plenty for all," said Bill, "but it won't be many months before the whole valley will be full of prospectors."

"I'll be down in the morning," said his companion, "but I don't believe I'll dig any gold."

When Bill was gone the stranger said to himself: "Here's a million! Let the fools dig—I'll get the gold, or my name is not G. Reed."

* * *

Reed was absent about three months. During that time Hez and Bill worked on, taking out good wages every day, but they were not long alone. They never could tell how Reed happened in the Gulch, nor why it was the Gulch began to fill up so rapidly after he left. He had not been gone a month until the miners were coming in, and when Reed returned there were a hundred men working or prospecting in the hills, living principally off game killed in the mountains and getting water from Minute Creek.

The Gulch proved rich, but not extensive. There were barely a hundred gold claims, all told, but the population grew and to overcome the water difficulty a cistern was dug, and one man who had some burros earned \$16 dollars a day in filling it.

Early in August Reed returned; behind him were a train of burros, loaded with varied merchandise, including oil-cloth, all of which he sold to Bill and Hez, and the other miners, at an enormous profit. He did not tarry long in the Gulch, but took his train and the six men who came with him direct to the cabin on Minute Creek. He found his homestead notice all right and the cabin intact, thanks to the care of Bill and Hez.

There were some surprising articles in the burros' packs. Among them were several Winchester rifles and an abundance of ammunition; also long wire nails, coils of copper wire, wheels, pieces of some peculiar machine, and a long leather belt.

Reed began improving his claim by laying a pipe underground from the bed of Minute Creek down the slope about forty yards where it came to the surface and fell with a graceful curve into a chasm at the head of the trail that wound among the rocks toward Monopoly Gulch. The pipe was so arranged that no water could be taken from it except by catching the stream before it fell into the chasm. He next built a stockade, planting the first posts against the face of the precipice out of which leaped Minute Creek, from thence building across the plateau along each side of the stream, bridging the crevice in which the creek was lost, and then completing the enclosure. His next move was to construct a strong overshot wheel under the fall. Then the strange machine was set and the belt slipped on, and after several barbed copper wires were run about the stockade; an electric lamp swung from a high pole in the centre of the enclosure, and a large wire run through the water pipe. G. Reed was ready for business.

The miners watched the process of enclosing Minute Creek with curiosity, and when all was complete the entire population of the Gulch came to see the "Lightning Factory." All went merrily for a few days. The stockade was made snug and tight. A little tower was built on either corner, and one of Reed's employees stationed at each one of them, armed with a Winchester.

The Sunday following the completion of the fort was extremely hot and dry; the heat in Monopoly Gulch was so intense that the atmosphere looked like a sea of shimmering liquid metal, and the water in the cistern having become too warm and stale to drink, the water

carrier, in response to the general request, started with his train of burros to Minute Creek to bring the thirsty miners a draught of fresh water. As he approached the end of the trail, where the water fell from the pipe, he was tired and thirsty; even the burros showed signs of discomfort from the heat; and it was with unusual eagerness that he turned the corner of the rock that brought the stockade and the water-pipe into view. There was the stockade, cool and quiet in the shade of the precipice and the grove—but no water flowed from the pipe on the trail. The water-carrier, supposing some accident had occurred to the pipe, passed on to the gate of the stockade and called for admittance. He was answered by Reed from the lodge over the entrance:

"Well, what will you have, Mr. Water-carrier?"

"I want water, of course. They are almost famished down at the Gulch, and I'm frightfully thirsty myself. There's not a drop running out of the pipe; hurry up and let me in."

"Why, my dear Mr. Water-carrier, you talk like you owned this place and like you had a right to the water. You seem to forget this is my land, my house; I'm not going to let you in—this is Sunday."

"Come, Mr. Reed, don't keep me waiting, I'm in a hurry. The boys want a fresh drink, and I'm anxious to get back as soon as possible."

"I may as well tell you first as last," said Reed, "that I am not joking. I do not intend to let you in, nor give you a drop of water unless you pay for it. This ranch belongs to me. I've got a good title to one hundred and sixty acres around here, and this water is mine. Neither you nor anyone else can get a drop of water unless you pay for it. You can go back to the Gulch and tell the whole population, that until they agree to give me one-half of all their wages as pay for the water, you get no water. You can tell them, too, that they need not come up here and try to take the stockade. I've supplies enough to last me a year and they haven't water enough to last more than a week. We are well armed, and there's a dozen rows of chain lightning around the stockade, and the man who touches one of them will drop dead on the spot. I have the water, they have the gold. If they divide with me I'll divide with them."

The water-carrier stood beside his burros a long time thinking, then he slowly turned away, and retraced his steps to Monopoly Gulch.

To say that the news the water-carrier brought created a sensation, would be putting it mildly. The miners raved, and with a common impulse, started for the owner of Minute Creek. Above the curses and screams of rage, Bill's voice was heard shouting: "Hold on! Hold on, boys! Don't act like a lot of maniacs, don't be fools, wait and let's talk this over." But Bill's plea was without avail.

Bill and Hez did not follow at first, but seeing they could not stay the mob's mad rush, went with the crowd, hoping to control it, but their more eager companions outstripped them, and when Bill and Hez arrived at the plateau, the mob was firing at the stockade. The fire was not returned—all was still within. The miners rushed on; a huge Kentuckian, far in advance, reached the gate, threw himself against it with all his force, and, as he touched the wires, dropped as if struck by a bolt from the sky.

As the Kentuckian fell Reed's calm, cool voice rang out, "Halt!" The mob stopped as suddenly as it had started, dismayed and puzzled by the collapse of their stalwart leader. No shot had been fired from the stockade, and they did not know the deadly quality of the wires. The water-carrier did not have time to tell them.

"Stand where you are, gentlemen. There is death between you and me. Though I have no desire to harm any of you, I must protect myself and my own. The man who attempts to open the gate or scale the stockade will meet the same fate as your leader. I am deeply sorry that he is injured. I shouted to him to stop, but he did not listen, and I hope you will not be so rash."

At this juncture Bill and Hez pushed through the crowd, hot and panting. As soon as Bill could get a breath he said:—

"Reed, what does this mean?"

"It means business," said Reed.

"Do you call it business to refuse men a drink of water on a day like this," said Bill, "when you have the whole creek-full that you cannot use? You must be crazy, man; open the gate and stop your nonsense."

"Why, Gumption Bill, I'm surprised; I thought you a philosopher."

Bill had come to be known as Gumption Bill because of his calm and impartial way of looking at things.

"I'm not joking. Do you think I would perpetrate a joke like that one by the gate? No, I'm in earnest—I'm simply doing what the law gives me a right to do; I am only asking pay for what belongs to me. I came here and took up a piece of ground that had water on it—you men went to the Gulch and staked off land that had gold in it. You won't let anybody have gold for nothing; why should you expect me to let you have water for nothing? The gold is yours, the water is mine. We've each the same kind of title, and back of them is the whole power of the Government. Every claim in the Gulch is taken, and you have a monopoly of all the gold land there—already several of you have quit work and let your claims out on shares. You make the new-comers give you nine-tenths of all their wages—that is nine-tenths of all the gold they take out—for the privilege of working your claims. You think that is all right; but here you are ready to murder me because I propose to do the same with my water mine that you are doing with your gold mine. Once for all, I tell you my terms: Bring me each day one-half of all the output of gold in the Gulch and you may have all the water you want; otherwise you don't get a drop."

Gumption Bill's jaw dropped; it was a knock-down argument. As Reed had suggested, he was somewhat of a philosopher, and saw the force of Reed's position. He saw the law in the case, but Hez only saw the injustice. His eyes glowed with suppressed rage, but, as usual, he said nothing. A feeling of helplessness seemed to take possession of the crowd, and they stood like a lot of dazed animals, waiting for a word from their master.

Their rage was all gone—Bill's wits came back first, and he essayed to argue the case.

"Reed, you're no better than a murderer or a thief if you keep that water from us, or make us pay for it; we can't live without it. It is like pointing a gun at a man and saying, 'Money or your life.'"

"Right you are," said Reed; "but it is unkind to call me a murderer and a thief. Where is the difference between you gold miners making a man pay you nine-tenths of his wages for the privilege of digging a little gold with which to buy food, and my scheme to make you pay half your gold to get a little water? He can't dig without a mine, and you can't dip without a pool. You're master of the man who makes his living by the labour in the mines, because you own the ground he stands on. Now I propose to make something out of your necessities. How do you like your own medicine? Why did you men come out from the States if it wasn't to get the good mines and good lands so that you could

collect rent off those who come after you? You're a set of cold-blooded monopolists like myself, and you need expect no mercy from me. I've got the drop on you, and I propose to keep it. Now, I'll turn off the current and let the water through the pipe, and you can all get a drink and go back. Take that dead man with you, and to-morrow I want you to send me half of all the gold you dig, or you will all go dry."

The mob was thoroughly tamed, and after a few minutes' parley, moved down to the water-pipe with their dead comrade, and thence slowly marched single file down the trail to the Gulch.

When the last miner disappeared from view, Reed climbed down from the lodge over the gate. "Well," said he, "that is an easy victory. I thought we should be compelled to shoot 15 or 20 of them."

Hez maintained his silence the whole afternoon and Bill respected it. When the hour for the funeral arrived they joined the others at the dead man's shanty and helped to bear him to the foot of the hill, where they laid him to rest. Many a rough eye was dimmed as Bill solemnly said, "Good-bye, pard; you were rough, but always brave and kind; God rest your soul."

Hez spoke at last.

"Men," said he, "what are you goin' to do now? Our dead pard won't need us to-morrow; it is the live devils we must look after. What are you goin' to do? Are you goin' to give your wages to that imp on the hill or are you goin' to fight like men for your own? We left like a lot of curs to-day; are you goin' back like a pack of dogs to-morrow and give him half of all you have? By God, I'm not. I'll die of thirst before he shall have my gold; I've worked for it, and it's mine."

This was like fire to the powder, and the rage of the miners burst out anew; but they did not start for Minute Creek again. The influence of the morning had not wholly waned; they only stormed and swore and argued. After a time Bill succeeded in restoring comparative quiet, and, standing upon a little elevation, he thus addressed the crowd:—

"Men, I've been doing a good deal of thinking to-day, trying to make up my mind what we ought to do, and my mind's made up. I wouldn't suit Hez, nor most of you, but there is but one other thing to do, so we might as well come to bed-rock at once. That imp on Minute Creek has a cinch on us; he not only has the only water in the country, but he has got a good title to it, and he has a right to charge for it. He is surrounded by a dozen rows of chained lightning, and, if necessary, he can bring the whole power of the national government to back him, with a lot of armed detectives besides. If we should drive him out of his fort and take possession of it, he would return with a troop of regulars and shoot every one of us down. This is a free country and a man has a right to do as he pleases with his own. Now, as Reed says, if we can charge rent for a gold mine—that is, the chance to dig—why can't he charge rent for a water mine—that is, a chance to dip? There isn't a blamed bit of difference. If one is right the other's right. He's got the drop, and I'm going to drop to him; and the man that don't drop, might as well get up and git. I can make ten times more and pay half to Reed than I could working back in the States. And how much worse is it for him to take half of all we earn for water, than it is for the landlords of the great cities of the East to take in rent for one squalid room half of all that a whole family can earn, leaving barely enough out of the week's wages to keep their despairing souls in their starving bodies. I'm going to stay and pay water rent, and I advise the rest of you to do the same."

And stay they did. Hez finally cooled and all went

smoothly as before, only Reed got his water rent, but the water-carrier no longer got \$16 dollars a day. All wages were scaled down to help to make up the water rent, and as more men came to the Gulch, it grew harder and harder each day for the poor fellow whose only source of supply was the labour of his hands.

A few months later, immense silver mines were discovered in the vicinity, and a city quickly grew up in Monopoly Gulch. Reed, for a consideration, released the mine owners from their obligation to pay water rent, and accepted in lieu thereof the waterworks franchise of the city. Then arose the great question of taxation.

A young stranger from the States, named Brokaw, said that all taxes should be laid on Reed's water rent, and the rent of the gold and silver mines, franchises and the city lots exclusive of improvements; that Reed's income was an unearned income: that rent of mines and increase in the value of corner lots due to increase of population were unearned incomes, too, and that it would be robbery to tax wages—that is, food, clothing, and homes—until the rental value of the lots, franchises, mines and Reed's water monopoly was exhausted. But nearly every one called Brokaw a fool. And, strange to say, all the miners—even Hez and Bill, who, with many others, had become millionaires, and all the real estate speculators—joined with Reed like brothers to fight the monopoly tax, and finally succeeded in securing a provision in the State constitution taxing all property, real and personal, by a uniform rule. Then they straightway established the uniform rule of taxing small homes at nearly their full value and the mines at a nominal value as compared with their true value. They also uniformly forgot to return their stocks, notes, and bonds, and put Reed's water monopoly upon the duplicate as agricultural land. Following the decision of the Supreme Court of a great State that a franchise is not property, they did not tax franchises at all, and on the anniversary of the adoption of the new constitution they had a banquet, at which a great statesman responded to the toast:—

"America for Americans."

Brokaw, by reason of his position as a reporter for one of the city papers, was present at the banquet, and when the great statesman had finished, though not on the programme, the Single Tax man involuntarily leaped to his feet. His soul was in his face; his voice rang like a clarion. So swift was his action, so commanding his tones, that every guest's attention was seized and held until he had finished.

"'America for Americans,' but not for all Americans! In Monopoly Gulch the water that God gave to all Americans is owned by one man; the gold and silver that he gave to all mankind are monopolised by a few; the land that this city is built upon is owned by a hundred men. Americans cannot lie down to sleep in their own city nor drink a glass of water under their own flag without consent of the men who surround the table. This is law, but it is not justice. We declare against alien ownership of land, with every drop of water and every inch of earth starvation high, though owned by patriotic Americans. Houses like kennels hide in the shadows of the palaces, streets like devil paths in hell, run by avenues that rival in splendour and beauty the boulevards of paradise. We have stolen the cups from the altar of liberty with which to drink monopoly's crimson wine. We cover all our social crimes with the American flag—but on the wall the handwriting appears: 'God hath numbered the kingdom of land monopoly and finished it; it has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Henceforth it shall be administered for all the children of men.' Hark! without this hall the tramp of a mighty host, coming not with fire and sword,

but with ballots in their hands, on their banners 'Peace and goodwill to men,' on every lip the cry: 'America for mankind!'

Brokaw's speech broke up the banquet, but as the banqueters left the hall the band played a medley of national airs, among which were:

"Hail Columbia, happy land."

and

"My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty."

Mr Montagu Burgoyne presented last Monday a petition to both Houses of Parliament for the enclosure of Epping Forest, containing 12,000 acres, of which 3,000 belong to the Crown.—*The Observer*, 28th December, 1832.

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HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION

Essay Competition

PRIZES AWARDED

The Essay Competition, conducted under the auspices of the Henry George Foundation, closed for the Second Year on 24th March last.

There were 85 entries. The Trustees were fortunate in having the voluntary assistance of Messrs H. R. Henton, H. E. Nicholls and D. Cuthbertson, who made the preliminary examination and helped in the final judgment. The work was carefully and well done, the results being announced in the *Times' Educational Supplement* of 18th June.

The general standard, as well as the comparative merit of the essays qualifying for recognition, was such that the awards had to be varied. Instead of twelve awards, made up of one each of £20 and £15, three of £10 and seven of £5, the Trustees decided that circumstances required the distribution of the £100 in sixteen awards, namely, four of £10 each and twelve of £5 each. In addition, the Trustees have granted eight consolation awards of £2 each. The following are the names:—

Prize Essayists

£10 Awards.—"Justice, Liberty, Progress" (H. F. Hardacre, Brisbane, Queensland); "John Manders" (A. Blackburn, Brixton, London); "Prudentius" (James Trickett, Rossendale, Lancashire); "Jonathan Scrivener" (R. Batty, East Finchley, London).

£5 Awards.—"Cluny" (Cluny MacPherson, Ashfield, N.S.W.); "Myson Gerald" (J. P. Boyle, Bradford, Yorks); "Latimer" (F. W. S. Howland, Westham, Weymouth); "Taxnone" (Edwin J. S. Harding, Toowong, Queensland); "Romar" (Robert A. Murray, Cathcart, Renfrewshire); "Liberator" (James D. Slater, Rossendale, Lancashire); "Forrester" (W. Waddington, Coventry); "Arthur Nicholas" (Arthur T. Lamsley, Southsea); "Frankland" (George Tulloch, Busby, Glasgow); "Geofred" (George Frederick Robson, Spennymoor, Co. Durham); "Aodh" (Frederick Miller, Bangor, Co. Down); "Nike" (Miss Irene Hubbard, Oxford).

£2 Awards.—"Isca" (David Fryd, Canterbury); "Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit" (R. A. Reed, Devonport); "Alpha" (S. Langford, Covent Garden, London); "Ca Ira" (M. H. Crees, Balham, London); "Peter Lonsdale" (Ernest Ingledew, Forest Gate, London); "Peter Quince" (M. Pettitt, Soham, Cambs.); "Terab" (William T. Barrett, Middlesbrough); "Sage" (S. Allan Johnson, Woodend, Victoria).

The result of the Competition has been communicated by post to all the essayists.

THE COMPETITION RENEWED

The Trustees of the Henry George Foundation (the United Committee) have decided to continue the Competition for another year. As heretofore, there is no entry fee.

Awards are offered amounting to £100 made up as follows: One of £20, one of £15, three of £10 each, seven of £5 each. The Trustees reserve the right to vary these awards.

The closing date will be 27th March, 1933, and essays are invited on the following subject:

The principles of Land Value Taxation and Free Trade and their necessary relationship. Discuss their practical application as the remedy for unemployment and poverty.

The Prospectus with full particulars (Third Year, 1932-33) is obtainable on application to the Henry George Foundation, 94 Petty France, London, S.W.1.