

Famous Gold Hunter Dies In Poverty

A romance and tragedy were bound up in the life of Samuel H. Napier, lately in charge of one of the lumber supply stations of Gilmour & Hugheson of Ottawa, Canada, which it situated in the wilds of the Gatineau district, whose body, half eaten up by rats, was found a few days ago. He died all alone in the heart of the Canadian pine forest, with no other companion save a faithful dog, who attracted the attention of some visitors to the lonely spot where the body of his master lay.

Mr. Napier was once a successful gold miner and occupied important public positions in this country. In late years, however, misfortunes crowded upon him and swept away his wealth, forcing him in his old age to seek a livelihood as a keeper of stores in a lumber camp far beyond the limits of civilization in the Ottawa valley. He was the discoverer of the greatest nugget of pure gold that the world has ever known. Traveling with it from Australia, where he had found it, to London, he became one of the lions of that capital and the guest of royalty. Returning to New Brunswick, he was soon elected a member of the provincial parliament for his native county of Gloucester. The story of his great find is one for the latter-day novelist, but with the important feature that it is strictly true and a matter of history in some respects.

In 1852 the world was stirred by the reports of great fortunes being won by the pick in the gold fields of Australia. Napier was then a purser of a clipper sailing ship, plying between Liverpool and Melbourne. He left seafaring life and joined his brother at the Kingowar diggings.

The brothers' claim was not a large one, only thirty-six feet square, but in it was hidden a treasure that made even the eyes of the queen of England sparkle. On August 14 their find was made, which gave fortune to the Napier brothers, and it was in the year 1857. The circumstances are best given in Napier's own language, as related to Mr. Payne, secretary to the minister of railways in Ottawa by Napier before he went up to the lumber camps last spring:

"We had got down to the pipe-clay bottom, which marked the bed of an extinct river, and was the chief characteristic of all alluvial diggings in Australia, when my pick struck something hard. I knew at once that it was not a boulder. There was not the same ring to it. It struck dead. Scraping the dirt away, I caught sight of the bright yellow color of pure gold. I knew at once that it was a nugget, but its size I could not estimate. This happened about 10 o'clock in the morning."

"Were you excited?"

"Excited? I cannot describe to you how excited I was, especially when the nugget was at last got free. It was all I could do to lift it, and I saw that it was solid, pure gold. It was two feet four inches long by ten inches wide and from one and one-half inches to three and three-quarters thick. It weighed exactly 146 pounds four ounces and three pennyweights, and was actually the largest and finest nugget of pure gold ever found anywhere in the world. One or two others were discovered that weighed as much, but they were not solid or pure gold."

"At dusk we secretly transferred the precious lump to our tent, and at midnight, when all was quiet we made a hole six feet deep in the middle of the tent. Into this we laid the nugget and filled in the earth with great care, so as not to leave a trace of our work. Then only did we feel safe. No one had seen the nugget save ourselves—my brother and I—and it was now buried securely from discovery. We went to work as usual every day, and left the tent open to avoid exciting suspicion in the camp. For three months it lay thus buried, and at the end of that time we washed out our claim. We found a number of other

nuggets in the same hole, one of which weighed eight pounds. Then we quit the diggings and soon landed our prize in the bank at Melbourne, and all anxiety was at an end. The news then spread like wildfire, and thousands rushed to the Kingowar gold field. We named the famous nugget the 'Blanche Barclay,' in honor of the beautiful daughter of the governor, and by that name is the model, now in the British museum, known. The bank gave us an insurance of \$50,000 for the safe delivery of the nugget in London and we set sail for England.

"On our arrival we were made lions of in London. The queen sent for us and we dined at Buckingham palace. Her majesty and the prince consort received us most graciously, and the prince of Wales, now the king, then a lad of fifteen, showed a very deep interest in the big mass of gold, and no wonder, for it was one of the prettiest sights one could wish to see. It was 23.7 carats fine, or as near absolutely pure gold as it is possible to get it. Then it was put on exhibition at the Crystal palace, for which privilege we were paid \$250 a week. This lasted for some three months, during which time Sir Roderick Murchison had a cast made of the nugget for the British museum. The work was so perfectly done by an Italian that you could not tell one from the other until you lifted them. Finally we sold the nugget for \$60,000. It was, however, not worth more than \$50,000, intrinsically, but, being the largest and finest gold nugget ever found, we got \$10,000 more for it than its real value.

After a time it passed into the hands of the bank of England, the intention being to keep it for the British museum. But after that time a new general manager or directorate came in, and, to the surprise and regret of every one, the nugget was melted down and turned into money. It yielded 10,000 sovereigns, and that was the last of the famous nugget."

Rehearsing ... a Play.

The average theatre goer, who sits in a box or in the dress circle, watching the development of the play before him little imagines the trouble, time and study that is necessary to present it to an over-critical public, with any degree of smoothness, whatever.

During the past two weeks the Grace Hayward company, which opens the season at the Oliver, has been diligently rehearsing a number of plays at that house and a Courier reporter who dropped in the other afternoon secured some novel enlightenment on the art of rehearsing.

There was none of the tinsel and glare, none of those pleasing accessories that hide the fact that it is all mimicry. Just bare walls, garish gleams of light and men and women in ordinary attire walking about and talking. Each member of the cast is equipped with a typewritten copy of his or her part, and all have lead pencils. The chairs and tables are arranged on the

stage, just as they are to be the night of the play. Each is expected to do his best, and after he has become letter perfect very often have to rehearse over and over several times, in order to attain perfection in the "business" of the piece, the gestures, movements, action. The ladies kept their hats on during the rehearsal, and when not reciting their parts, sat around on chairs or boxes and chatted, now and then an audible "Oh, you could do better if you did so and so," and exclamations equally as interesting. Two Germans who were cleaning and sweeping the theatre seemed oblivious that an important rehearsal was in

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As the representatives of the United States at the big German military maneuvers General H. C. Corbin and Major General Young are being made much of by Kaiser Wilhelm. The above snapshots show how the American generals look in the new field dress they will wear at the German military reception.



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