

and minarets and palaces, such as no mortal man hath built, in and out of our banking account. whose flaming doors the glorious angels of the sun do move .continually. And then there is the wild game, following its feeding grounds in great armies, with the spring-buck thrown out before selves with, and then I went with my them for skirmishers: then rank upon rank of long-faced blesbuck, marching and wheeling like infantry; and last the shining troops of quagga and the fierceeyed shaggy vilderbeeste to take the place of the cossack host that hangs upon an army's flanks."

"Oh, no," he would say, "the wilder ness is not lonely, for, my boy, remem ber that the further you get from man, the nearer you grow to God," and though this is a saying that might well be disputed, it is one I am sure that anybody who has watched the sun rise and set on the limitless deserted plains. and seen the thunder chariots roll in majesty across the depths of unfathom able sky, will easily understand.

Well at any rate he went back again. all the rest.' and now for many months I have heard nothing at all of him, and to be frank, 1 greatly doubt if anybody will even hear of him again. I fear that the wilderness, that has for so many years been a mother to him, will now also prove his monument and the monument of those who accompanied him, for the quest upon which he and they have started is a wild one indeed.

But while he was in England for those three years or so between his return from the successful discovery of the wise king's buried treasures, and the death of his only son, I saw & great deal of old Allan Quartermain. I had known him years before in Africa, and after he came home, whenever I had nothing better to do, I used to run up to Yorkshire and stay with him, and in this way I at one time and another heard many of the incidents of his past life, and most curious some of them and nine.' were. No man can pass all those years

following the rough existence of an elephant hunter without meeting with many strange adventures, and one way and another old Quartermain has certainly seen his share. Well, the story

that I am going to tell you in the following pages is one of the later of these . adventures; indeed, if I remember (

with a handspike, 'my boy and I have had a slight difference of opinion, and "At last the crisis came. One Saturwas enforcing my view of the matter day night I had paid the men as usual, upon him; that's all, Mr. Tom.' and bought a muid of mealie meal at sixty shillings for them to fill them ginning to snivel.

"Well, all I can say is that a playboy Harry and sat on the edge of the ed-out old claim is a wonderful queer thundering great hole that we had dug in the hillside, and which we had in sort of place to come to for to argify at bitter mockery named Eldorado. There | ven o'clock of night, and what's more, we sat in the moonlight with our feet | my sweet youth, if ever I should 'ave the argifying of yer'-and he leered unhanging over the edge of the claim, and were melancholy enough for anything. pleasantly at Harry-'yer won't oller Presently I pulled out my purse and in quite such a jolly sort o' way. And emptied its contents into my hand. now I'll be saying good-night, for I There was a half sovereign, two florins, don't like disturbing of a family party. nine pence in silver, no coppers, for No, I ain't that sort of a man, I ain't. copper practically does not circulate in Good-night to yer, 'unter Quatermain-South Africa, which is one of the things good-night to yer, my argified young that makes living so dear there, in all one:, and Mr. Tom turned away disappointed and prowled off elsewhere, like exactly fourteen and ninepence. "'There, Harry, my boy!' I said, a human jackall, to see what he could 'that is the sum total of our wordly theive or kill.

wealth; the infernal hole has swallowed "Thank heaven!" I said, as I slipped off the lump of gold, which left a "Gracious!' said Master Harry. 'I dint upon my person that did not wear

say, father, you and I shall have to let out for a week or more. 'Now then, ourselves out to work with the Kafirs just you slip up, Harry, and see if that and live on mealie pap,' and he giggled consummate villain has gone.' Harry at his unpleasant little joke. did so, and reported that he had van-"But I was in no mood for joking, ished towards Pilgrims' Rest, and then for it is not a merry thing to dig like we set to work, and very carefully, but mad for months and be completely trembling with excitment, with our ruined in the process, especially if you hands hollowed out all the space happen to hate digging like poison, ground into which I had struck the

and consequently I resented Harry's pick. Yes, as I thought, there was light.heartedness. regular nest of nuggets, twelve in all, "'Shut up!' I said, raising my hand running from the size of a hazel nut to as though to give him a cuff, with the that of a hen's egg, though of course

result that the half sovereign slipped the first one was larger than that, out of it and fell into the gulf below. How they all came there nobody can "'Oh, confound it all, said I, 'its say; it was one of those extraordinary freaks, with stories of which, at any

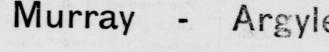
" There, dad, said Harry, 'that's rate, all people acquainted with alluvial what comes of letting your angry pas- gold-mining will be familiar. It turnsions rise; now we are down to four ed out afterwards that the Yankee who sold me the claim had in the same way

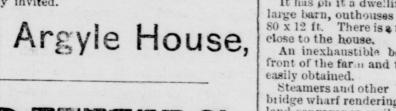
"I made no answer to these words of made his pile-a much larger one than wisdom, but scrambled down the steep ours, by the way-out of a single pocket, sides of the claim followed by Harry, and then worked for six months with to hunt for my little all. Well, we out sceing color, after which he gave hunted and we hunted, but the moonup.

light is an uncertain thing to look for "At any rate, there the nuggets were, half sovereigns by, and there was some to the value, as it turned out afterwards, loose soil about, for the Kafirs had of about twelve hundred and fifty knocked off working at the very spot a pounds, so that after all I took out of couple of hours before. I took a pick that hole four hundred and fifty poun is and raked away the clods of earth with more than I put into it. We got them it, in the hope of finding the coin; but all out and wrapped; them up in a Il in vain. At last in sheer annoyhandkerchief, and then fearing to car y ince I struck the sharp end of the home so much treasure, especially as pick-axe down into the soil, which was we knew that Mr. Handspike Tom was of a very hard nature. To my astonishon the prowl, made up our minds to ment it sunk in right up to the haft. pass the night where we were-a neces-" Why, Harry,' I said, 'this ground sity which, disagreeable as it was, was must have been disturbed! wonderfully sweetened by the presence "'I don't think so, father,' he an of that handkerchief full of virgin gold, swered, 'but we will soon see, and he which represented the interest of my began to shovel out the soil with his lost half-sovereign. hands. 'Oh,' he said presently, 'it's "Slowly the night wore away, for only some old stones; the pick has gone with the fear of Handspike Tom before down between them, look, look; and my eyes I did not dare to go to sleep, he began to pull at one of the stones. and at last the dawn came, blushing " 'I say, dad,' he said presently, al like a bride, down the sombre ways of nost in a whisper, 'it's precious heavy, night. I got up and watched its perfect feel it,' and he rose and gave me a growth, till it opened like a vast celesround brownish lump about the size of tial flower upon the eastern sky, and a very large apple, which he was hold the sunbeams began to spring in splen- JUST IN. ing in both his hands. I took it curdor from mountain-top to mountain-top. iously and held it up to the light. I I watched it, and as I did so it flashed was precious heavy. The moonlight upon me with a complete conviction fell upon its rough and dist-encrusted that I had not felt before, that I had surface, and as I looked, curious little had enough of gold-mining to last me thrills of excitement began to pass the rest of my natural life, and I then and through me. But I could not be sure. there made up my mind to clear out of "Give me your knife, Harry,' I said. Pilgrims' Rest and go and shoot buffalo "He did so, and resting the brown towards Delagoa Bay. Then I turned, tone on my knee I scratched at its surtook the pick and shovel, and although it was a Sunday morning woke up "Another second and the secret was Harry and set to work to see if there out; we had found a great nugget of were ahy more nuggets handy. As I pure gold, four pounds of it or more. expected, there were none. What we 'It's gold, lad,' I said, 'it's gold or I m had got had lain together in a little pocket filled with soil that felt quite "Harry, with his eyes starting out of d.fferent from the stiff stuff round and outside the pocket. There was not a year's elephant hur ting beyond the Zam- ing yellow scratch that I had made up- trace of gold. Of course it is possible besi, and I sighed deeply and prophet- on the virgin metal, and then burst out that there were other pockets full somewhere about, but all I have to say is I made up my mind that, whoever found Standard Bank notes with the lordly claims like the shrieks of somebody be- them, I should not; and, as a matter of fact, I have since heard that that clair "Shut up, shut up? I said, 'do you has been the ruin of two or three people, want every thief on the fields after you? as it very nearly was the ruin of me. "Scarcely were the words out of my "Harry,' I said presently, 'I am going away this week towards Delagoa to shoot buffalo. Shall I take you with me, or send you down to Durban?' "Ob, take me with you, dad,' begged Harry, 'I want to kill a buffalo! "And supposing that the buffalo kills

you instead?' I asked.

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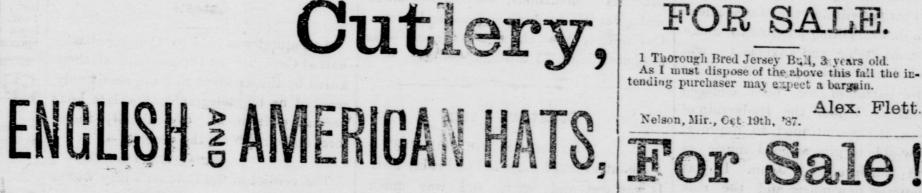
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right, it happened in the year 1875. At any rate I know that it was the only one of his trips upon which he took his son Harry (who is since dead) with him, and that Harry was then about fourteen. And now for the story, which I will repeat, as nearly as 1 can in the words in which hunter Quartermain told it to me one night in the old oak-panelled vestibule of his house in Yorkshire. We were talking about gold-mining-

"Gold-mining!" he broke in; ah! yes, I once went gold-mining at Pilgrims' Rest in the Transvaal, and it was after that that we had the turn up about Jim-Jim and the lions. Do you know it? Well, it is, or was, one of the queerest little places you ever saw. The town itself was pitched in a sort of stony valley, with mountains all about it, and in the middle of such scenery, as one does not often get the chance of seeing. "Well, for some months I dug away gaily at my claim, but at length the very sight of a pick or of a washing trough became hateful to me. A hun-

dred times a day I cursed my own folly for having invested eight hundred pounds, which was about all that I was worth at the time, in this gold-mining. But like other better people before me I had been bitten by the gold bug, and face. Great heavens, it was soft! now had to take the consequences. I had bought a claim out of which a man had made a fortune-five or six thousand pounds at least-as I thought. very cheap; that is, I had given him five hundred pounds down for it. It was all that I had made by a very rough | his head, glared down at the long gleam-

a Dutchman.

ically when I saw my successful friend, into yell upon yell of exultation, that who was a Yankee, sweep up the roll of went ringing away across the silent air of the man who has made his fortune. ing murdered. and cram, them into his breeches pockets. 'Well,' I said to him-the happy vender-"it is a magnificent property,

and I only hope that my luck will be month when I heard a stealthy footstep as good as yours has been." He smiled; approaching. I promptly put the big to my excited nerves it seemed that he i nugget down and sat on it, as though smiled ominously, as he answered me it had been an egg, and uncommonly in a pecuilar Yankee drawl: "I guess, hard it was, and as I did so I saw a stranger, as I ain't the man to want to | lean dark face peked over the edge of turn a dog's stomach against his dinner, the claim and a pair of beady eyes more especial when there ain't no more searching us out. I knew the face, it

