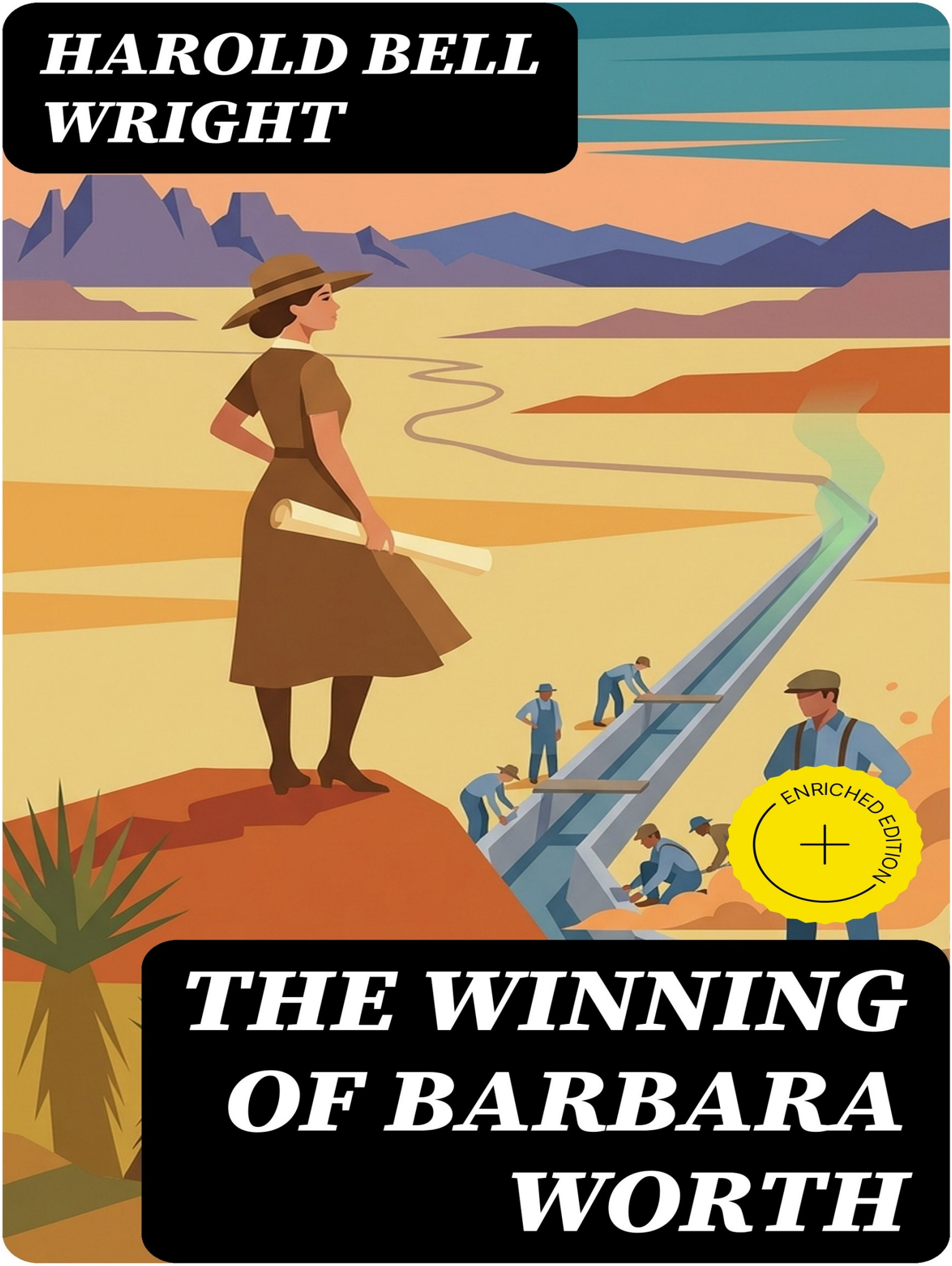
HAROLD BELL WRIGHT



THE WINNING OF BARBARA WORTH

Harold Bell Wright

The Winning of Barbara Worth

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Noah Knightley

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Introduction

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This is a story about the audacity to make a desert bloom and the moral costs of deciding who deserves the water. Harold Bell Wright’s The Winning of Barbara Worth sets its compass by that audacity, following visionaries who imagine a green future where sand and sun once ruled. The novel’s horizon stretches beyond private yearning toward civic purpose, asking how individual loyalty, enterprise, and love can coexist with public responsibility. Without revealing its turns, one can say it balances romance with the hard arithmetic of risk, labor, and leadership, making the fate of a community inseparable from the choices of a few determined people.

First published in 1911, The Winning of Barbara Worth is an early twentieth-century American novel that blends frontier romance with social drama. Set in the arid reaches of the American Southwest, it draws on contemporary efforts to reclaim desert land through irrigation fed by the Colorado River. Wright writes squarely within the popular tradition of Western storytelling while rooting his narrative in the realities of engineering, finance, and settlement. The book arrives from a moment when national attention fixed on development, progress, and civic optimism, and it translates those public debates into a vivid, accessible tale shaped by place and purpose.

The premise begins with rescue and resolve: a child found in the desert is taken in by a steadfast guardian

whose life is devoted to building a community where none yet exists. As Barbara grows, the settlement’s dream coalesces around bringing water to the wasteland, drawing surveyors, engineers, laborers, and investors who believe the river can be mastered for the common good. The arrival of Eastern expertise and outside capital introduces both opportunity and friction. Alliances form, rivalries sharpen, and affection complicates ambition, yet the novel stays close to its initial promise—watching a town define itself while a young woman’s character becomes a touchstone for competing ideals.

Readers encounter a brisk, omniscient narrative voice that favors clarity over ornament and moral argument over ambiguity, yet remains attentive to the beauty and severity of desert landscapes. Wright’s style alternates between panoramic descriptions of work and weather and intimate scenes of conversation, planning, and quiet resolve. The tone is earnest, occasionally didactic, but consistently humane, with conflicts framed as tests of character in the face of material and environmental pressures. The reading experience is cinematic in sweep yet grounded in practical detail, making boardroom decisions, survey lines, and irrigation gates as compelling as rides across open country or moments of tentative romance.

At its core, the book explores the tension between human ingenuity and the intransigence of nature, insisting that technical skill must answer to ethical purpose. It examines how communities are financed and governed, weighing local stewardship against distant speculation, and asks whether prosperity can be shared without diluting

responsibility. Love, loyalty, and the meaning of worth itself—financial, civic, personal—are tested by drought, delay, and competing visions of success. Wright's characters model differing ideas of leadership and trust, suggesting that progress requires more than capital and calculation; it demands courage, patience, and a willingness to bind one's fate to neighbors as well as to plans.

For contemporary readers, its debates feel strikingly current. Water scarcity, infrastructure risk, and the complexities of public–private partnership echo in many regions today, and the novel's insistence that engineering triumphs carry moral consequences anticipates ongoing conversations about environmental stewardship. Its portrayal of civic ambition highlights the costs of haste, the necessity of oversight, and the value of transparent leadership. Readers will also recognize the pull between local knowledge and imported expertise, and the way personal loyalties shape public outcomes. In an era of climate uncertainty, the book's questions about who pays, who benefits, and who decides remain urgent.

The Winning of Barbara Worth rewards a historically minded yet forward-looking reading: as a Western, it dramatizes courage and self-reliance; as a social novel, it measures them against fairness and duty. Approached with awareness that some representations reflect the attitudes of its time, the work still offers a robust meditation on community-building under pressure. It invites readers to admire determination without overlooking consequences, to value innovation yet demand accountability, and to see romance as inseparable from civic choice. In charting how a

desert might be remade, Wright asks how people might remake themselves, and why that struggle remains worth witnessing today.

Synopsis

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Harold Bell Wright’s 1911 novel The Winning of Barbara Worth opens on a perilous desert crossing in the American Southwest, where a child survives catastrophe and is taken in by Jefferson Worth, a reserved but principled banker. The stark landscape, both hostile and alluring, frames the book’s central vision: reclaiming a vast dry basin through irrigation. As Worth raises Barbara among survey maps and ledgers, the idea of transforming waste land into homes takes root. The story’s foundation is laid in contrasts—hardship and hope, caution and daring—while the foundling’s future intertwines with an audacious plan to bring a river’s water to the sand.

Years later, a fledgling settlement rises on the rim of the desert, its families staking everything on canals that have yet to be completed. Engineers and surveyors arrive with instruments and optimism, backed by distant investors who measure progress in timetables and dividends. Willard Holmes, a highly trained engineer from the East, embodies technical mastery and corporate confidence. Abe Lee, a taciturn surveyor loyal to Worth, represents frontier persistence and local knowledge. Between them stands Barbara, now the community’s poised, capable center. Their varied loyalties and ideals set the stage for conflicts over method, responsibility, and the meaning of success.

The enterprise moves from dream to excavation, and the narrative details the practical and moral geometry of

irrigation. The river to be tapped is powerful and erratic; the proposed intake and canal must withstand shifting sands, sudden rises, and scorching heat. Cost estimates tighten; schedules compress; expedients beckon. Eastern backers press for speed, while Worth argues that engineering must serve people, not merely paper calculations. Holmes, responsible for crucial decisions in the field, weighs orders against professional duty as unforeseen stresses appear. Barbara, watching workers and settlers alike, becomes a touchstone for judging motives, steadying ambition with humane concern.

Community life broadens the book beyond survey stakes and grade lines. Camps and a raw new town host dances, arguments, and alliances, while dust storms, mirages, and accidents remind everyone of nature’s prerogatives. Old hands prize integrity and competence; newcomers chase rumors of quick wealth. Barbara moves among them with practical kindness, learning the cost of each mile of ditch. Her suitors’ courtships—one shaped by precision and prestige, the other by loyalty and endurance—reveal competing definitions of manhood and leadership. These social currents, never far from the work itself, illuminate how personal choices can fortify or imperil a common undertaking.

As the canal nears critical stages, financial pressure mounts. Speculation inflates land values; corners are cut; and responsibility for risk drifts between offices and outposts. Jefferson Worth, convinced that control must be local and accountable, undertakes an independent course to protect settlers and stabilize development. He gathers

trusted associates, including the steadfast surveyor, to chart routes and terms that prioritize permanence over display. The move challenges the dominance of absentee capital and focuses attention on who will answer when structures fail. Holmes, confronting the limits of directives from afar, begins to reconsider what it means to deliver a project faithfully.

Nature renders judgment when the river, swollen and unruly, defeats human calculations. A breach sends water rushing toward the basin, threatening homes, crops, and the promise of a valley reborn. Emergency works rise with desperate speed; men and machines strain to confine the torrent. Decisions made in boardrooms and on embankments alike converge into a single test of character: who accepts accountability, who perseveres, and who serves the community first. Relationships bend under the strain, and the question of Barbara’s future is tied to deeds rather than declarations. The novel intensifies without settling every fate until responsibilities are faced.

Without treating history as documentary, the novel mirrors early efforts to reclaim a desert valley and the perils of diverting a mighty river. Its lasting appeal lies in entwining romance with the ethics of public works, asking how ambition can be disciplined by duty and compassion. The desert becomes a moral landscape where calculation, courage, and community must align. By dramatizing clashes between speculation and stewardship, and by honoring those who build as well as those who finance, Wright anticipates enduring debates about water, infrastructure,

and the public good. The story’s resonance endures wherever human designs meet implacable natural forces.

Historical Context

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Harold Bell Wright’s The Winning of Barbara Worth appeared in 1911, amid the Progressive Era, and is set in the arid borderlands of the American Southwest. Its action unfolds around a desert basin patterned on California’s Imperial Valley and Salton Sink, below sea level near the Colorado River and the U.S.–Mexico line. The narrative engages institutions reshaping the region at the turn of the twentieth century: private land and irrigation companies, railroads, local banks and newspapers, county governments, and the new federal U.S. Reclamation Service created by the 1902 Reclamation Act. The novel follows settlers and engineers attempting to convert desert into farms.

In the late nineteenth century, western promoters and engineers sought to divert the Colorado River to irrigate the Salton Sink, long a dry lakebed. The California Development Company, organized in 1896 by Charles R. Rockwood, advanced the scheme and enlisted engineer George Chaffey in 1900 to design canals carrying water through Mexico into what became the Imperial Valley. These efforts drew on federal and state frameworks such as the Desert Land Act of 1877 and the Carey Act of 1894, which encouraged private irrigation enterprises. The National Irrigation Congress advocated reclamation, helping build popular momentum for settlement in newly watered lands.

By the early 1900s, rail access and telegraph lines linked the district to national markets, enabling townsites,

colonization tracts, and intensive booster campaigns. The U.S. Geological Survey expanded hydrologic and topographic mapping, and the 1902 Reclamation Act created the U.S. Reclamation Service to finance and build federal projects. On the lower Colorado, the government launched the Yuma Project and constructed Laguna Dam beginning in 1905 to stabilize irrigation for lands near Yuma, Arizona and California. In this environment, private and public approaches to water development competed and overlapped, with settlers depending on expert surveys, canals, and credit to make agriculture viable.

The turning point for the region came in 1905–1907, when floods breached diversion works on the Colorado River and the uncontrolled flow poured into the Salton Sink, creating the modern Salton Sea. The California Development Company proved unable to halt the break, and the Southern Pacific Railroad undertook massive emergency construction—trestles, rock dumps, and levees—to close the gap and restore the river to its channel. The episode drew national headlines, caused heavy damage to farms and infrastructure, and led to lawsuits and the company’s financial ruin. This well-documented crisis provides the novel’s central historical backdrop and informs its conflicts over responsibility.

The book’s emphasis on surveying crews, levees, and canal design reflects Progressive Era confidence in scientific expertise. President Theodore Roosevelt’s administration promoted conservation and reclamation, while figures like Gifford Pinchot popularized the principle of managing natural resources for long-term public benefit. In the arid

West, water allocation followed the prior appropriation doctrine, and in California the Wright Act of 1887 enabled formation of local irrigation districts financed by bonds. Professional engineers, federal officials, and local districts sought durable infrastructure and accountable finance, themes mirrored in the novel’s attention to standards, measurements, and the practical ethics of building in a volatile river system.

The period also featured intense debate over corporate power and speculative finance. Trust-busting politics, muckraking journalism, and state regulatory reforms scrutinized railroads, land companies, and banks. Western settlement campaigns relied on promotional literature and easy credit, but failures of undercapitalized irrigation ventures exposed settlers to ruin. The turmoil coincided with wider financial instability culminating in the Panic of 1907, which tightened credit and heightened public skepticism toward loosely supervised development schemes. The novel’s depictions of boosterism, risk-taking capital, and newspaper influence are grounded in this climate of scrutiny, as communities weighed the promises of rapid growth against the costs of failure.

Imperial Valley settlement brought migrants from the Midwest and elsewhere, while labor demands tied the region to cross-border communities. The California Development Company founded paired towns—Calexico in California and Mexicali in Baja California—in the early 1900s to anchor operations along the canal. Early crops included alfalfa, grains, and vegetables suited to irrigated desert agriculture, produced in extreme heat and below-sea-level conditions.

The formation of the Imperial Irrigation District in 1911 signaled a shift toward public control of works in the valley, a development consistent with Progressive trends. These realities supply the novel with social texture: colonists, laborers, surveyors, and emerging civic institutions.

Upon publication, Wright’s novel quickly became a bestseller, and a notable 1926 film adaptation shot in the Imperial Valley helped cement its association with real events on the Colorado River. The book distills major questions of its era: whether private promoters or public agencies should control reclamation, how engineering standards and accountability can prevent disaster, and what obligations financiers owe to the communities they organize. Without detailing every historical figure, it draws on widely reported events and institutions to dramatize the stakes of desert development. In doing so, it reflects Progressive optimism while criticizing the reckless practices that produced the Salton Sea crisis.

The Winning of Barbara Worth

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CHAPTER I.

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INTO THE INFINITE LONG AGO.

Jefferson Worth's outfit of four mules and a big wagon pulled out of San Felipe[1] at daybreak, headed for Rubio City[2]. From the swinging red tassels on the bridles of the leaders to the galvanized iron water bucket dangling from the tail of the reach back of the rear axle the outfit wore an unmistakable air of prosperity. The wagon was loaded only with a well-stocked "grub-box," the few necessary camp cooking utensils, blankets and canvas tarpaulin, with rolled barley and bales of hay for the team, and two water barrels —empty. Hanging by its canvas strap from the spring of the driver's seat was a large, cloth-covered canteen. Behind the driver there was another seat of the same wide, comfortable type, but the man who held the reins was apparently alone. Jefferson Worth was not with his outfit.

By sending the heavy wagon on ahead and following later with a faster team and a light buckboard, Mr. Worth could join his outfit in camp that night, saving thus at least another half day for business in San Felipe. Jefferson Worth, as he himself would have put it, "figured on the value of time." Indeed Jefferson Worth figured on the value of nearly everything.

Now San Felipe, you must know, is where the big ships come in and the air tingles with the electricity of commerce as men from all lands, driven by the master passion of human kind—Good Business—seek each his own[1q].

But Rubio City, though born of that same master passion of the race, is where the thin edge of civilization is thinnest, on the Colorado River, miles beyond the Coast Range Mountains, on the farther side of that dreadful land where the thirsty atmosphere is charged with the awful silence of uncounted ages.

Between these two scenes of man's activity, so different and yet so like, and crossing thus the land of my story, there was only a rude trail—two hundred and more hard and lonely miles of it—the only mark of man in all that desolate waste and itself marked every mile by the graves of men and by the bleached bones of their cattle.

All that forenoon, on every side of the outfit, the beautiful life of the coast country throbbed and exulted. It called from the heaving ocean with its many gleaming sails and dark drifting steamer smoke under the wide sky; it sang from the harbor where the laden ships meet the long trains that come and go on their continental errands; it cried loudly from the busy streets of village and town and laughed out from field and orchard. But always the road led toward those mountains that lifted their oak-clad shoulders and pine-fringed ridges across the way as though in dark and solemn warning to any who should dare set their faces toward the dreadful land of want and death that lay on their other side.

In the afternoon every mile brought scenes more lonely until, in the foothills, that creeping bit of life on the hard old

trail was forgotten by the busy world behind, even as it seemed to forget that there was anywhere any life other than its creeping self.

As the sweating mules pulled strongly up the heavy grades the man on the high seat of the wagon repaid the indifference of his surroundings with a like indifference. Unmoved by the forbidding grimness of the mountains, unthoughtful of their solemn warning, he took his place as much a part of the lonely scene as the hills themselves. Slouching easily in his seat he gave heed only to his team and to the road ahead. When he spoke to the mules his voice was a soft, good-natured drawl, as though he spoke from out a pleasing reverie, and though his words were often hard words they were carried to the animals on an under-current of fellowship and understanding. The long whip, with coiled lash, was in its socket at the end of the seat. The stops were frequent. Wise in the wisdom of the unfenced country and knowing the land ahead, this driver would conserve every ounce of his team's strength against a possible time of great need.

They were creeping across a flank of the hill when the off-leader sprang to the left so violently that nothing but the instinctive bracing of his trace-mate held them from going over the grade. The same instant the wheel team repeated the maneuver, but not so quickly, as the slouching figure on the seat sprang into action. A quick strong pull on the reins, a sharp yell: "You, Buck! Molly!" and a rattling volley of strong talk swung the four back into the narrow road before the front wheels were out of the track.

With a crash the heavy brake was set. The team stopped. As the driver half rose and turned to look back he slipped the reins to his left hand and his right dropped to his hip. With a motion too quick for the eye to follow the free arm straightened and the mountain echoed wildly to the loud report of a forty-five[6]. By the side of the road in the rear of the wagon a rattlesnake uncoiled its length and writhed slowly in the dust.

Before the echoes of the shot had died away a mad, inarticulate roar came from the depths of the wagon box. The roar was followed by a thick stream of oaths in an unmistakably Irish voice. The driver, who was slipping a fresh cartridge into the cylinder, looked up to see a man grasping the back of the rear seat for support while rising unsteadily to his feet.

The Irishman, as he stood glaring fiercely at the man who had so rudely awakened him, was without hat or coat, and with bits of hay clinging to a soiled shirt that was unbuttoned at the hairy throat, presented a remarkable figure. His heavy body was fitted with legs like posts; his wide shoulders and deep chest, with arms to match his legs, were so huge as to appear almost grotesque; his round head, with its tumbled thatch of sandy hair, was set on a thick bull-neck; while all over the big bones of him the hard muscles lay in visible knots and bunches. The unsteady poise, the red, unshaven, sweating face, and the angry, blood-shot eyes, revealed the reason for his sleep under such uncomfortable circumstances. The silent driver gazed at his fearsome passenger with calm eyes that seemed to

hold in their dark depths the mystery of many a still night under the still stars.

In a voice that rumbled up from his hairy chest—a husky, menacing growl—the Irishman demanded: "Fwhat the hell do ye mane, dishturbin' the peace wid yer clamor? For less than a sup av wather I'd go over to ye wid me two hands."

Calmly the other dropped his gun into its holster. Pointing to the canteen that hung over the side of the wagon fastened by its canvas strap to the seat spring, he drawled softly: "There's the water. Help yourself, stranger."

The gladiator, without a word, reached for the canteen and with huge, hairy paws lifted it to his lips. After a draught of prodigious length he heaved a long sigh and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. Then he turned his fierce eyes again on the driver as if to inquire what manner of person he might be who had so unceremoniously challenged his threat.

The Irishman saw a man, tall and spare, but of a stringy, tough and supple leanness that gave him the look of being fashioned by the out-of-doors. He, too, was coatless but wore a vest unbuttoned over a loose, coarse shirt. A red bandana was knotted easily about his throat. With his wide, high-crowned hat, rough trousers tucked in long boots, laced-leather wrist guards and the loosely buckled cartridge belt with its long forty-five, his very dress expressed the easy freedom of the wild lands, while the dark, thin face, accented by jet black hair and a long, straight mustache, had the look of the wide, sun-burned plains.

With a grunt that might have expressed either approval or contempt, the Irishman turned and groping about in the

wagon found a sorry wreck of a hat. Again he stooped and this time, from between the bales of hay, lifted a coat, fit companion to the hat. Carefully he felt through pocket after pocket. His search was rewarded by a short-stemmed clay pipe and the half of a match—nothing more. With an effort he explored the pockets of his trousers. Then again he searched the coat; muttering to himself broken sentences, not the less expressive because incomplete: "Where the divil—Now don't that bate—Well, I'll be—" With a temper not improved by his loss he threw down the garment in disgust and looked up angrily. The silent driver was holding toward him a sack of tobacco.

The Irishman, with another grunt, crawled under the empty seat and climbing heavily over the back of the seat in front, planted himself stolidly by the driver's side. Filling his pipe with care and deliberation he returned the sack to its owner and struck the half-match along one post-like leg. Shielding the tiny flame with his hands before applying the light he remarked thoughtfully: "Ye are a danged reckless fool to be so dishturbin' me honest slape by explodin' that cannon ye carry. 'Tis on me mind to discipline ye for sich outrageous conduct." The last word was followed by loud, smacking puffs, as he started the fire in the pipe-bowl under his nose.

While the Irishman was again uttering his threat, the driver, with a skillful twist, rolled a cigarette and, leaning forward just in the nick of time, he deliberately shared the half-match with his blustering companion. In that instant the blue eyes above the pipe looked straight into the black eyes

above the cigarette, and a faint twinkle of approval met a serious glance of understanding.

Gathering up his reins and sorting them carefully, the driver spoke to his team: "You, Buck! Molly! Jack! Pete!" The mules heaved ahead. Again the silence of the world-old hills was shattered by the rattling rumble of the heavy-tired wagon and the ring and clatter of iron-shod hoofs.

Stolidly the Irishman pulled at the short-stemmed pipe, the wagon seat sagging heavily with his weight at every jolt of the wheels, while from under his tattered hat rim his fierce eyes looked out upon the wild landscape with occasional side glances at his silent, indifferent companion.

Again the team was halted for a rest on the heavy grade. Long and carefully the Irishman looked about him and then, turning suddenly upon the still silent driver, he gazed at him for a full minute before saying, with elaborate mock formality: "It may be, Sorr, that bein' ye are sich a hell av a conversationalist, ut wouldn't tax yer vocal powers beyand their shtrength av I should be so baould as to ax ye fwhat the divil place is this?"

The soft, slow drawl of the other answered: "Sure. That there is No
Man's Mountains**[3]** ahead."

"No Man's, is ut; an' ut looks that same. Where did ye say ye was thryin' to go?"

"We're headed for Rubio City. This here is the old San Felipe trail."

"Uh-huh! So *we're* goin' to Rubio City, are we? For all I know that may as well be nowhere at all. Well, well, ut's news av intherest to me. *We* are goin' to Rubio City. Ut may

be that ye would exshplain, Sorr, how I come to be here at all."

"Sure Mike! You come in this here wagon from San Felipe."

At the drawling answer the hot blood flamed in the face of the short-tempered Irishman and the veins in his thick neck stood out as if they would burst. "Me name's not Mike at all, but Patrick Mooney!" he roared. "I've two good eyes in me head that can see yer danged old wagon for meself, an' fwhat's more I've two good hands that can break ye in bits for the impedent dried herrin' that ye are, a-thinkin' ye can take me anywhere at all be abductin' me widout me consent. For a sup o' wather I'd go to ye—" He turned quickly to look behind him for the driver was calmly pointing toward the end of the seat. "Fwhat is ut? Fwhat's there?" he demanded.

"The water," drawled the dark-faced man. "I don't reckon you drunk it all the other time."

Again the big man lifted the canteen and drank long and deep. When he had wiped his mouth with the back of his hairy hand and had returned the canteen to its place, he faced his companion—his blue eyes twinkling with positive approval. Scratching his head meditatively, he said: "An' all because av me wantin' to enjoy the blessin's an' advantages av civilization agin afther three long months in that danged gradin' camp, as is the right av ivery healthy man wid his pay in his pocket."

The teamster laughed softly. "You was sure enjoyin' of it a-plenty."

text), referring to a railroad company that controls the main line and the pass into the Basin.

46 El Capitan is the name of Barbara's horse in the chapter; the Spanish phrase literally means 'the captain' and is commonly used as a personal or place name in the Southwest.

47 Grade stakes are wooden or metal markers set by surveyors to indicate elevations, alignment, or location for grading and construction (e.g., canal or railroad lines) used to guide earthwork.

48 A unit of water flow (commonly called cubic feet per second, cfs) used in irrigation and river engineering to express how many cubic feet of water pass a point each second.

49 A Spanish-derived term for an irrigation official who manages distribution of water into ditches and canals in arid regions; historically used in the American Southwest for watermasters.

50 A revolver manufactured by Colt's Manufacturing Company, a widely used handgun in the 19th and early 20th centuries; here it denotes a heavy handgun carried for protection.

51 A major U.S. telegraph company that operated the national telegram service in the 19th and 20th centuries, commonly used for sending urgent messages across long distances.

52 The Fresno (or Fresno scraper) is an early earth-moving/grading implement used in road and canal construction; 'grader's Fresno' refers to land that has not yet been leveled or scraped by that machine.

53 The fictional town founded by Jefferson Worth in the novel as a rival company town; it is described as newly established on desert land to attract settlers and businesses.

54 A Spanish greeting meaning 'good night, miss'; the phrase appears in a slightly nonstandard spelling in the text (modern Spanish is 'buenas noches, señorita').

55 Refers to a horse with a tan or yellowish coat and usually black mane and tail; in Western literature the term also evokes the tough, hardy riding stock used across plains and desert country.

56 A late 19th/early 20th-century reference to a Colt .45 revolver, a widely known large-caliber handgun of the period; here it denotes the heavy sidearm the surveyor carries.

57 Alludes to James Fenimore Cooper's 'Leather-Stocking' character and the Leather-Stocking Tales — a popular early-19th-century series of frontier novels; the phrase evokes rustic, frontier heroism familiar to contemporary readers of Cooper.

58 Refers to the Cocopah (sometimes spelled Cocopah) people, an Indigenous group historically living along the lower Colorado River in what is now Arizona and Sonora (Mexico); the novel uses the name to denote a local Native group in the region.

59 A Spanish-derived term used in the period to refer to lower-status or mixed-heritage urban or rural people from Mexico or the Southwest; in this chapter it is used to describe some of the Mexican workers or laborers, and the

word carries historical regional connotations that can be pejorative.

60 An early form of electric lighting (carbon-arc lamp) that produced a very bright light and was commonly used for streets and industrial sites in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

61 Uses the Spanish word 'mañana' (here spelled without the tilde) meaning 'tomorrow' and idiomatically conveys procrastination or a promise to do something later; the phrase reflects the laborers' complaint about repeated delays in payment.

62 Spanish for 'the young lady'; in the text it is used as an honorific form of address for Barbara, reflecting local Spanish usage in the novel's setting.

63 A derogatory slang term historically used in the U.S. to refer to Mexicans and other Latin American laborers; the word is offensive and reflects period attitudes in the novel.

64 Refers to a rail line or railroad company in the novel ('The King's Basin Central') whose tracks are described as being extended toward the terminal; it denotes the transportation infrastructure tied to the story's development projects.

65 A business transaction mentioned in the dialogue; the excerpt gives no detailed background, but the phrase indicates a contested commercial arrangement involving a person or firm named Cartwright.

66 A place-name in the book where fighting occurs; such dramatic toponyms are typical in Western fiction and denote a rugged, remote canyon setting in the story.

67 Spanish name for the Colorado River, the major river of the American Southwest and northern Mexico, noted here for its powerful flow and silt that built a large delta.

68 The Salt River (referred to here simply as “Salt”), a tributary in central Arizona that feeds into the Colorado River system and is named among rising streams.

69 Likely a reference to the Grand River (an older name for part of the upper Colorado River system) or another major tributary; the exact modern equivalent is not specified in the supplied text.

70 A company town in the novel that is undermined and destroyed by the flood; presented as part of the story’s fictional geography.

71 A reference to the colonial American militia called Minutemen who fought in the early stages of the American Revolution, used here to compare the settlers’ rapid response.

72 In the novel this is a local watercourse and deep gorge near the town, often dry but spanned by a bridge; the name is descriptive and not necessarily a reference to any single real-world river.

73 A principal character in the book who has acted as Barbara’s guardian or father figure; the name refers to a fictional person in Harold Bell Wright’s story rather than a historical figure.

74 Two named characters in the narrative who discover a tin box containing papers and portraits; 'Texas Joe' is a nickname-style designation and both are figures within the novel’s plot.