



***JAMES
BONWICK***

***NOTES
OF A GOLD
DIGGER,
AND GOLD
DIGGERS'
GUIDE***

James Bonwick

Notes of a Gold Digger, and Gold Diggers' Guide

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Gold Fields have a most bewitching influence upon fallen humanity. The very name begets a spasmodic affection of the limbs, which want to be off. Then man, as a mere lover of beauty, cannot help wishing to look upon the pretty mineral in its virgin home of seclusion, and his acquisitiveness pants for possession of the loveliest darlings ever rocked in a cradle. But the Australian Gold Fields put to the blush the very fairy tales of old. The Genii of the “Arabian Nights” would have stared, had they winged their flight over the ocean, and taken a quiet evening’s stroll under our ranges and gullies. Need we wonder that the dull eyes of the sons of earth twinkle with delight at the chamber of treasure.

“They come—they come.” Well, let them come; and I for one will be glad to see them as lucky as their hearts can wish. In order to give the embryo digger a little insight into the wonders of this wonderful region, I have noted down a few facts, the result of my own experience as a Gold Digger.

Some simple hints before you start, my friend. Do not encumber yourself with too much luggage. The drays will not carry it for “*thank ye*.” There is no necessity for laying in a stock of everything, as storekeepers at the mines do not now desire a thousand per cent upon every article. This may arise from a principle of benevolence, or, as some ill-natured people say, from competition. If you lay in a stock in town you are likely to buy too much, as you are surrounded by good things, and the difficulties of the journey are unknown

to you. Should you reserve the purchase of most of your requirements, till you arrive at the ground, you will have no trouble in carriage, you will *know* what you really want, and, from the high price, you will only *buy* what you want. By all means, however, provide yourself with good stout clothes and boots, a coat and trousers of oil-skin cloth, a roll of canvass for your future home, not forgetting a decent shooting jacket for Sundays, when you ought to appear civilized. Tools are dearer up than in town. A cradle may be carried in parts without much trouble.

Take up a few choice books, (not on Metaphysics or Mathematics,) because you should be prepared in some degree to keep up your intellectual position. A packhorse will ease the toil of a party, or a bundle might rest on the top of a passing dray. Unless positively obliged, spare yourself the anxiety of having your own conveyance. Otherwise a solemn warning—*beware of a gibber*, as that genus is not an uncommon one on the road. There are few things in life more undesirable than pushing behind a cart at every foot of rising ground, extricating a load from a chasm, or watching a vehicle approaching a precipice, impelled by an animal that will persist in going crabwise.

Now, I will suppose you are fairly started. You are rather nervous, yet sanguine. Sundry brave stories keep up your spirits. By one you are told of a fellow benighted in the bush, who could not sleep by reason of the hardness of his bed, but who ascertained by morning-light that he chanced to throw himself down upon a nest of big golden nuggets. Another tells you of a bullock driver in want of a stick, who pulled up a young wattle, and found hanging at the root, a