

Told by Firelight

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was buried where he died. The grave, of course, was said to be haunted. There was a water-hole not far off and a good place for a camp, so one night I camped there on the chance of seeing a Chinaman's ghost.

Unfortunately a hot day under a Queensland sun is a bad preparation for ghost-hunting. I lay down alongside the grave, and shortly after I fell asleep. I awoke at sunrise, still uncertain whether the place was haunted or not.

No story of the Queensland bush would be complete without some mention of snakes. Queensland is a country of snakes. I saw and killed plenty, but I cannot say that they bothered me much. Only once or twice was I put in danger by them.

Once when I was driving a young horse in a trotting sulky, I saw a large tiger snake in the track. I had to kill it, of course—no bushman will willingly allow a snake to escape. I could not leave my horse, so I drove the wheel over it, hoping to break its back, but the gig was light and the serpent large, so the next thing I knew was that the snake was whirling round with the wheel and striking at my head. However I managed to get him before he got me.

One snake experience had a tragic end. One of my mates went out in the early morning to find his horse. When he knelt down to take the hobble off he was struck in the wrist by a death adder, and died within half an hour. Another experience was a comic one. I rode up to a bush shanty, where I found all hands terribly excited over one of their mates who had been bitten by a snake. He seemed very bad, and as I was not a doctor in those days, I thought the best thing was to rush him into a township eighteen miles off, which possessed a bush hospital. When we met the doctor, the medico looked at his leg and laughed—the marks were those of a harmless reptile. The pallor, the incoherence, and all the terrible symptoms which so frightened us, were due solely to the bush whisky which the unfortunate patient had been forced to swallow, and they disappeared completely after a few minutes' hard work with the stomach pump.

Snake bite was, of course, one of the risks of the bush, but it was only one of its inevitable drawbacks, like flooded creeks, the dangers of riding after cattle, and many other things which men counted as part of the day's work.

I could, I suppose, find a few times when my life was really in danger, but the only one that remains vivid in my mind is this. Arriving at an out station which was out of fresh meat, my host and I rode off to round up some wild cattle which were playing havoc with his herd. Our aim was to shoot a bull and bring back a steak. My horse carried me close to one of the enemy, and I shot him from the saddle just behind the shoulder. He fell with a crash—I pulled up and dismounted. In a flash the bull was on his feet again, head down and ready to charge. I made for my horse, but before I could mount the bull fell again, this time really dead, shot through the heart. In death he had his revenge, for the steak we cut from

him was the toughest I have ever eaten.

Twice during my life in the bush I was really frightened. Once, when following a long deserted track, I pulled up at a ruined shanty occupied by a sinister looking individual with one eye. As we shared our evening meal, he suddenly reached behind me for a

gun and fired directly over my head. The thought flashed through my mind, "Has he another barrel?" but before I could move, he reassured me by saying "Sit still, mister, it is only that — opossum which has been stealing my tucker."

The other time was more serious. It was drought time, and I had a seventy

mile stage to make on horses weak from lack of food. I was told that halfway I could get water at the Friendly Springs. At the end of my first day I reached the springs, but they were bone dry. That meant next day about forty miles without water. I started before dawn, and struggled on. By the afternoon, both I and my horses were nearly "all in." My tongue was too big for my mouth, and I could not swallow. I began to wander in my mind. I thought of two poor fellows I once found in the bush, dead of thirst. However, I managed to reach the township at last. The doctor gave me a sleeping draught and a small cup of milk, and when I awoke I was pretty right again.

I spent some six months on a gold field, but was neither richer nor poorer for my stay. Once, however, I just escaped a fortune, though it was not in gold. I had camped many a time at the foot of a range of low, sandstone hills, and thought no more of it than to wonder why this queer group of hills should push its way through the flat alluvial plains. I little suspected that the hills were full of opal. It became, shortly after I left the district, one of the richest opal mines in Queensland.

If I did not find riches on the gold field, I saw there one of the most impressive sights of my life. Andy Brown and his mate, a Swede, whose name I forget, were giants of men, good fellows both, steady saving men, and real mates. One night in a friendly wrestle the Swede threw Andy against a table edge, broke his back, and killed him. Never was there such a tragedy in the camp before. Next day at high noon of a hot day the whole field ceased work, and the whole population, man, woman and child, flocked out to the cemetery a few miles outside the town. A dense crowd, hatless and silent, listened to the stately church service. Again a long silence, then someone stirred, and like a clap the whole mob made for their horses and galloped full split for the camp. Each man went to his accustomed place, and the life of the camp began again. That night at every camp fire men spoke of the cruel fate which had compelled the good-natured Swede by a chance accident in a friendly contest to take the life of his beloved mate, Andy Brown.

Valedictory

A HAPPY little function took place in the studio of 3YA on Sunday evening, when the staff and artists gathered to bid farewell to Miss Merle Miller, the studio pianiste, who is leaving for England and the Continent. The station director, Mr. J. Mackenzie, on behalf of the staff, presented Miss Miller with a handsome suede lined music case as a token of the staff's good wishes. A presentation was made also by Mr. H. G. Glaysher on behalf of the Studio Orchestra.

DURING the present season classical music is occupying more time on the Columbia Broadcasting systems programmes than previously. About twelve per cent. of the transmissions are now allotted to purely classical music. The director of programmes has stated that there is no question about America's increasing interest in the best music, and that the vogue for rubbish is definitely on the wane.

"Bringing Up Father"

Novel Series of Entertainments from 2ZW



Jiggs.

A NOVEL series of entertaining programmes, entitled "Bringing Up Father," will commence next Tuesday, March 28, from station 2ZW, Wellington.

The broad casts, which comprise a number of recorded short character sketches adapted from the newspaper comic strip of the same name, drawn by the world-famous cartoonist, George McManus, will be conducted by Mr. Voco, the Vacuum Oil Company's popular announcer.

Over twenty years ago George McManus, then a cartoonist on the staff of the New York "World," commenced a series of newspaper comic strips which immediately attracted attention. McManus later started experimenting with a particular newspaper comic strip built around the efforts of a new-rich family to polish up an unwilling father to fit him for "Society." "Bringing Up Father" was evolved with an Irishman, Jiggs, and his wife, Maggie, in the leading character roles.

By 1925 this series was appearing in six hundred papers, and to-day it is read by over one hundred million newspaper readers in seventy-one countries throughout the world. It has been termed "the greatest entertainment unit in the world," and has now been adapted to radio.

The story is woven around the comic and delightfully human escapades of the Jiggs family. Years ago, Jiggs, an Irish bricklayer, was happy with his work and his friends, among whom he was very popular. Maggie, his wife, was to say the least, an able defender of the happy hearth, and had by far the best reputation in the district for her prowess during back and front fence wordy battles. Furthermore, true to her sex, she believed in "feeding the brute," and corned beef and cabbage appeared regularly on the Jiggs's menu.

Jiggs, as befitting a good husband, was quite content to bring home his earnings each week (after deducting sufficient for tobacco and an occasional gamble with the "boys") and altogether the domestic affairs of the Jiggs family ran along fairly smooth-

ly. Outstanding among Jiggs's friends was Dinty Moore, another son of "ould Ireland," who, although never known to work, seemed at all times to present an appearance of prosperity. Dinty had an uncanny gift of always winning at card games, and it was Jiggs's fondness for this pastime that made Dinty and him such good pals. In those days Maggie tolerated this weakness on the part of her Jiggs.

The main home tie of the Jiggs family was their daughter, Nora, who, being well trained by Maggie, was already quite well known for her undoubted ability to hold her own in verbal contests. Still, for all their argumentative and fighting tendencies, the Jiggs family—Jiggs, Maggie and Nora—were all well liked by their friends.

Into the happy household, however, came the postman, bearing a legal missive which was to change the entire social status of the Jiggs family. Maggie's rich uncle in Fiji had died and left her a huge fortune. Naturally for a time the effect was one of bewilderment, but gradually Maggie recovered from the shock and, realising what a difference their newly acquired money would make to them socially, decided that Jiggs must give up his bricklaying and become a gentleman.

Thus the process of "Bringing Up Father" began, and poor old Jiggs's trials and tribulations with it. A palatial home was purchased and a staff engaged to care for the needs of Jiggs Esquire, wife and daughter. Maggie, like most wives, realised Jiggs's shortcomings (quite forgetting her own), and forthwith engaged Oswald, a butler-valet, to chaperon Jiggs into his new role of "man-about-town."

The endeavours of Maggie and Nora to move in the best social circles, their efforts to teach Jiggs manners befitting his new standing, Jiggs's schemes to get back among his

old friends, all of whom were now ostracised by Maggie, not forgetting the innumerable, and in some cases amusing, suitors for Nora provide the theme of the quaint and delightful episodes which will be broadcast from 2ZW in the "Bringing Up Father" radio session every Tuesday evening.



Maggie.