

# The Winning of Barbara Worth

---

By HAROLD BELL WRIGHT

---

Author of "The Calling of Dan Matthews," "The Shepherd  
of the Hills," "That Printer of Udell's,"  
"Their Yesterdays," etc.



---

A. L. BURT COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

**COPYRIGHT, 1911.**  
**BY HAROLD BELL WRIGHT**

**COPYRIGHT, 1911.**  
**BY ELSBERRY W. REYNOLDS**

**PUBLISHED, AUGUST, 1911**

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

# The Winning of Barbara Worth

By HAROLD BELL WRIGHT

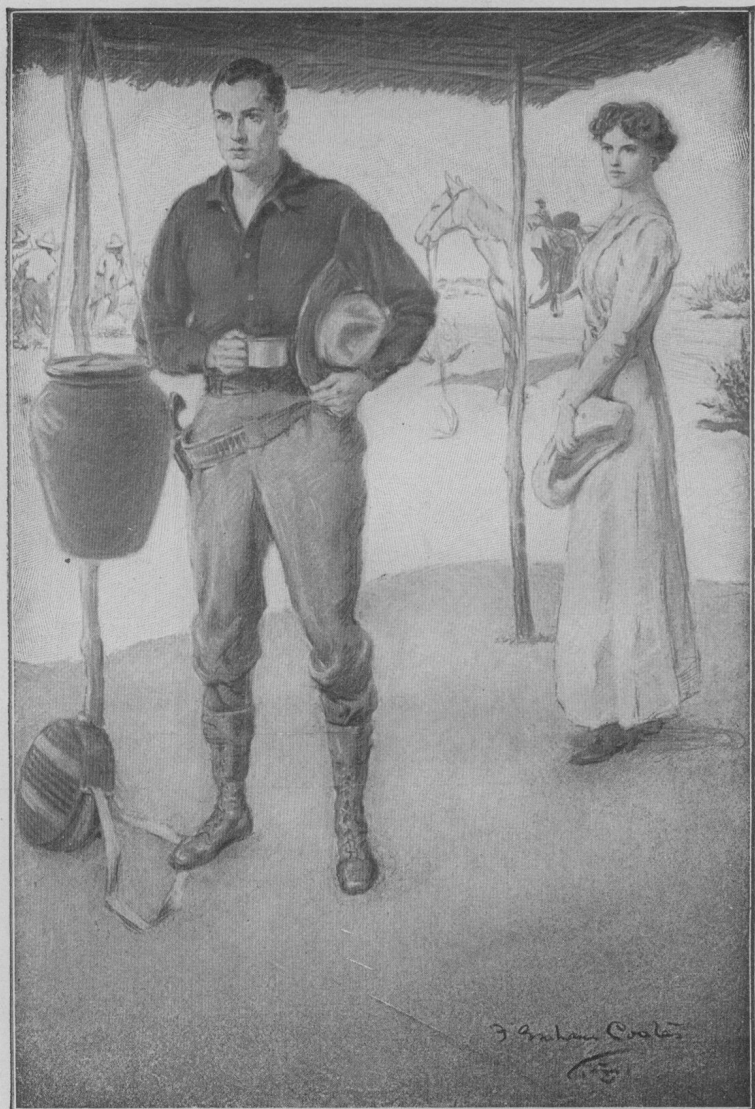
Author of "The Calling of Dan Matthews," "The Shepherd  
of the Hills," "That Printer of Udell's,"  
"Their Yesterdays," etc.



WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS  
By F. GRAHAM COOTES

A. L. BURT COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS  
NEW YORK





More to regain his composure than because he was thirsty, helped himself from the earthen water jar



## *Books by* HAROLD BELL WRIGHT

*Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch*—"The secret of his power is the same God-given secret that inspired Shakespeare and upheld Dickens."

*Oregon Journal, Portland*—"It is this almost clairvoyant power of reading the human soul that has made Mr. Wright's books among the most remarkable works of the present age."

### THE WINNING OF BARBARA WORTH

The Ministry of Capital

### THE CALLING OF DAN MATTHEWS

The Ministry of Daily Life

### THE SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS

An Inspiration to the Simple Life

### THAT PRINTER OF UDELL'S

A Story of Practical Christianity

### THE UNCROWNED KING

An Allegory of Life





## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

While this story is not in any way a history of this part of the Colorado Desert now known as the Imperial Valley, nor a biography of anyone connected with this splendid achievement, I must in honesty admit that this work which in the past ten years has transformed a vast, desolate waste into a beautiful land of homes, cities, and farms, has been my inspiration.

With much gratitude for their many helpful kindnesses, I acknowledge my indebtedness to H. T. Cory, F. C. Hermann, C. R. Rockwood, C. N. Perry, E. H. Gaines, Roy Kinkaid and the late George Sexsmith, engineers and surveyors identified with this reclamation work; to W. K. Bowker, Sidney McHarg, C. E. Paris, and many other business friends and neighboring ranchers among our pioneers; and to William Mulholland, Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

I am particularly indebted to C. K. Clarke, Assistant Manager and Chief Engineer of the California Development Company, and to Allen Kelly, whose knowledge, insight and observations as a journalist and as a student of Reclamation in the Far West have been invaluable to me.

To my friend, Mr. W. F. Holt, in appreciation of his life and of his work in the Imperial Valley, this story is inscribed.

H. B. W.

Tecolote Rancho, April 25, 1911.

*"Give fools their gold, and knaves their power;  
Let fortune's bubbles rise and fall;  
Who sows a field, or trains a flower,  
Or plants a tree, is more than all."*

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTO THE INFINITE LONG AGO..	11
II. JEFFERSON WORTH'S OFFERING.	30
III. MISS BARBARA WORTH.....	53
IV. YOU'D BETTER MAKE IT NINETY.	62
V. WHAT THE INDIAN TOLD THE SEER.....	83
VI. THE STANDARD OF THE WEST...	101
VII. DON'T YOU LIKE MY DESERT, MR. HOLMES?.....	116
VIII. WHY WILLARD HOLMES STAYED.	137
IX. THE MASTER PASSION — "GOOD BUSINESS".....	150
X. BARBARA'S LOVE FOR THE SEER.	168
XI. ABE LEE RESIGNS.....	178
XII. SIGNS OF CONFLICT.....	194
XIII. BARBARA'S CALL TO HER FRIENDS	205
XIV. MUCH CONFUSION AND HAPPY EXCITEMENT. ....	217
XV. BARBARA COMES INTO HER OWN.	233
XVI. JEFFERSON WORTH'S OPERATIONS	248
XVII. JAMES GREENFIELD SEEKS AN ADVANTAGE.....	263
XVIII. THE GAME PROGRESSES.....	274
XIX. GATHERED AT BARBARA'S COURT.	283
XX. WHAT THE STAKES REVEALED..	292

# CONTENTS


CHAPTER	PAGE
XXI.	PABLO BRINGS NEWS TO BARBARA 304
XXII.	GATHERING OF OMINOUS FORCES. 318
XXIII.	EXACTING ROYAL TRIBUTE..... 334
XXIV.	JEFFERSON WORTH GOES FOR HELP. .... 345
XXV.	WILLARD HOLMES ON TRIAL.... 360
XXVI.	HELD IN SUSPENSE..... 369
XXVII.	ABE LEE'S RIDE TO SAVE JEF- FERSON WORTH. .... 375
XXVIII.	WHAT THE COMPANY MAN TOLD THE MEXICANS..... 390
XXIX.	TELL BARBARA I'M ALL RIGHT.. 399
XXX.	MANANA! MANANA! TO-MORROW! TO-MORROW!..... 418
XXXI.	BARBARA'S WAITIN' BREAKFAST FOR YOU..... 435
XXXII.	BARBARA MINISTERS TO THE WOUNDED..... 438
XXXIII.	WILLARD HOLMES RECEIVES HIS ANSWER..... 450
XXXIV.	BATTLING WITH THE RIVER.... 460
XXXV.	NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE... 480
XXXVI.	OUT OF THE HOLLOW OF GOD'S HAND..... 490
XXXVII.	BACK TO THE OLD SAN FELIPE TRAIL..... 498
XXXVIII.	THE HERITAGE OF BARBARA WORTH..... 504

# *The* Winning of Barbara Worth

---

## CHAPTER I.

### INTO THE INFINITE LONG AGO.

EFFERSON WORTH'S outfit of four mules and a big wagon pulled out of San Felipe at daybreak, headed for Rubio City. 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,

## THE WINNING OF BARBARA WORTH

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.

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

## THE WINNING OF BARBARA WORTH

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 WINNING OF BARBARA WORTH

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. 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 studded with legs like posts; his wide shoulders and



## THE WINNING OF BARBARA WORTH

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