

**BARKER'S LUCK,
AND
OTHER STORIES**

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Barker's luck, and other stories by Bret Harte

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BY

BRET HARTE



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BARKER'S LUCK.

A BIRD twittered! The morning sun shining through the open window was apparently more potent than the cool mountain air, which had only caused the sleeper to curl a little more tightly in his blankets. Barker's eyes opened instantly upon the light and the bird on the window ledge. Like all healthy young animals he would have tried to sleep again, but with his momentary consciousness came the recollection that it was *his* turn to cook the breakfast that morning, and he regretfully rolled out of his bunk to the floor. Without stopping to dress he opened the door and stepped outside, secure in the knowledge that he was overlooked only by the Sierras, and plunged his head and shoulders in the bucket of cold water that stood by the door. Then he began to clothe himself, partly in the cabin and

partly in the open air, with a lapse between the putting on of his trousers and coat which he employed in bringing in wood. Raking together the few embers on the adobe hearth, not without a prudent regard to the rattlesnake which had once been detected in haunting the warm ashes, he began to prepare breakfast. By this time the other sleepers, his partners Stacy and Demorest, young men of about his own age, were awake, alert, and lazily critical of his progress.

"I don't care about my quail on toast being underdone for breakfast," said Stacy, with a yawn; "and you need n't serve with red wine. I'm not feeling very peckish this morning."

"And I reckon you can knock off the fried oysters after the Spanish mackerel for me," said Demorest gravely. "The fact is, that last bottle of Veuve Clicquot we had for supper was n't as dry as I am this morning."

Accustomed to these regular Barmecide suggestions, Barker made no direct reply. Presently, looking up from the fire, he said, "There's no more saleratus, so you must n't blame me if the biscuit is extra heavy. I