

# WHAT FILLED THE BLUE BOX



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**What  
Filled the Blue Box**

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be together at the end!" and Mrs. Peters used the corner of her apron to check the tears before they fell on the curly head resting on her arm.

"There now, cheer up, do, Mis' Peters! Dave'll come back all right, and probably bring a bigger fortune than all the rest; who knows!"

And with further words of comfort, Mrs. Thompson finally rose to leave, promising that as soon as her husband returned she would let Mrs. Peters know.

But spring came, and summer followed, bringing Sam Thompson with it but no word from Dave Peters; nor could Mr. Thompson give his poor wife any information concerning him beyond what she already knew.

Then one day in the early fall there was great excitement on the street, for the expressman had stopped at Mrs. Peters', and carried in a small, but apparently heavy wooden box, for which she gave the receipt, and declined the offer to open it for her.

"Guess Dave has sent you a gold-brick from Alaska!" the expressman had commented; but somehow Mrs. Peters knew that it was not a "gold-brick" which the box contained, and she wished to be quite alone when she opened it.

Carefully she removed each piece of the cover, and economically pulled out each nail. First came a few folds of newspaper, and then she saw what the box contained.

There were only three things, a letter addressed to her; a small worn Testament, and a baby's little blue stocking, which was filled with something, she did not notice what.

She lifted out each article, and, placing them on the table, she stood and looked at them. There were no tears, but her lips were pressed tightly together, and her hands shook as at length she took up the letter, and mechanically opened it.

It was written from the Mission Hospital at ——— by one of the nurses, and the words were simple and few as it told how Dave had been brought to the hospital in an advanced stage of pneumonia. How they had done their best to save him but, unable to do so, the missionary stationed there had given him a Christian burial. Before he died he asked them to write home, and tell his wife that he had had no luck yet, and that his love was all he had to send to her and "the kid."

"His companions from the mining-camps," the letter went on to say, "brought this Testament and little sock to the hospital with him; for they had found them over his bunk, and his last hours were comforted by the words of the one, and he died with the other in his hand. His companions, however, asked to be allowed to fill it with some of their nuggets, which they send to you and 'the kid.'"

"Muver, take me up!" and the pleading of the baby voice recalled the grief-stricken mother from her stupor.

"Baby, baby," she sobbed as she held him close to her breast, "he ain't never comin' back! He has 'moved on' for the last time!"

"Pity stones!" cooed Jamie, who had become deeply fascinated in his discovery of the nuggets.

"No, baby," said his mother, gently releasing them from his tiny fists; "we have managed all this time without 'em, and I guess we can get on the rest of our lives without 'em; so see, let's put 'em all in this blue box and say — God bless the missionaries, 'specially in Alaskey."