

from the shacks about the camp came to pass an hour or so, as on an occasion of this kind there was sure to be a few good yarns, and Kootenay Bill was the best at that, although many of them were told over and over again. Yet they were interesting for all that, and they never seemed to tire of them. A couple of old boxes partly filled with sawdust answered for a spittoon or cuspidore, and although the smoke curled in wreaths and hung like a cloud over the store, between the circles of smoke you would every moment or so see most of those who sat any distance from these boxes making a special target at them, as most miners are tobacco chewers and seem to take great enjoyment in seeing who was the best marksman. Bill, after listening to a yarn or two and having secured what provisions were necessary, and getting the mail, which consisted of four letters and a couple of papers, one of which was addressed to himself in his sister's handwriting. Tying up his provisions, which consisted of two bottles of Scotch and one of rye, a few raisins, some dried prunes, some assorted cakes and other sundries, he strapped them on his back in prospectors' fashion and had started out. The clerk, postmaster's assistant, etc., having just entered and coming in stamping the snow off his boots, remarked: "Bill, you're going to have a tough trip up to the shack: its snowing to beat the mischief."

Bill not paying much heed, except saying "is that so?" started out on his journey back to the shack, and being somewhat tall and rather slight of stature, started out with all confidence of making it in a couple of hours. After trudging on for about half an hour, becoming somewhat fatigued, he remarked to himself, "this is tougher than I expected." But not being made of the stuff to give in easily, he kept on, but reaching the turn in the trail where the ascent became steeper, and travelling harder, he was thinking of home, of the cosy parlor, and being so fatigued he decided to rest for a while. Leaning against a tree to rest, the cold becoming more intense, he became quite drowsy, but knowing that was how people often become frozen to death he, with renewed energy, braced himself up and started afresh, but struggling on for some time he became so exhausted that he sank down in a bank of snow on the side of the trail, and would probably have been snowed under and frozen to death had it not been for the manager of the Silverine, who, not wishing to spend Christmas at the mine, was on his way to camp. He was one of those well-built men about 38 years of age, and was astride a bronco of somewhat more than the ordinary size. He wore a heavy prospectors' coat of blanket material, and a fur cap pulled well down over his ears; under his outer coat he had donned his best suit of black, a heavy gold chain, attached to which was a charm of triangle shape, engraved on which was a scull and cross-bone, also the letters K. P.

But we might here relate that the principal attraction at the camp was the postmaster's daughter, and he was expected to spend Christmas with the family.

Coming up to the prostrate form of Bill he immediately saw what was wrong. Getting off his bronco he began rubbing Bill's hands and face with snow, and seeing that he had with him the whiskey which he was expecting to entertain the Surenough boys with, he took the bottle out of his pack and poured a small quantity of its con-

tents down Bill's throat, reviving him somewhat. He placed him on the back of his bronco, and turning around, led them to the shack, which was much nearer than the town. Immediately upon their arrival they placed him in his bunk, gave him a drink of the contents of one of the bottles, and wrapping him well up in blankets, the manager, or Mr. Bicombe, as we will call him, after seeing that Bill was out of danger and in good hands, proceeded on his way to camp. Next morning all were up early and were making preparation for the Christmas festivities. Bill was little the worse except being a little weak for his adventure. The boys from the mine came down at the hour promised, and, dear reader, if you have ever seen a gathering of a few young prospectors or miners, at a shack or cabin, you can easily imagine what a time there would be, with eight or ten young fellows meeting to celebrate any occasion. Of course card playing was the starter, then who could tell the biggest yarn, then the feasting, fruit and nuts, and the bottles were attacked, we fear, too often, until those who were more temperate in their habits rolled the others in their bunks, and about the hour of midnight you might have pulled the shack down without disturbing any of them.

The letters which Bill had brought from the camp had all been read except the one for Bill

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