

KLONDIKE SKETCHES

LOVE COVERETH ALL SINS

By EDITH TYRRELL

IN 1903, while travelling up the Pacific coast from Vancouver to Skagway, and afterwards on the White Pass Railway, and on the Yukon River steamers plying to Dawson, the most noticeable passengers were a very old man and woman. At first it was hardly possible not to view them with disfavour, for it seemed terrible for them, at the ages of 81 and 79, to be going into a country where all were going in search of gold, and where "only the strong may thrive."

They were apparently of the farming class, and appeared to have every necessary comfort. The tenderness of the old man for his wife was quite pathetic. How carefully he would wrap a little shawl about her head if the wind blew the least bit cold! Then he would always pat her shoulder and say, "There, mother, are you comfortable?" He would peel her an orange, or bring her a cup of tea and a biscuit, but in doing so he always seemed to emphasise the fact that it was for mother, as if he wanted constantly to remind her of her motherhood, and she would look at him with a look of trust and hope in her dim old eyes whenever he spoke to her in that way.

As we were going over the White Pass I went and sat beside them, and the old woman told me a little of their history. They owned a farm in one of the middle states, and had been able to save quite a bit of money. They had been married for ten years when their only child was born, a boy, Charlie she called him. He had been the joy of their lives, but twenty years ago there had been some trouble, and in a fit of anger he had run away from home. Since then they had heard nothing directly from him. Occasionally a report would come to their ears of his having been seen in such and such a place, and immediately they would go or send, but in every case only to meet with disappointment. They had followed every clew that had presented itself, and at last, in despair, had consulted a fortune teller who, while in a clairvoyant state, professed to have seen their son working in a mine in the Klondike. He was poor and in trouble, so she said.

With hope once more aroused these trembling old people undertook unshrinkingly that long and wearisome journey to Dawson. With hearts full of love they closed their house and started on another fruitless search for their boy. The old woman said to me with such a look of hope on her face. "Is he married and has he children? We have room enough and plenty for all, and love enough to take him in, broken down, sick or penniless though he may be." By this time all the passengers began to take a great interest in these old people, and promised to do what they could to help them find their Charlie.

On reaching Dawson they went to the Cecil Hotel, and for about two weeks this sort of notice would appear in each of the daily papers, "If Charlie ——— would call at the Hotel Cecil he would hear of something greatly to his advantage," or "Father and mother here, come Charlie," or "Everything forgotten, all is yours, come and go home Charlie," and again "Charlie, mother is here waiting for you."

Each day notices of the same kind appeared, but alas no Charlie came in response to these loving and pathetic appeals, so the old people turned again sadly to their home.

Though I have never heard anything more of my old friends, yet I feel sure that already they have found their Charlie, if not here then there, "where none are sick or sad or lone, the place where we shall find our own."

EDNA ELDORADO

IN the early days of the Klondike, when there was a great rush, or as they say in the west a stampede, from all over America to that far northern country, and every person who went there expected to find a fortune ready made, which he or she had only to pick up, many people totally unfit either in constitution or by training joined the rush and reached the "golden" country.

In this latter class were two from some little Canadian town. They were almost boy and girl, ages 21 and 19, but their imaginations were fired by the glowing accounts which they saw in the newspapers, of the mines where gold was plentiful beyond all imagining. They married and spent what little money they had in an outfit, which might rather have been termed a misfit, for it was like



The Hotel Cecil—Dawson City's Early days.



Steamer on the Yukon River going to Dawson.



Working in a Mine in the Klondike.

so many of the outfits sold to prospectors, which proved to be merely bundles of useless burdens.

They confidently expected to make a large fortune, but as they were unfit to contend with the new and strange conditions which surrounded them on every side, and as they were unable to find work that they could do, they had a very hard time of it.

At last they went to Eldorado Creek, where the husband was able to procure some work with pick and shovel. The poor young wife, in no condition to work, succumbed to the cold and exposure, and died at the birth of a baby girl.

There were no women on the creeks at that time, but the men, rough, dirty and uncouth as many of them were, appearing only to be possessed with a lust for gold, showed quite an unusual side to their characters. They proved once more that true human hearts beat under the roughest exteriors, and that nothing can so quickly reach those hearts as a little child.

They decided something must be done at once. Dressing the baby in the pitiful little garments that the mother had already made from some of her own clothes, they bundled it up in their rough blankets and hurried into Dawson City. Here they called for volunteers to care for the baby among the few women there. Most of these women had plenty of work to do caring for their own families in that hard northern climate, yet sixteen of them offered to take the motherless little one. There was then some difficulty in deciding who should have the baby, but after much consultation a woman who had been a nurse was chosen. As all food was very expensive in those days, milk being a dollar a glass, the men raised three hundred dollars among them to pay for the baby's milk during the winter.

One Sunday, in February, 1899, the people in the Presbyterian Church in Dawson were surprised at a christening, and more so at the name given to the child, which was Edna Eldorado. All the men from the mines were present, and the baby was held by one of them.

When the long winter came to a close, and navigation opened on the Yukon river in the following spring, more money was raised to pay for the passage of the baby and its nurse to the "outside," where it was received by its parents' relatives.

I have since heard that the little one is living, and is still regarded by her early friends as their baby, Edna Eldorado, the first white child born on Eldorado creek in the Klondike.

The Whales of Edmonton

WHALES are now regarded as one of the raw materials in the vicinity of Edmonton. At least a writer in one of the western papers refers to the whale fisheries at the mouth of the Mackenzie as one of the industries of Edmonton's hinterland. Now the distance between the southernmost whale and the most northerly part of Edmonton is not less than two thousand miles as trails and rivers run. So there is no probability that live whales will ever be seen in the metropolis of the Saskatchewan—though they have caught sturgeon in the river there. But people go to market in Edmonton who pack up their goods to-day and arrive within three months. When the new navigation system gets opened up down the Mackenzie, when Edmonton school teachers begin to take the Mackenzie trip for a summer vacation; when they get electric lights at Fort McPherson and a public debt at Fort Norman; when the Yellow Knives knife no more and the "huskies" are no longer husky—the storekeepers of Edmonton may go in for whale-bone and blubber as now they deal in furs and musk-ox robes. There is always something wild that may be discovered in Edmonton's hinterland—even if it be not woolly. Meanwhile the whales of Edmonton's hinterland go to the United States. Since 1889 nearly fourteen million dollars' worth of whale-bone has been exported, to say nothing of the oil. Total catch in that period, 1,345 whales; average per whale, 2,000 pounds of bone, at five dollars a pound. Just about all Canada has to do with the whales is to supply mounted police at Herschell Island to keep in order the whalers when they winter in Canadian waters.

His Highness the Hooligan

"THE Bad Boy of Europe"—that is popular nickname which Prince George of Serbia has earned for himself by his extraordinary exploits. His "pranks" have been as mad and cruel as they have been many, and if his recent renunciation of his rights to the throne of Serbia was received in the country with great astonishment, it was received with even greater joy.

Hurling apples and pears and a syphon at the head of his tutor, boxing the ears of the Court physician, belabouring palace footmen with a hammer—such, for him, were mild exploits, comparatively speaking. On one occasion he had a passage of arms with his own father. On another he presented a sentinel with a live mouse, and ordered him to bite off its head. When the soldier refused, the Prince beat him, and threatened him with a revolver, for disobeying his military superior. More horrible than all, however, was the shooting out of a peasant's eye during a hunt, merely that he might prove the accuracy of his aim.

The Motherly Queen

WHEN a girl, Wilhelmina of Holland possessed a family of dolls, of whom she remained particularly fond long after her skirts had been let down. She was a motherly little person, and could not bear to put away her pets.

One was the Queen of Doll-land, and was dressed in miniature robes of royalty. It had also a tiny throne, and other dolls appointed as attendants.

One day, after coming home very tired from the celebration of her own birthday, Wilhelmina got out her queen doll, and made her bow and bend till her veil and crown were terribly awry.

"Now," said the little girl, pettishly, "how do you like being a queen? Doesn't your back ache, and don't you feel horrid?"