

CHAPTER XVIII

Timothy Meadows sat in quilted majesty at the open door of his cabin. He looked very much like Old King Cole, who had exchanged his crown for a bandage and his royal robes for a quantity of Indian blankets. Beside him was a glass of his own whiskey — unadulterated — and his teeth gnawed fretfully upon the stem of a discolored old corncob.

But the resemblance went no farther. Merriment was conspicuously absent; in fact, Meadows showed the effects of mental stress in a much greater degree than the physical encounter of recent date.

He stared out into the brilliant spring sunshine with no appreciation of its beauty and its warmth. He listened to the terrific roar of the Yukon River without the feeling of welcome "sourdoughs" always gave to summer. He was grappling with a problem. He was thinking of Goldie and for the first time in nineteen years his thoughts of her were not tinged with pleasure and pride.

On the contrary!