

The Miner at "66"

Written for the Western Home Monthly by Alma Oliveine Noble.

STANDING in cosmopolitan groups, eager excitement depicted upon their faces, the hard-working prospectors of Temiskaming had gathered around Maloney's Wharf to witness the arrival of the first steamer that was to visit their camp. The boat was small and dirty, merely an ugly blot upon the placid, rippling beauty of Lake Temiskaming, yet the watching sons of toil welcomed it as the beginning of better things; as the very acme of civilization,

and over everything prevailed that spirit of optimism that is so characteristic of the men of the Northland.

In one group stood Bobby Thurman, a young man of generous being, whose sunny-hued locks had earned for him the nickname of "Reddy." Thurman was the sole owner of a claim he called "The Hopeless Case." The name was, perhaps, an apt description of the prospect, for, despite Reddy's careful surface prospecting and sinking of test pits, he could

only produce some Cobalt bloom and schist, with a sprinkling of calcite and faint traces of leaf-silver.

This misfortune, however, did not prevent the "Case" from being the apple of Reddy's eye, and his trusting pride in it afforded the camp more than a little amusement. As usual, he was defending his pet against a humorous attack from "One-eyed" Ben Hardy, the wit of "66."

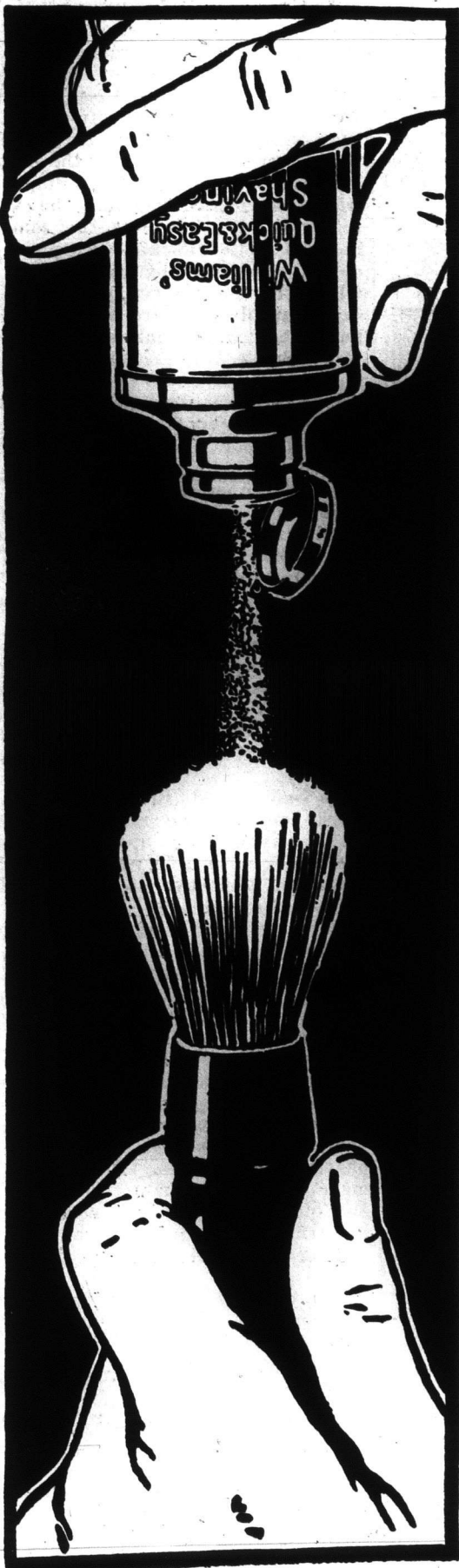
"Aw, fade away, son!" Hardy was advising him, with a crooked, little smile at the rest. "The Hopeless Case' ain't seen any silver sence the flood and it wouldn't a' seen any then only when Noah was acrossin' over on the Ark he happened tu lose a silver fillin' outta his toofy. Yuh found the fillin' an' yuh staked the 'Case,' my boy!"

A roar of boisterous laughter greeted this sally and Reddy's face turned a

dull red, and he was about to retort in kind when the loud whistle of the anticipated steamer shrilled the pine-perfumed air and there was a noisy rush for the end of the wharf.

The water was too shallow to permit the steamer's landing, so a pointer, old and slopping with a watery bottom, was rowed in with the mail and provisions. Willing hands quickly unloaded and distributed the slight cargo to the rightful owners and, in the reigning confusion, the pointer receded to the larger boat, only to return again with a solitary passenger. A wave of admiration, not unmixed with curiosity, swept over the inhabitants of "66" when the pointer drew in and the passenger alighted.

It was a girl, young and well dressed, and there was about her an unmistakable air of refinement that was painfully



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