

# POOR DOCUMENT

THE ALBERT STAR, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 31, 1894.

## The Heiress of Golden Falls.

—By RADON HILL—

The man who came to the Golden Falls, where the road-agent and shooting-iron were quite commonplace affairs. Just before the commencement of that long vacation, I had seen an advertisement in one of the newspapers which informed the next of kin of the late Leonard Saltmarsh of New York that he would 'hear of something to his advantage, by applying to Wilkins & Crowdy, attorneys-at-law in that city. To the best of my belief, I was that individual, Leonard Saltmarsh having been my father's only brother. We had never heard of his marriage, and they wanted me to be furnished with the necessary proof, and that hinted that, considering the amount at stake, it would be worth my while to run across to New York in person. The idea of spending my vacation in this way pleased me. My father had left me well off, so, whether the inheritance proved to be mine or no, I could well afford the holiday jaunt. I took the next Central boat, and on landing went straight to the offices of the attorneys.

But here a surprise was in store for me. The very morning of my arrival in New York, Messrs. Wilkins & Crowdy had received a letter putting in a claim to the property from another applicant. The letter was dated from Golden Falls, which the lawyers believed was a mushroom mining camp in the Black Hills district, and it purported to come from one Luke Saltmarsh, who said he was a son of Leonard Saltmarsh as the result of a marriage contracted by the latter when 'out West' twenty-eight years before. His mother, he went on to say, was dead, and he was the only child. In the face of this new claim, Messrs. Wilkins & Crowdy, though thoroughly recognizing my position, very properly determined to know more of this latest applicant before coming to any decision. They had written to Mr. Luke Saltmarsh for proof, just as they had written to me, and expected to get an answer within six weeks. It was impossible to say how long a letter would take in reaching such an out-of-the-world place as Golden Falls.

I chose my own course at once. I explained to the attorneys that I was well off, and only desired that justice should be done. If this young man were really my uncle Leonard's son, by all means let him have the property. But I had no relatives living, and quite apart from the matter in hand, it would please me much to make my cousin's acquaintance. My time being my own, I therefore proposed myself to go to Golden Falls and see him, quite in a friendly way, and thoroughly prepared to recognize his claim. My legal training, I said, might even be of some use to him in helping him to procure the proofs which were necessary.

Messrs. Wilkins & Crowdy confessed that they did not like my project. A trip to the Black Hills was no joke, they said; and if by any chance Luke Saltmarsh was an impostor, my life even might not be safe in that wild region. Better, at any rate, wait for his reply. These objections I overruled, and started for the West that same evening.

Thus it was that on the day the Parson's City mail-coach was robbed I was approaching Golden Falls with nothing but a change of clothes and a solitary ten-dollar note. At the end of ten miles the path suddenly dipped over the brink of a ravine down the centre of which a mountain torrent was bawling. Perched among the rocks below on the brink of the stream were two log cabins, with a few tents here and there, to denote that Golden Falls was a thing of today but not of yesterday. All down the course of the brook were the 'cradles' for washing out the gold, and as I went down the stream I saw the heaped dirt on either bank. But they seemed to be all deserted. Spades and picks were lying here and there, as if cast aside in a hurry.

It struck me as strange—this abandonment of work in the middle of the day—the more so as I could hear the hum of men's voices raised, I thought, in angry discussion. Looking again, I saw that there was a crowd round the largest of the cabins about the centre of the row, above which a flag floated bearing the device, 'Ben Baldwin's Saloon.' It flashed upon me in a moment. The miners had heard of the robbery of their gold-dust.

When I reached the saloon, I found that I was right. Three of the miners whom I had seen at the wayside 'hotel' had just arrived with the news of the coach's forlorn return. Beyond the doorway of the saloon an excited throng of slouch-hatted miners were lamenting and vowing vengeance. I eluded my way into the saloon, and, having been posted in the custody of West, pulled out my ten-dollar bill to 'treat the crowd' inside. This method of self-introduction left me with only a dollar or two in my pocket.

The excitement increased when it became known that I had been the solitary passenger in the mail-coach. Many were the questions I had to answer as to the appearance of the masked robbers; but I could throw but little light on that. Almost any of the men before me would have resembled them, given the addition of a crane mask.

It was not for fully half an hour that I was able to shake my own affair. Then I asked the landlord if he knew where Luke Saltmarsh was to be found. 'I guess he's totin' around some place,' said one of the miners. 'Expect he'll be back by supper-time.' I explained to the landlord that I had come from New York to see Saltmarsh on a matter of business. 'Well,' said Mr. Baldwin, 'I reckon you'd best get along to his shanty, it's fourth from here as you go down stream; maybe his sister will fit you up something to eat while you wait.' Here was a revelation! Luke Saltmarsh with a sister? I distinctly remember that he had described himself in the letter to the lawyers as an only child. Was there something wrong about my unknown cousin, after all?

I thanked the landlord, and turned my steps towards the cabin he had indicated. It was larger than most of its neighbours, and there was an air of neatness about it which would have suggested woman's presence, even if I had not heard of it. A dusky half-breed Indian boy of about fifteen was just entering the cabin with a bucket of water as I approached, and at the same moment a white arm appearing in the doorway relieved the boy of his load.

I cannot describe Naomi as I saw her then for the first time. I only know that I looked upon the most beautiful woman my eyes have ever seen. Tall and fair, and with a stately dignity of her own, the picturesque simplicity of her frontier dress in no way clashed amid those surroundings which were natural grace. There was an air of refinement about Naomi which the roughest setting could not negative. She invited me in, and without going into the object of my visit, I told her that I had reason to believe I was a relative.

To my wonder a look of harassed fear came into her eyes. 'Only know,' she said, 'is my father, Leonard Saltmarsh, living?' 'Is it possible?' I exclaimed, 'that you do not know? Your brother Luke knows. It is in consequence of a letter from him that I am here. Leonard Saltmarsh died two months ago.'

'Ah!' she said as if to herself, shuddering the while. I thought that explains it then—that explains it. It is the fact of the death of her father, Leonard Saltmarsh—or may I call you cousin? There is a story which I must tell you—before Luke returns. I am Leonard Saltmarsh's only child. Luke is neither his son nor my brother. He is my dead mother's nephew. But I was brought up to believe myself his sister, and it is only the other day that I learned the truth. He has known it since.

'But how is it?' I asked, 'that you are out here in the wilds? Did not your father and mother live together?' 'Only for two years after their marriage,' she said, 'when he died. My mother always said that his temper was so violent that she could not stay with him. So she ran away, taking me with her, and supported herself as best she could by her needle. Luke was her sister's child, and mother took him when my aunt died. When my mother died when I was twelve years old; but first she gave me a little box, which I was not to open until I was twenty last May; and when I opened the packet, I found a letter from my mother telling me that Luke was not my brother. I had no one to protect me, she wanted me to think myself his sister. That was the reason she gave; and she added, that when I was twenty, it would be right for me to know the truth.'

So Luke has always known that you were not his sister, but you have only lately discovered it? I said. 'Yes,' she answered; 'I have not told him yet that I know.'

'Yes, I said; but as I find another claim with more right than mine, I shall go home again quite contented.' 'That's all right, then,' said Luke; 'stay as long as you like, and make yourself comfortable. Naomi will fix you up.'

After this he became more and more hospitable. He listened with an air of interest to my story of the coach robbery and offered to lend me one hundred dollars till I heard from New York. But I said not a word to enlighten him as to my knowledge of his having claimed Leonard Saltmarsh's money for himself alone, without mentioning Naomi. I wished to fathom him, without raising his suspicions. In the course of that evening's friendly conversation Luke informed us that he had been to Parson's City that morning to buy a horse.

The next few days passed quickly enough. Naomi and I became fast friends, and whenever she had the chance, she told me much of her early life. But Luke took care that we were seldom alone. He haunted the cabin, under the pretence of entertaining me, and pressed attentions which were almost servile. He avoided talking of his claim on the saloon, but when I could not speak of it, always inferred that Naomi was to share his good fortune. It was understood that I was to remain at any rate till the remittance which Luke had written to New York arrived.

When I had been at Golden Falls three weeks, an accident occurred which had its effect on after-events. I came out of the cabin one day and found Luke brutally thrashing Indian Joe, the half-breed boy who fetched and carried for Naomi. In my horror at the cruel treatment, I called Luke a blackguard. To my surprise, he left the lad alone and apologized to me humbly, making some excuse about his temper. When I told Naomi of this, she was much agitated. Luke's civility she felt sure was dangerous.

The next day I was sitting alone in the cabin reading a week-old newspaper. Naomi had gone up the ravine to hunt for some herbs among the rocks, and Luke had started off after breakfast to his 'cradle' to wash for gold. Suddenly the door of the cabin burst open and Luke dashed in. 'For God's sake, cousin—he always called me cousin—get on my nag and ride for Doctor Bell at Parson's City. Naomi has fallen over a snag up yonder. I'm afraid her leg is broken. She can't be moved, and I must get back to her right away.'

Horrid as I was, and anxious to go to her, there was no need for Luke to press me into the service. In two minutes I was mounted and listened to Luke's final instructions. 'Take the path you came by till you strike the coach-road,' he said; 'then along the road till you come to the Doc. Any one will tell you where the Doc lives and bring him back at all risks, and ride like thunder.'

The sure-footed horse—a large ravened chestnut—carried me safely up the rocky sides of the ravine. Once on the top, I dug my heels into his sides, and he galloped his best. The ground, though level, had a broken surface; but with Naomi lying there injured, perhaps fatally, what cared I for the risk of a broken neck. We flew long reckless of stones and the frequent burrows of prairie-dogs. I had reached a spot three miles from the coach-road when I thought I heard a shout. Looking round, I saw some twenty or thirty men on foot, galloping their hardest, and some of the best mounted were overhauling me. For a moment I wondered what it meant; but Naomi's peril started me, and I rode on. I was in search of a doctor? That had nothing to do with me. I had promised to go to Parson's City, and whether I arrived there first or last, thither I would go. I sent my horse along with a will.

But there were fester-footed than the chestnut behind me. As we entered the coach-road, three of my pursuers dashed alongside, and, before I could get what they were doing, pointed their pistols at my head. 'Halt! you durned horse-thief, or we'll down you,' cried one of the miners.

I pulled up to explain. Before I could get my words out, they were off the horse. Two of them held me fast while the remainder of the party came straggling up.

'For heaven's sake,' I said, 'what have I done? I am a doctor, and I let one of you ride on for the doctor. Let me be too late else.'

'It's uncommon little good a doctor will do you in this job, my lad,' said one of the old-timers. 'Luke has said, Naomi's sui-distant brother rode up on a borrowed steed, 'we've took him to ride for the doctor.'

'That be hanged for a yarn; you had better tell that to the Court. You stole the horse, you dirty rascal,' replied Luke, letting his post-up hatred loose at last. I saw that I was trapped, but I rejoiced that Naomi's supposed fall was but part of Luke's device.

'Come, boys,' form the Court, 'said one of the old-timers; 'there's a handy tree on yonder bluff ready for the Britisher.'

Thus it was that I found myself on trial for my life—for horse-stealing, in a hanging prison in Dakota—before the dreaded Judge Lynch. Luke's perjured evidence was fatal. He swore that my story of having been sent for the doctor was false, that I had arrived at Golden Falls a mere penniless lad, and that I had requisited his charity by robbing him of his horse. I looked round on the rugged faces of my captors, and saw that there was no hope for mercy. I was absolutely without power of my innocence.

It was all over in five minutes. The Court pronounced me 'guilty,' and I was told to say my prayers. But just as the sentence was uttered there was the clatter and rattle of wheels, and round Blackman's Corner came the Parson's City mail-coach—the self-same vehicle which I had been victimized by the road-agents.

The driver pulled up as he came abreast the crowd. I saw that my old acquaintance the one-eyed guard was charged. He got down and scolded over to where the miner who had overtaken me was still holding the chestnut nose. 'Going to hang him, boys?' he asked after a moment's scrutiny.

'That's so,' was the reply. 'Where is the man?' asked the guard. 'That's him,' said one of the men, pointing to where I stood with my hands bound behind me.

The guard recognized me with a start. 'Pah!' he said, 'you're foolin'. That Britisher was along with us, a passenger, when the agents stuck us up. He couldn't have stole the horse, or the dust either, for the matter of that.'

'What do you mean?' asked the miner who had acted as judge; 'no one's talking about dust.'

'I am, though,' said the guard shortly. 'I tell you that that is the horse the road-agents lifted, and it stands to reason that the man as lifted the horse lifted your dust, don't it?'

There was a murmur of wrath among the miners. All eyes were turned to Luke. He began to move towards the edge of the crowd; but rough hands restrained him, and the leader said very quietly: 'You will have to show where you got that horse, Luke, before you make tracks.'

'It ain't a matter of showin' where he got the horse, I reckon,' said the guard; 'leastways, not altogether—' 'See here, a button short in the centre of his shirt. Guess I can find the missing shiner to match,' and he pulled out of his pocket a bright metal fairy button, engraved with a phoenix—the exact counterpart of the shiny fastenings Luke wore in his hunting shirt.

'Go on. What of that?' shouted the crowd. 'I picked up that button on the ground where we were robbed,' said the guard, right here by the corner. It got hitched off as the gaboot cut the traces of that bald-faced chestnut. I saw it drop. I guess that ought to be enough for you.'

It was. 'What say you, boys, shall we hang him?' asked the judge; and amid a storm of 'Ayes,' Luke was dragged, pale and trembling, to the tree. As the fatal spot was reached, he forced himself up with an effort, and pointed to me. I was still bound between two of the men. 'Boys,' he said, 'if I tell you where the dust is hid, will you hang that cursed Englishman alongside me?'

'No! By gun, we wouldn't hang a dog on your evidence, you traitor, that sold your pals!' said the judge. 'Up with him, lad.'

It was not till a year later that, safe in the security of our English home, Naomi told me quite all there was to tell about Luke. She had reason to believe that in the interval between hearing of her father's death and my arrival, he had twice attempted her life—once by means of a reputed 'accident' with his revolver; and again by persuading her to cross the mountain torrent at a dangerous spot. In all probability my rash trip out West was the means of preserving the life as well as the fortune of the Heiress of Golden Falls. But I am more than a little suspicious.

My character was fully re-established among the miners on our return to camp. The boy, Indian Joe, had overheard Luke pressing me to take the horse to ride for the doctor. Needless to say, Naomi's fall from the cage was a fiction designed to send me to a merciless death.

Names of Chinese War Ships.

To the Chinese there is no confusion in the names of their cruisers and gunboats, and if Ting-Yuen and King-Yuen get mixed by the time they arrive in New York it will not seriously affect the fortunes of war in the China Sea. In colloquial Chinese the distinction is preserved by the difference of tone. In the Chinese characters, or ideographs, the possibilities of confusion is absolutely nil, for King-Yuen and Chin-Yuen no more resemble each other than do New York and Minneapolis, or than Bunker Hill monument resembles the state house, Ting-Yuen signifies future security; Chen-Yuen, guarding the future. The characters on the other vessels are as distinct in sound, appearance and meaning as these two.

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On and after Monday the 1st October, 1894, the trains of this Railway will run daily (Sundays excepted) as follows:

WILL LEAVE SALISBURY.

Express for St. John (daily).....	7.30
Express for Moncton, Campbellton and Halifax.....	8.30
Express for St. John.....	8.45
Express for St. John.....	11.20
Express for Halifax.....	11.45
Express for Moncton, Quebec, Montreal.....	12.00
Accommodation for St. John.....	12.30

All trains are run by Eastern Standard Time.

D. POTTINGER, General Manager, Moncton, N. B., 1st October, 1894.

Salisbury and Harvey Railway Company.

TIME TABLE NO. 31.

In effect Monday, Oct. 15th, 1894. Trains will run daily (Sundays excepted) as follows:

Leave Harvey.....	4.00
Leave Albert.....	4.15
Leave Hillsboro.....	5.00
Arrive Salisbury.....	7.20
Leave Salisbury.....	10.00
Leave Hillsboro.....	12.00
Arrive Harvey.....	12.30

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