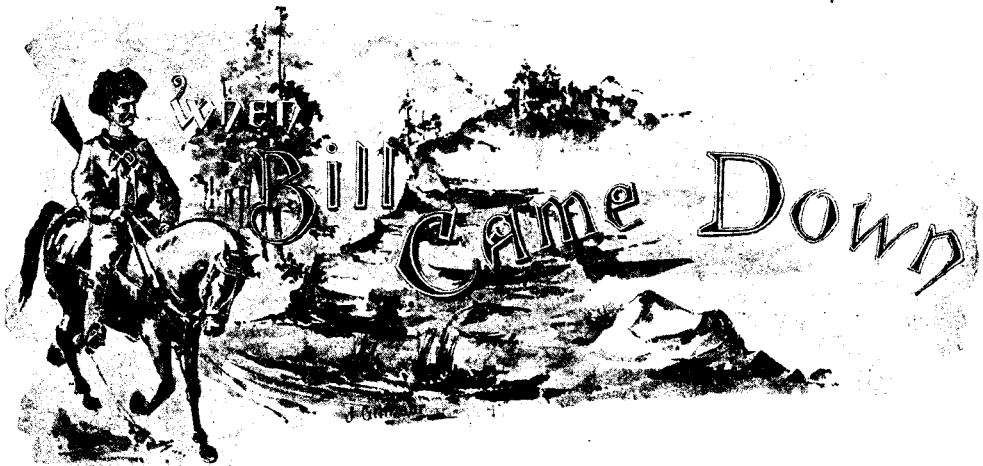




BLAZING hot day in 186 , and a "regular roaster" on the Fraser river, wherever the sun struck fair between the grim walls of the marvellous Canyon. The higher peaks shewed blurred and undefined, and seemed to quiver in the hazy atmosphere, while the lower crags and many tinted boulders were hot to the touch, as though fresh from that fiery ordeal that half fused many of them aeons ago, when Titans wrought monuments eternal from out of earth's plastic crust.

The narrow strip of snow-white sand, marking the shoreward limit of "Sally's Bar," shone like a band of burnished metal, and where it spread far out beneath the shallow, tumbling current, there gleamed a million golden lights, as though the entire bed of the river was formed of that yellow talisman, which drew men over hundreds of miles of perilous wilds into the heart of British Columbia.

The first wild rush was long over. The pioneers of placer mining had years before scrambled through the ranges and up the river in a desperate race,—scratching the surface of one bar, scooping up gold by the thousand dollars' worth at another, only to rush on again ere half the treasure was secured, in their mad eagerness to be first.

Toiling, drinking, cursing, fighting and murdering they came; some toiled back again with fortunes; some, shattered in mind and body, crawled home empty-handed; others staid, hidden in fearsome crevices, biding the final "clean-up," when gold shall be forever separated from dross.

Years after these ruffians came others, like gleaners on a golden stubble, seeking

for what had been passed over. Among these was the redoubtable "Lucky Sally," who had piloted his partners—Old Lant, "Sloppy" and Dave—to their present camp, the only one for miles.

He had, with his usual luck, discovered the bar; it proved rich, and was promptly named after him by his admiring associates.

Lucky Sally—or Sally, as he was commonly called, was a Chinese puzzle to all men. Unmistakeably a gentleman by birth, yet really one of the hardest men on the river. A tall, graceful, golden-haired blonde moustached devil; phenomenally lucky in everything he undertook,—love, cards or prospecting,—his good fortune and womanish beauty at once marked him, and the grim humour of the camps decided that "Lucky Sally" would do for him, and so he was christened in a country where few men owned to their real names, for reasons sufficient.

Ever since the days when he, a wee tow-headed cherub, stole into the dining-room to drain the wine-glasses after dinner, he seemed to have been cursed with an appetite for liquor, and ever since he ran away, as a twelve-year old, from home he had followed his own sweet will and evil passions. His associates found him honest as the day, strangely self-reliant, and game to the last gasp, and asked no more. His one grand redeeming feature was his love for his brother, known far and wide through the camps as Black Bill. Like Sally, Bill had fled his home, and suddenly turned up on the river. He, too, was a handsome man, and every whit as bad, save that he rarely drank to excess. He had none of Sally's wonderful luck, but