

misery and despair, sudden riches and absolute penury.

Just when he had ceased to hope, the beginning consciousness of it stirred within him. It was invoked by a woman. The melody of life hung on that woman's lips. Her hair and eyes reflected life's subtle radiance. Her whole person breathed forth the spirit of ever-living, eternal joy.

McMann had seen much of her—but not enough. He was her friend. He met her as often as he dared. He talked with her, walked with her, sat long hours by her side, basking in the warmth of his new-found happiness. He learned the little tricks of her speech. He studied her with close but unnoticed scrutiny. He endeavored to understand her varied moods, just as he had endeavored to understand the myriad problems and mysteries which had heretofore confronted him along the journey of existence.

Standing there in the doorway, McMann's thoughts reverted to the day when he had first met her. Even now his pulses quickened at the memory of that unexpected meeting, and, with glowing eyes, he recalled how wonderful it had all been. The day before he had left Moose Portage with prospector's kit and grubstake and had rafted down the Pelly. At night he had camped in the open, under the stars, choosing for his purpose a lonely sandbar, over whose surface was scattered sufficient driftwood for his campfire. When morning broke he had walked shoreward, rifle in hand, looking for game. He had clambered up the precipitous bank and had paused a moment, his eyes turned toward the mouth of a small ravine, half expecting to see a moose or deer spring forward from

the protecting thicket which lined its curving sides.

Suddenly he drew back. Excitedly he had tiptoed his way a few steps and stood again, breath bated, eyes widening in amazement at the sight before him. Not fifty yards ahead, squarely facing him, apparently cool, calm and unflinching, was the figure of a woman. Further back, in a shelter of spruce and pine, wonderfully picturesque in the radiant morning light, nestled a tiny log cabin.

It was her home. In a wilderness this woman lived, and that very hour their friendship had begun, and he, unwittingly, had stumbled into a new and delightful existence. The days that followed were dream days, for love had come into the world, touching all therein with the magic of its making. Bit by bit he had learned her history. Two years before Edith Patterson had come north with her father, whose health had been broken in a city's close and unhealthy environment. They had come here to earth's most successful physician—the Great Outdoors—and had profited thereby, incidentally learning to love the silent and mysterious wilderness which had so befriended them.

Following a hurried but monotonous luncheon, McMann was in readiness to depart. His original plan had been to take the trail which ran directly to the Patterson home; but now, after mature deliberation, it occurred to him to make a wider detour north to Wolf Creek. By doing this he would see Dagg, a fellow-pro prospector, who, in addition to the Patterson family and himself, was the only other person residing in that part of British Columbia.

Two hours later he made his way down a wooded slope toward the