

# THE WHITE ROSE OF KLONDYKE.

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**I**VE tried hard, but somehow luck has been against me. If I only had a son! If Polly was a boy I'd go to the Klondyke," muttered farmer Shaw, as he scratched a match on his boot-top and lit the pipe he had just filled with cut plug.

"By Jove!" he continued, excitedly, "I believe nothing could keep me if Polly was only a boy!"

A merry laugh rang out, clear and sweet, on the fresh morning air, as pretty Polly Shaw came suddenly around the corner of the house.

"Why, father," she exclaimed, "what would you do if I were a boy?"

She had been feeding the chickens, and the blue sunbonnet had fallen back upon her shoulders, exposing the pretty red-gold hair, tangled in soft curls about her fair face. Her innocent blue eyes expressed the astonishment she felt on hearing her father lament that she was not a boy. Her mother had died two years before, and since then Polly and her father had struggled on as best they could.

But, as her father said, luck seemed against them. The little farm was mortgaged to pay the expenses of the long illness of the wife and mother; then the wet season was followed by drought and the cattle-plague. The old house was weather-beaten and innocent of paint.

Day followed day in a pitiable monotony and struggle for existence. But outraged nature always rebels; every day the cruel, hard facts thrust themselves on the mind of the discouraged old man, and he was becoming querulous and exacting.

It was a hard life for the young girl. Her sunshiny nature had kept her from brooding over the dull routine; but as she stood before her father, her eager face upraised to his, while she listened to his expressed desire to try his luck in the gold fields of Klondyke, it seemed that it was their opportunity—the chance of a lifetime.

"Don't you worry about me," she said, "I'll go or I'll stay, just as you say; but I'd rather go. My! How lonesome you'd be out there without me! While you are digging the ground for gold I can keep the shack comfortable. The life there has possibilities for good, and you know, father, we are just at the end of the string here."

"That's it—you've hit it!" cried Shaw, much gratified at the perspicacity of his daughter. "The note is most due, and Willison 'll show no mercy. It's doubtful," he said slowly, as he took his pipe from his mouth and looked towards the fields, "if the

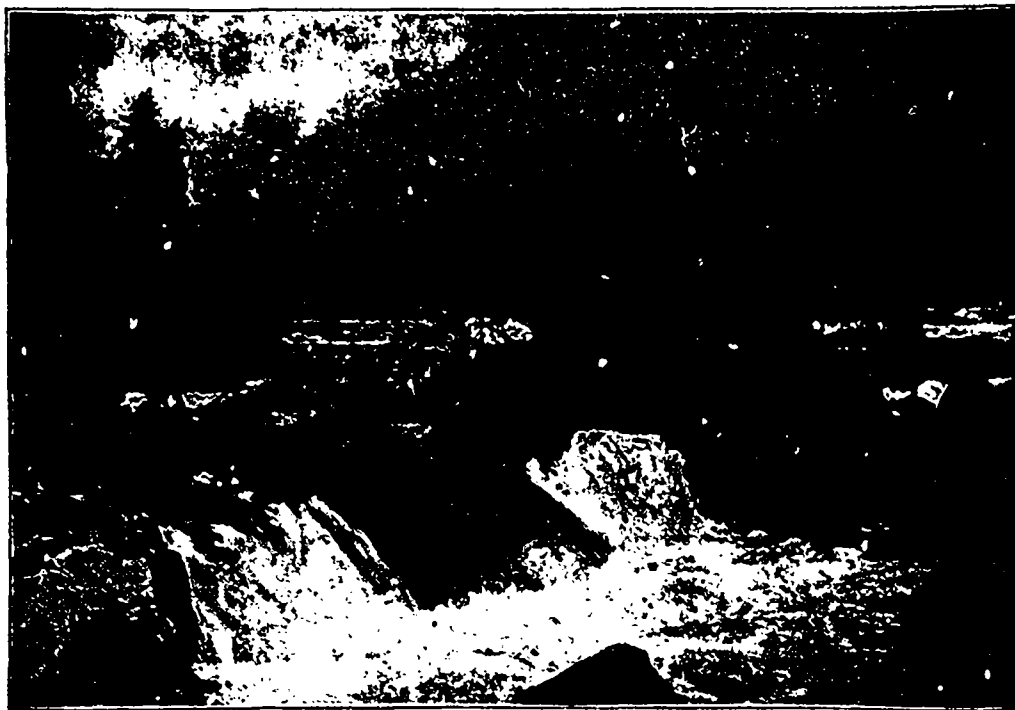
crops will leave a margin above expenses. I guess it's up with me, Polly. Reckon we may as well look the fact squarely in the face. I don't just know how to look ahead."

Polly went up to him, and putting her arms around his neck kissed away the big tears that lay upon his furrowed cheek.

"Whatever comes, father, you've got me, and we'll stick together; and together we'll seek a fortune in the gold-fields of Klondyke."

He took her face between his hands, and smiled into her eager eyes. It required some resolution to make up his mind upon the question.

"It ain't no use driving things," he said. "If we was hasty we might regret it."



KOOTENAY FALLS, NEAR NELSON, B.C.

It don't seem right for you to go. I didn't calc'late—"

"Yes," she said, "it is right. Father, I must go."

To Polly the distance seemed nothing. All would be so new and strange. She looked at him pleadingly. "Wal, wal," he said, "you're a good girl, Polly. I will not bid you stay. We will sell out and go."

"I tell you, partners, this is a pretty rough country for a dainty little girl like that. The truth is, she was made for a different kind of life. 'The White Rose of Klondyke,' I heard some of the officers of the mounted police call her. She's just the nicest little girl I ever knew. It's evident the Inspector thinks so, too; and a woman likes a man who can fig' t."

Billy Breen looked at him with an understanding eye. "Fight! The devil fly away wid yez! Fight! Smoke cigars and play six-penny Bob, d'ye mane? I'm thinkin' it's quare fightin'. It's meself could show 'em how to fig'nt."

Jim Bowers shrugged his shoulders, paused for a moment and went on: "I was down

to Nelson's saloon last night, and I heard some of the boys talking queer-like; and I laid low to see which way the wind blew. There's a lot of mean sons-of-guns up here, and some on 'em was planning to do some dirty work. Old man Shaw has struck it rich, and the boys is planning to run him off and jump his claim. They won't do that same, by a long shot! Miss Shaw was that good to the mis'us when the baby took sick and died. I'm not the man to forget it," he said, huskily. "Say Billy, let's constitute ourselves a vigilance committee."

"All right, I'm wid yez. It's a dirty thieck, and we'll be after spoilin' it," said Billy.

Ten minutes later Jim Bowers was on his way to let old man Shaw know what to expect, while Billy Breen, springing onto his broncho's back, slapped it with the palm of his hand and rode "like the devil," he afterward said, to inform the mounted police of the intended raid.

"It gives me a pain in the heart," Billy mused, "just to be thinkin' of the fright the thievin' villians will be givin' the swate lady."

From the sole of his heavy boots to the crown of his sombrero, Billy was in love with the White Rose of Klondyke.

"Not that she'd ever look at the loikes of me," he said aloud, in a devil-may-care, ironical sort of way. "I've got a fine heap of the dust, too." Smiling grimly, the blue-shirted gold-digger pulled a flask from his hip pocket, and took a generous draught. "It's me mate and me drink," he said, with a twinkle in his eye at his own wit.

Polly and her father talked it over between them, and agreed to stick it out. Polly had learned to use a gun like a frontiersman, so they took turn watching for the claim-jumpers. It was close upon

midnight, when suddenly an unusual disturbance arose outside. There were loud outcries, and threatening voices uttered oaths as a dozen men surrounded the shack. One of them in particular, who seemed to be the leader, hounded on the others. "Why don't you take the old man by the throat and throttle him?" he urged. The villains made a rush at the door, while some one fired a shot through the window.

Polly, who had been asleep, sprang up quickly, and gun in hand, ran to her father's side. Pointing at a burly fellow she took aim and fired. Another shot and another, and three of the jumpers stumbled and fell. Then she turned to her father, who lay on the floor where he had fallen at the first shot. With a vague fear at her heart she bent over him, then softly spoke his name: "Father!"

Wildly she threw herself on her knees and cried: "Father, dear father, won't you speak to me?" The next instant there was the quick tramp of horses' hoofs and the shouts of the police, who rushed upon the frightened raiders.