

"FAIRY"

"Well, I do reckon that for out-and-out cheek a blue-jay can lick all creation."

The words were spoken to a bird of the species named, and, as though realizing this, the little creature paused, its head turned aside, one bright eye regarding the speaker. Apparently the scrutiny was satisfactory, for in a moment the bird was hopping again in close proximity to the man's spade. In truth, says for his humanity, there was nothing alarming in Stephen Deane; other bright eyes—more critical than a blue-jay's—had found the tall, clean-lined young miner, with his sun-stained skin and frank gaze, good to look upon, and if his face had the gravity which comes of shouldering life's responsibilities too early, there was a twinkle in the grey eyes, which showed that he looked on the rosy side of things as a rule. The twinkle was prominent now as he surveyed his present visitor.

"S'pose you've got your own affairs to attend to," he drawled, "but if you could spare time to go down there an' find out what a go-in on you'd be doin' me a real service."

He nodded as he spoke to where, nearly half a mile below in the gully, a miscellaneous collection of rough buildings indicated a settlement. That something unusual was "goin' on" was evident from the groups of hurrying figures, the shouts, and occasional reports of firearms.

"It's either fightin' or celebratin'," and as I allow it's that last, I reckon she's come," Steve continued. "I most wish I'd—"

He did not finish, for a stumble, followed by a picturesque ejaculation which sent the blue-jay fluttering into the bushes, made him turn hastily.

"Halloa, Josh!" he said slowly. "Managed to tear yourself away from the festivities at last, eh?"

Josh was a middle-aged man, but otherwise of generous proportions, with a round, red face, which—as he was often told—made one have to look at it, mopped his streaming brow and replied with a nod. Steve regarded him quizzically.

"Why, you're blushing like a girl, Josh," he began, only to be swiftly interrupted.

"Steve, you're playin' me for an infant," Josh said severely. "That old joke of my complexion ain't worthy of you, an' you wouldn't take in a blind mule; but if you meant to intimate that no news is required, I'll take it that way."

He sat down on a pile of gravel and began to fill his pipe, ramming the tobacco home with extra care. His companion watched him with ill-disguised impatience—reticence was quite a new feature in Joshua Stebb. At length, when the pipe was fairly going, Steve could stand it no longer.

"Seem that I've been slavin' up here all day with nothing better than a blue-jay for company, an' that you've been in the gay and giddy crowd of frivolity," he said, with a wave towards the settlement below, "perhaps it ain't unreasonable to expect some news."

"That's so," responded Stebb stolidly. "Well, Pete Adams lost a cool five hundred to Funny Rogers, the gambler, Jacob's best mule slipped and broke her off fore-leg, an'—"

He paused as Steve turned away and kicked an unoffending lump of red clay into infinitesimal fragments.

"These interesting items of social intelligence don't seem to fill the bill," he continued. "Was there anythin' special you were expectin' to hear?"

Steve whirled round and regarded his partner fiercely for a moment. Then his face relaxed as he said:

"All right, Josh, that's one to you. Drop foolin' now; has Fairy come?"

"No," replied the other soberly enough. "But there's a young lady from New York who calls her self Miss Nora McQueen, and at times she minds me a bit of her."

"Aye, they've spoilt her, as I know they would," Steve said bitterly. "When the old man was just Jerry McQueen, the saloon-keeper, we were good enough for her; but now she's the only daughter of Mr. McQueen, who owns the richest claims in Red Pine, and she ain't been allowed to forget it at this highfalutin' New York seminary. Did her ladyship condescend to remember ye, Josh?" he queried.

"She shook hands—!" Josh began.

"Having gloves on, of course," sneered Steve, with a glance at his partner's none too cleanly digits.

"An' asked after you," continued the other, and as the sneer on Steve's face grew more pronounced, he added, "She was nice, ye know, but there was a difference."

Deane nodded in silence.

"Ye see, Steve," Stebb explained. "On my way down I reckoned I would say, 'Halloa, Fairy, ye're back again, are ye?' but somehow I found myself doin' in her Miss Mc-

Queen before I knewed it. An' I wasn't the only one, either."

"Red Pine ain't noted for timidity," Steve said, meditatively, "an' once she was just 'Fairy' to every man in it."

He sat down on an upturned bucket and began to fill a pipe. Josh watched him in silence for some moments, and then said, suddenly:

"She ain't come alone."

The match Steve had just struck burned out unheeded in his fingers. His face whitened under the tan, for there was something in the speaker's tone which told him more than the words implied. He did not speak, but Josh needed no spur now.

"A yaller-faced chap, with black hair an' eyes, looks like a half-breed greaser," he said. "Wears a biled shirt, store clothes, and flashes his jockery considerable."

"An' does Fairy—that is Miss McQueen"—he corrected himself and bowed ironically towards the bushes—"think anything of this—this thing?"

The bushes swayed and rustled slightly as though in acknowledgment of his courtesy, and Josh fung a lump of clay into them.

"Durn that blue-jay pal o' yours," he said. "I dunno her opinion of him, but he 'pears to think an' almighty lot of her—or of the old man's dollars. He's a relation of sorts, I heard, an' if I'm any judge, 'Noo York ain't givin' any over his absence."

Steve did not answer; his thoughts were back in the little clearing a hundred yards away, where, two years before, a girl in a short, shabby frock, with hair the color of ripe corn, and blue eyes laden with unshed tears, had put her hand in his and made him promise to write to her. He recalled his letter—he knew every word—and lived again the weary months of waiting for the reply that never came.

Too proud to write again, he had deduced his own reasons for her silence—she was wealthy, moving in a new sphere, making new friends, and she had either forgotten or despised her old ones. Little by little the iron had entered, and so, when the news came that she was to return, he determined to hold aloof.

When he awoke from his reverie Josh had vanished into the shanty they called home, and Steve shattered another lump of clay. What nonsense had he been thinking! After all, the girl was free—no word of love had passed between them. What did it matter to him if this dandy admirer was a scamp?

He asked himself, scornfully. But he knew it did.

Why else should he have ignored his determination and visited McQueen's saloon that very evening? Mere curiosity was deemed a sufficient excuse to give Josh; but if he thought it deceived the little man, he was mistaken. Josh noticed that his partner "licked himself up" before setting out, and he executed a solemn little step-dance as soon as he had the cabin to himself.

Whatever faint hopes Steve might have been harboring died when he entered the saloon. There was, as Josh had said, a "difference"—indeed. The slim slip of a girl had developed into a shapely, handsome young woman, fashionably dressed and perfectly at ease. Steve understood just how his partner had felt, and himself hung back until old McQueen, standing proudly by his daughter's side, saw him and called him up. The girl shook hands, made a casual allusion to old times, and then turned to another of the crowd pressing around. Her father dragged him to the bar.

"Give it a name, my boy!" he said. "All free to-night, you know, in honor of my girl's homecoming." Then, lowering his voice, he added: "What d'ye think of her, eh? You were agin her goin'—said it would spoil her. What's your idea now?"

Steve did not answer, and the old man chuckled in gleeful triumph.

"It's cost money," he continued, "but I reckon it's worth it, and say, see who's talkin' to her now?"

Deane did see, and his teeth met as he watched her eyes light up, and the other men fall back at the approach of the stranger. As Josh had said, he looked like a half-bred Mexican, with lank black hair, sal-low face, and shifty eyes. His youth, flashy attire, and evident intimacy with McQueen's beautiful daughter clearly impressed the simple—in some ways—miners of Red Pine.

"He's a kind of distant relation she unearthed in New York," McQueen confided. "Jest rollin' in money—estates in Spain, ye know—and though I don't cotton to fur-riners ez a rule, Norrie might do worse."

Steve did not stay long. He had to make the acquaintance of the stranger, Paul Mendez, and with their hands their eyes met in one keen flash, and each knew the other for an enemy.

For the next few weeks Josh found his partner a burden. Nothing pleased him. A spirit of unrest seemed to have taken possession of him, and he spoke seriously of quitting Red Pine altogether. The claim, from which they were surely, if slowly, amassing a mod-

est fortune, was put forward as his reason.

"Mebbe there's richer claims elsewhere, as you say," Stebb argued, "but there's plenty worse. We're doin' well, and in, say, five years—"

"Five years!" broke in Steve impatiently. "I can't wait five years. What's the good of money to me when"—he stopped short, and finished lamely—"when I'm an old man?"

The conclusion was obviously absurd, but Josh accepted it. He knew what the real trouble was, just as he knew why Steve—whose visits to the settlements used to be rare events—now went every night, and spent more money at the saloon than he could well afford. Steve himself did not realize why he went; he was simply conscious that he could not stay away. Certainly Nora gave him no encouragement, for her manner to him was even distant at times, and a disinterested spectator would have noticed that she was kindest to Mendez when Steve was there to see it.

The young miner knew it, and drew his own inferences. Nevertheless, when, after a few weeks, his rival openly boasted that the girl would soon be his, and produced a photograph of herself which he said she had given him, Steve gave him the lie, and backed the assertion by a blow which sent Mendez, rolling in the dust. Nothing but the quickest intervention of the bystanders saved Steve from being shot down by the furious Spaniard. When Deane next met Miss McQueen his gratitude to those who had saved his life at once became a doubtful quantity.

"Mr. Deane," she said coldly, "the mere accident of your being an old friend does not entitle you to insult newer ones. I did give Paul the photograph, though the silly fellow need not have made the fact so public."

A slight smile and a blush accompanied the last sentence, and Steve's teeth set in his lower lip. "Turned away without a word," he knew the worst now, and partly to get away from his own thoughts, and partly to show the girl that he did not care, he requested the saloon more than ever, and even took to gambling—a thing he had never been partial to. The old proverb, "Unlucky in love, lucky in play," did not apply in his case, for he was unlucky in both. The sums he lost moved even Josh to exhortation, and to that worthy being curiously told to mind his own affairs.

Then came a night when, disgusted with his luck and the part he was playing, Steve left the saloon earlier than usual. Climbing up the trail, he was astonished to see a dark shadow slip quickly into a shanty, the owner of which—Irish Pat—had just left in the saloon. Noisily he approached and peeped through the unlatched door. The faint glimmer of a candle end showed him the bent form of a man groping beneath the shake-down. It was not Pat.

He drew back and waited. In a few moments the intruder slipped out, and with one silent stride Steve confronted him—pistol in hand.

"Hands up!"

The command was obeyed so promptly that the man's hat was jerked back, and Steve saw that his captive was Paul Mendez, whose right hand still clutched the little leather bag of gold dust which represented Irish Pat's fortune.

After the first shock of surprise Steve was conscious only of a feeling of grim triumph. This man whom McQueen thought so much of—this Spanish grandee with estates in Spain—was nothing more than a common thief, caught red-handed stealing the gold he spent so lavishly in sustaining his reputation. And this man had stolen the girl he loved. But it was his turn now.

"Keep your hands up and walk ahead," he said, grimly. "Don't drop that bag, if you want to live another minute."

"Goin' to give me up?" queried the captive. "Why not go halves?"

"You've guessed it," said Steve, and added, fiercely, "And if I hadn't been I would now, you dog. Step out."

The other drew hard on the cigarette which quivered between his lips, but he made another attempt. "And the lady," he sneered. "How pleased she will be!"

Steve paused; the words went home, shivering his dream of triumph to atoms. Thief or no, this man was the man Nora loved—the man she was to wed; and though to give him to justice would save her from that, there would be the shame, the blow to her pride. He made his decision quickly.

"You'll have urgent business in New York to-morrow," he said. "And you'll not come back. You understand?"

"Sure," said Mendez. "Then drop that bag and clear out," Steve said, sharply.

The thief obeyed with alacrity. A few yards away he turned his head, and saw Steve pick up the gold and re-enter the hut. His hand stole to his pistol as he paused irresolutely. Then a fiendish grin distorted his face as the murmur of approaching voices reached him. He hurried forward, and almost

tumbled into the arms of Irish Pat and another miner.

"Thought you were at home, Pat," he said, familiarly. "Saw you go into your shanty two minutes ago."

Pat wasted no time in questions, but ran for his hut and dashed open the door just as Steve was replacing the stolen gold. Covered by the Irishman's revolver, Steve realized how he had been trapped, and that explanations would be useless. He now learned, for the first time, that several similar thefts had occurred during the past few days.

At the hour fixed for the trial, the saloon—where all important events took place—was crowded. McQueen was elected judge, and the selection of a jury was but a matter of moments.

The prisoner, his hands bound behind him, and guarded by a pair of stalwart, armed miners—surveyed the proceedings with calm gravity. He knew his case was hopeless, and his only comforting thought was that Nora, visiting a neighboring camp, would not be back till it was all over.

One by one the victims of the previous robberies detailed their losses, and then Irish Pat told the story of the arrest, corroborated by his companion. Moreover, it was common knowledge that the prisoner had lost heavily at cards, and that he supplied a motive. Even Josh, listening to the incriminating recital, could see no loophole of escape for his partner. Honestly, in such a community, was an essential factor, and from men who regarded the shooting of a card-cheat as a justifiable act, a mean thief could expect no mercy. Asked if he had anything to say, the prisoner shrugged his shoulders and was dumb.

"Anyone want to speak for the prisoner?" asked the judge.

"Yes," said a silvery voice, and from behind the bar appeared Miss Nora. "I've heard all the evidence and you've got the wrong man, Deane," she said, with a feminine disregard of the judicial dignity. Then, turning to the prisoner, she asked: "Steve, did you take the gold?"

"Yes," replied Steve firmly; and a ripple of mirth disturbed the assembly.

The girl was nonplussed for a moment by the unexpected answer, but her eyes never left the prisoner's face.

"From whom did you take it?" she asked, and when he would not answer she continued: "You caught the thief, took the gold from him, and when Pat arrived you were putting it back. Isn't that so?"

Still Steve was silent. The girl did not falter; her eyes swept the crowd of faces until they encountered those of her so-called relative, and in a flash the truth came to her.

"The man you are trying to shield—the real thief—stands there! He calls himself Mendez, she cried.

The Spaniard—whiter than the slim fingers directing all eyes to him—strove vainly to speak.

"Why should Deane shield the man he hated?" asked the judge. The girl's face flushed, but she answered proudly: "For me; because he thought I cared for that."

The scorn in her voice, with the ruin of his hopes in the very moment of his triumph, lashed Mendez to a sudden fury. With a snarling cry he whipped out his revolver and levelled it at his accuser. Ere he could press the trigger, however, he tumbled headlong, an inert mass.

"I'm sorry," the judge said, regretfully; "I'd rather have hanged the mean skunk, but it couldn't be helped. Now, boys, I put it to you that counsel for the defence has proved her case, an' that the prisoner leaves the court without a stain on his character."

A burst of cheering ratified the verdict, and the prisoner found himself the hub of an enthusiastic crowd, which, after meeting to deprive him of his life, now unanimously expressed a wish to drink his good health.

What at length he managed to escape, a scene for solitude took him to the little clearing. Flung himself down on the pine-needles he tried to think things out. He had not been there long when the bushes rustled, and he looked up, impatiently, fancying Josh had come in search of him. But it was a girl who appeared—a girl in a shabby frock, with golden hair hanging in a plait behind—and at the sight of her he started up.

"Fairy!" he cried. And again, "Fairy!"

"I've come to answer your letter," she said. "I got it this morning—sent on from New York—it was in a mail robbery, and they've just found it. I waited and waited for it, and then, when you didn't even come to welcome me home, I thought you didn't care."

The blue eyes were downcast now, but a smile trembled on her lips as she added, "But if you had come her ladyship would have condescended to remember you, Steve."

"You heard that?" he cried. "Durn that blue-jay pal o' yours," she said, mimicking Josh, and fingering an imaginary piece of clay at the bushes. "Yes, I heard

HOME

FAVORITE RECIPES.

Dominos.—Have a plain cake baked in thin sheets and cut into small oblong pieces the size and shape of a domino, a trifle larger; frost the tops and sides; when the frosting is cold, draw the black lines and make the dots, with a small brush dipped in melted chocolate. These are nice for children's parties.

Fricassee of Chicken.—When tired of everything else try this: Rabbit or squirrel cooked in the same manner is delicious. Take chicken about one year-old, for if too young they go to pieces. Wash, disjoint, and put in iron kettle (iron with round bottom is best). Let come to a boil and skim. Then add butter size of a walnut, one-fourth teaspoonful of cayenne pepper, four cloves, four black pepper corns, salt to taste. Let boil till it begins to get tender—not too much; then remove cover and get all moisture out quickly as possible. Be careful not to burn. Have heap-

ing tablespoonful of flour carefully worked together with butter; draw chicken to one side, drop in flour and butter; let all fry together for twenty minutes. Add pint and one-half of milk; stir all up from the bottom. Be careful not to break the chicken. Let come to a bubble. Serve.

Stuffed Dates.—For stuffed dates clean and cut in halves about twenty dates. Remove the stones, have ready whole walnut meats. Take two dates and meats from two walnuts, press meats together. This will form a perfect half if put together neatly. Then dust with granulated sugar. These are delicious, as there is so much of them. Fine for after dinner dessert.

Substitute for Eggs.—When eggs are scarce and a recipe calls for more than one, use a tablespoonful of cornstarch in its place.

MEATS.

Spanish Deviled Meat.—Prepare one beef's tongue, also one heart, by scalding and scraping thoroughly in a granite vessel, boil until quite tender; remove from the liquor in which they were boiled; while yet warm run through a food grinder; have ready four hard-boiled eggs, chopped fine; add these to the meat; then a small pinch of cinnamon and cloves; one teaspoon of prepared chili pepper; salt to taste, last one pint of the liquor in which the meat was cooked, mix thoroughly; place in a deep pan or dish to cool. This is excellent served with cold boiled eggs, or sliced thin and made in sandwiches.

Dried Beef.—Buy one-half pound dried beef. Pick it to pieces. Place dried beef in a frying pan; put on enough water to cover; bring to a boil. Pour off water. This takes the salt out of beef. Now take a small kettle, into which put a pint of sweet milk. Into this put a piece of butter the size of a hickorynut. Take enough flour in a bowl to thicken milk. Put in your salt and pepper to suit taste. Bring milk to a boiling point, then use your flour to thicken milk as you would gravy. When done take your dried beef and stir into this gravy. Now take two eggs, beat up in a bowl. Turn out the fire and into the gravy stir your eggs. This recipe can be made in smaller quantities by using one-half the recipe.

Chicken Loaf.—When the butcher sends an old hen and it is too late to obtain anything else, remove all meat from bones, fat as well; put through a meat grinder; add one cup ground stale bread crumbs, one egg, salt, and pepper; mix well; make into loaf and bake one hour and a half. Boil bones with gizzard, heart, and liver for cream gravy. Pour gravy over loaf and serve. 3. Slice loaf and serve cold.

HAM DISHES.

Ham Scallop.—Two cupfuls of cold boiled ham ground fine, six hard-boiled eggs. Wash cold separate whites from yolks and chop fine. Make thick cream sauce of two tablespoonfuls of butter and four of flour. Cook until smooth, then add pint of sweet milk. When thick season with salt and pepper. Butter baking dish, putting in layer of sauce first, then add in succession ham, yolks of eggs, whites, and top layer of sauce, dusted over with fine cracker crumbs and small pieces of butter. Bake until brown, about half an hour. This is delicious for a luncheon and its cheapness commends itself, for scraps of ham or pieces clinging to the bone that cannot be served sliced can be

all, and that's what made me act so mean to you, Steve; I wanted to pretend I didn't care, either."

"Pretend!" Steve repeated, and then—well, the blue-jay is not one of those little birds that tell tales.

"And you are sure they haven't quite spoilt me, Steve?" she teased.

"Quite sure," he answered; "but"—and his eyes laughed—"I expect I shall."—London Tit-Bits.

utilized for this fine dish. Above amount serves eight.

Ham Baked in Milk.—A delicious way to prepare ham is as follows: Get a slice of ham about one and one-half inches thick, place in a shallow pan, and cover with milk. Bake in a slow oven until milk has soaked into the ham and until the ham is a light brown on top. Gravy is made by adding milk to the grease which remained in the pan after ham has been removed and then thicken with flour.

BREAKFAST HINTS.

Fried Mush.—When making corn meal mush to fry, if one tablespoonful of flour is added to each cup of meal the slices will be much firmer and not break while frying.

Potato Muffins.—Parse three good sized potatoes, boil until tender, and mash well. Add one teaspoonful salt, one tablespoonful lard or butter, one cup sweet milk, one-half yeast cake dissolved; flour enough to make a stiff dough, and set to rise; then form into biscuit shape, set to rise again, and bake in hot oven.

Corn Mush.—Corn meal mush, southern style. When making the mush stir in sausage meat. After it gets cold slice and fry. Very good for breakfast.

LEMON PIE.

Lemon Pie.—Grate one-quarter of the yellow rind of one lemon into a bowl; squeeze in the juice, add a large teaspoon granulated sugar and two eggs, yolks only; beat well together; add a large cup cold water in which has been dissolved one dessertspoonful cornstarch; put into a double boiler, cook until a clear, rich jelly; make a rich crust and bake separately; fill with the jelly, beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth, add two tablespoonfuls sugar, and brown lightly in oven. This makes one pie.

Lemon Pie Hint.—When making lemon pies cut the lemons in quarters, remove the seeds, and run through the food chopper, using the cutter for nut butter. This saves time, the unpleasant task of washing a grater and also scratched fingers.

USEFUL HINTS.

Fresh lemons, if laid on a paper on a shelf with a tumbler turned over each one, will keep fresh for weeks.

One woman took the cuffs from her husband's worn-out shirts and made inner soles for her shoes from them.

Tiny corks tacked on the backs of lower corners of picture frames will prevent dark lines from forming on wall paper.

To turn out a pudding boiled in a basin, hold it for a few moments in cold water; this will prevent it sticking to the cloth.

To mend a torn umbrella stick black cork plaster, inside the tear. This will show less than a darn, and will last for some time.

Stewed prunes and figs are greatly improved by the addition of olive oil after cooking. This oil may also be used in fruit salads.

A light flannel petticoat is a great protection to the little folks, since it keeps the sensitive bowels from becoming suddenly chilled.

When preparing potatoes for baking put one paring around the largest side of the potato lengthwise and when baked the skin will slip off from each side very nicely.

After boiling potatoes pour off all water, take kettle of potatoes to the back door, or wherever the wind will blow on them, and shake several times, and they will be white and mealy.

Try greasing the bottom and sides of dishes you are going to cook rice, oatmeal, or hominy in. It saves much time in dish washing, as such things seldom scorch under this treatment. Use butter or lard sparingly.

After getting the ingredients together before mixing a cake, always warm the bowl by pouring into it boiling water. Let stand a few minutes, then pour out and dry. It must be warm enough to soften, but not melt the butter.

The soiling of walls caused by jess leaning their heads against the wall may be almost entirely removed by laying a sheet of blotting paper on the spot and ironing a cover with a hot iron.

In baking meat pies and fruit tarts they often fall over. To prevent this stand them in a baking tin with some water in the tin. This will prevent the juice and gravy boiling out in the least, as the steam from the baking tin keeps it in.

BROTHERLY SYMPATHY.

Mike, a lusty, good-natured Irish man, was one of a number of work men employed in erecting a new building. The owner of the building, who knew him, said to him on day:

"Mike, didn't you tell me one that a brother of yours is a bishop?"

"Yis, sor."

"And you are a hod-carrier! Th good things of this life are not equally divided, are they, my man?"

"No, sor," rejoined Mike, shou dering his hod, and standing up th ladder with it. "Poet Terence! I couldn't do this to save my life!"