

Bench Claim Dick and Eldorado Bill.

(Written for the Klondike Nugget)

Scene: Dawson, Date: 20th of October, 1898. The time when Jack Frost is again in evidence and wide awake from a four months' sleep during an arctic summer. That Jack Frost is very much in evidence at this date is shown by the numerous wagers made among the sporting fraternity of the city covering the day and hour when the last mail boat of the season will arrive from up-river points, which means the close of navigation on the Yukon for eight long months of the year.

Time, midnight, and place, a box in one of the popular theaters of the city. Hanging outside this particular box and conspicuously displayed to the audience beneath is a placard that reads, "Eldorado," which means that this night the house is honored with the presence of an Eldorado king. William Bates, Eldorado's creek claim owner and millionaire, is out tonight, and when this Eldorado king makes merry the lucky house he sees fit to honor is sure of a bountiful flow of wine and the welcome clink of Klondike gold.

Eldorado Bill, this gay lothario, is a handsome man with dark Italian cast of features, which, set off to advantage by rich attire and immaculate white shirt and diamond pin, the Klondike signs of a mushroom millionaire, makes him very popular among the fair ones of the demimonde. He treats with a wild extravagance, and bets the high card to the limit, and has many gentlemen friends. He is lionized by men of small ideas for his debonair ways and has a close following of others who are crafty for gain. William Bates, locally known as Eldorado Bill, was located at Fortymile when the first news of the rich strike on the Klondike reached him and he joined in the first stampede. There it was whispered around that he had left a wife and child in the States and came here under a cloud. But such rumors were vague, and the cloud had melted away under the glare of a golden sunshine. His companions in the box are two girls of the house, a mining friend from Eldorado, and a Dawson knight of the green cloth. The air is filled with jests and laughter, and at intervals, between acts, champagne corks at \$40 a cork pop merrily.

"Twelve o'clock, Eldorado Bill. The last mail boat of the season has not yet arrived and I win your money," spoke the knight of the green cloth.

"True, I lose," answered Bill, looking at his watch. "Here is your money and your time to treat."

A minute later another forty-dollar cork was drawn and glasses went merrily to lips.

But, listen! With a curse Eldorado Bill throws his glass to the floor, which gives a resounding crash, and he mutters: "Lost a cool thousand by a minute. There is the steamer whistle now."

The whistle closed the night's performance and everybody rushed out to the landing to view the incoming passengers and learn the outside news.

When Eldorado Bill wedged himself into the crowd the little stern-wheel river steamer had just made her turn in front of the landing and was heading back up stream. Her breathing was loud and laborious as she plowed her way back against a swift current and cut a passage through the slush ice and floating cakes. "Will she make it?" "That ice jam hits her hard!" and sundry other like remarks were passed by the crowd. But in the face of all obstacles the trim little boat plowed her way in. And why not? for on top of her pilot-house waves the boom, which signifies that this little puffing, throbbing thing of life has won the honors of making the fastest time on record between Dawson and Whitehorse—the fastest boat on the Yukon.

"Here at last," remarked a saucy-faced girl of 18 summers, to a matronly dame at her side as she leaned over the deck railing and cast wondering glances out over the city of Dawson, her first sight of this mecca of frame buildings and tents and the metropolis of the Golden North.

At this remark many eyes from the crowd look up and rest admiringly upon a brown-eyed brown-haired petite little figure in the sauciest cap and traveling gray, for she was about as pretty a little piece of feminine loveliness as a girl only two years out of school and short dresses could be.

So thought Eldorado Bill. As she leaned out over the railing in full glare of the ship's electric light, this Eldorado king, this man of the world, whose aim in life was to satisfy his

own desires, feasted his eyes upon this little beauty with sensual greed and made a vow to possess it for his own, even if it cost him a half of Eldorado.

"Who can she be?" he asked himself, and he wondered if she was single, and if the oldish lady was her mother. "Ah, I know the purser, and will lose no time to find her out."

Later on he became enlightened. Miss Bessie Rose was from California. She was an orphan and in company with her aunt, Mrs. Sparling, had come to Dawson to join her husband, who for a time was prospecting in some remote part of the country.

So far so good. The road was clear and nothing looked easier to Eldorado Bill than the snaring of this pretty bird.

A sore disappointment awaited Mrs. Sparling upon her arrival here. She received a letter from her husband stating that he had left Dawson and gone to the new discoveries on Minook, and instructed her to proceed on down the river and join him there for the winter. Now such a move upon her part was impossible, for hadn't she just arrived on the last boat of the season, and its destination was Dawson? No other boat could go either up or down the river, and she must winter here. It was aggravating, but what was still more so was the cold hard fact that her supply of cash was too limited to carry herself and niece in comfort through the winter—in fact Dawson prices far outstripped her means.

"But, dear auntie, I can certainly get something to do," remarked her energetic little niece as a finale to an outburst of despondency. "You know I am a good typewriter and accountant, and surely one of the stores or a big mine owner will give me employment. I will insert an advertisement without delay."

With Bessie Rose to think was to act, and immediately she sat down and penned the following for insertion in the "Nugget," the leading paper:

Wanted—By a young lady just arrived, a position as typewriter and accountant in store or at mine. Answer to B. R. at Nugget office.

The following morning, while sitting at the table taking his refreshments, this notice caught the eyes of Eldorado Bill. He pondered over it a moment, then read it again. A wicked gleam shot from his coal black eyes, and with self-satisfaction he muttered: "My little bird, I'll answer your chirp for help and give you a golden cage." Pulling out forth his note book and tearing out a leaf, upon it he wrote the following:

B. R., Nugget Office—If thoroughly competent a position with good salary is open for you at —, Eldorado. Meet me in the parlor of the Regina at 2 p. m. Come prepared to start immediately. WILLIAM BATES.

"Look! look! auntie," said Bessie, as she danced into the room excitedly waving aloft an open letter. "Here's luck to beign with—an answer so soon offering me a position with a good salary. We must both dress immediately and call upon Mr. William Bates, a mine owner on Eldorado. I am to meet him at the Regina and must go prepared to leave you right away," she added with a little sob.

"Well, really, this is quite sudden," answered her aunt. "But, my dear, do you know anything about this Mr. Bates, the great mine owner—have you made any inquiries about him?"

"I know nothing only what they told me at the Nugget office. They said he was very a wealthy mine owner on Eldorado, and that's all."

"Well, dear, you can try, and if things are not right you can come back to me again."

During the interview Eldorado Bill displayed his most polished manners and gentlemanly ways, and the conditions being satisfactory, Mrs. Sparling gave consent to her niece's going, saying again if she did not like her place to return. Through a number of years of motherly care she knew thoroughly her little niece's disposition, and that a little tigress would be aroused in response to any undue advances made by her employer or others.

"Now, Miss Rose, as we have 15 long miles to travel we must not delay our going," said Eldorado Bill. He placed her in his cutter, which was in waiting, and completely buried her in a warm foxskin robe, then behind a noble span of grays, with silver bells merrily jingling, this human hawk flies away with his captured dove.

As they sped along the heart of this juggler of a fair girl's name, throbs joy-

fully and his face is radiant with self-complacent smiles. Surely a munificent world is lavish on this Eldorado king in its wealth and splendor and joys.

Just before reaching the Klondike river this dashing rig overtakes a conveyance which is a team of dogs harnessed to a heavily laden Yukon sled. Behind the sled, slowly plodded the driver, every minute yelling to the lead dog to "mush on," and certainly the contrast here exemplified in the dog team of a bench claim owner and the cutter and span of an Eldorado king, ran from the ridiculous to the sublime.

"Oh, what a queer team!" remarked Miss Bessie, as the musher turned his dogs aside to give the grays an open road.

At this remark the dog driver glanced up and for an instant a pair of clear gray eyes looked into the brown ones of the merry little chatterer. Then suddenly coming to himself as the cutter passed him, he sung out:

"Look out! Eldorado Bill, there is danger ahead, the Klondike is not frozen solid yet, and your heavy team is liable to break through."

"I guess I've traveled this road before," was the mocking answer of Eldorado Bill, and paying no heed to the warning he starts his team out over the treacherous ice.

"Do you think there is really no danger?" asked Bessie in tremulous tones.

"No, little girl," answered her daring cavalier, "not while I'm—"

His answer was cut short by the sudden cracking of ice. This was warning enough to the grays, and they made a sudden leap forward and striking the thin ice crushed through and landed breast deep in water on a pebbly bottom.

At this point of crossing the Klondike river carries a medium swift current and is quite deep in the center of the channel. A short distance below is a treacherous rapid and at this date the surface is not frozen over. At the foot of the rapids, just before the stream enters the Yukon, the current again slackens and the waters flow into the darkness of an ice-roofed cavern.

The grays had secured sound foothold, and still attached to them was a bobbing, half submerged sleigh, and over it was sweeping the swift current with its chaotic mass of floating ice cakes. In the sleigh was a single occupant—a man clinging to the dashboard for dear life and shouting wildly to the animals to drag him ashore. In response to the shouting of their master they plunged ahead and succeeded in breaking their way through the thin ice to land.

But where is the other occupant of the sleigh? Has sweet little Bessie Rose disappeared in the cold, dark waters of the Klondike forever, or, by hap, like others, only until flowery spring time when the Yukon gives up its dead? (To Be Continued.)

For a Mint.

To the powerful arguments of the coast press we humbly wish to add our little mite.

No less an authority than the statistician of the San Francisco mint accounts for \$21,358,299 of Klondike and Atlin Canadian gold, including a doubtful quantity from Nome sand beaches, going to Frisco to be coined—into eagles, not sovereigns—and, we all cry "what an enormous trade goes with it to foreign markets."

It is an axiom that where the gold goes, there also is most of the money spent, and the return cargoes from American bottoms proves this assertion.

Who in Atlin has not seen strong box after strong box of gold, from the banks here, going out—and addressed to San Francisco and Seattle. And of the dozens of men who secreted and stealthily carried their gold out of the camp last fall, who can say aught but that the majority of them sold it in Seattle; and why? Simply because they could sell direct to the mint and at the highest price. Atlin has produced its two and one half millions of gold (not such a bad showing for a camp manipulated with rockers, 12 foot boxes and an occasional length of garden hose). Atlin provided the boxes, the screws and the buckskin bags, too, and Seattle and Frisco "does the rest." Witness, Canadian manufacturers and vendors, that in these two burgs you can exchange your gold for almost anything; a monitor, a stamp mill or a good time, sore head and empty pocket.

Just think of it! Twenty-one millions in 1900 and no Canadian mint. For shame, Canada, for shame.

The ratio of increase for 1901 and following years forbids calculation at the hands of any scribe evenhanded of a paper that can hardly keep up with the demand for extras at 25 cents per copy.

We say, go it Vancouver, and go it Victoria, too, even if you are "agin the government." Atlin ought to have

the mint and you both know it, but as we can't supply the heavy machinery and grub and luxuries and such like just now, and you can, and will too, again, we say, pour in the hot shot at Ottawa; get the mint, and we will help you, but don't quarrel over it! Get it!—Atlin Claim.

No Dance Tonight.

Out of respect for the memory of Queen Victoria, the Bon Ami club weekly dance will not take place tonight. Next week the dance will be given on Wednesday night as usual.

\$25 reward for one black malamute dog, with white tips; name Jack. Return to Sam Means, No. 20 above Bonanza.

Imported Turkish cigarettes, at Zaccarelli's Bank Cafe corner. cr5

Sweet potatoes at Meeker's.

Chewing tobacco's all brands, at Zaccarelli's, 75c per pound up, Bank Cafe corner. cr5

Steel marten traps, just in—0, 1 and 1½. Shindler's. cr5

Brewitt makes clothes fit. crt

All watch repairing guaranteed by C. A. Cochran, the expert watchmaker, opposite Bank B. N. A., Second street.

S-Y.T. Co.

ONE-HALF INCH CABLE

S-Y. T. CO.,

SECOND AVENUE

TELEPHONE 39

"White Pass and Yukon Route."

A Daily Train Each Way Between

Whitehorse and Skagway

COMFORTABLE UPHOLSTERED COACHES

NORTH—Leave Skagway daily, except Sundays, 8:30 a. m., Bennett 12:15 a. m. Arrive at Whitehorse, 5:15 p. m.

SOUTH—Leave Whitehorse daily, except Sundays, 8:00 a. m., Bennett 1:25 p. m. Arrive at Skagway, 4:40 p. m.

E. C. HAWKINS, General Manager **J. FRANCIS LEE,** Traffic Manager **J. H. ROGERS,** Agent

Special to the Family Trade

Wine, Beer and Liquors

Will be sold by the bottle or gallon at satisfactory prices. These goods are bought direct from the best vintages, breweries and distilleries in the world thus insuring quality.

A. E. Co.



Here We Have
"the Drayman"

If you were engaged in the Freight Business this illustration would look well on your cards or letterheads. We make all kinds of engravings appropriate for all kinds of business.

We have the only engraving plant in the Territory.

THE NUGGET



WE HAVE
Steam Hose, Points, Ejectors, Injectors, Valves, Pipe, Fittings, Lubricating Oil and a Full Supply of
...MINER'S HARDWARE...

The DAWSON HARDWARE CO. PHONE 38 SECOND AVE.