

CLEAR CREEK MINING STORY

Of the Way Some Big, Honest Men Love.

How Joe Bartlett Sacrificed Himself for Sake of Pretty Kitty Carter and Her Lover.

"She'll be hard to tether, Kitty will. It'll be like lassoing a butterfly, an I know as the man as can do it ain't appeared in camp yet," said Joe Bartlett meditatively. "As for me, I ain't got no show of a chance. How in thunder can I expect a dainty little girl like Kitty to care for a rough, ignorant feller like me?"

He took the pipe from his mouth and, knocking the ashes from it, filled it carefully, but it was evident that his mind was not upon his task.

"Can't even speak grammar as I'd ort to," he muttered, with disgust. "But they ain't nothing I wouldn't do for Kitty—Lord, love her, even to studying a grammar book."

Joe was modest. He had no self-esteem whatever and undervalued his merits. That so remarkable a creature as Kitty should ever love him was to be considered only in the light of an impossibility. If his love became hopeful, he reviled himself and blushed at his temerity.

Yet Joe was foreman of the new mine at Clear Creek camp and the most important man in the place.

"No, the man ain't arrived yet," continued Joe, "an when he does"—he looked a little pale—"when he does, call on Joe Bartlett!"

That evening, as was his habit, Joe sat at Amos Carter's cabin. There were two reasons why he liked to spend an evening with Carter—he enjoyed wrapping yarns with him over their pipes and Kitty happened to be Carter's daughter. Kitty never suspected his love. Joe knew that she did not return it, and he was not a man to wear his heart on his sleeve. If any one had asked her about her opinion of Joe, she would have confessed frankly that she was almost as fond of him as of her father.

In the midst of a story of the plains which he was telling for the twentieth time there was a loud rap on the door. Carter went to open it. A stranger stood on the threshold, a tall, slender, well-made young fellow, wearing the garb of the city-bred man.

"Is this Mr. Carter's place?" he asked.

"That's my name, young feller. Will you come in?"

"I was told," said the newcomer as he complied with the invitation, "that I should find Mr. Bartlett here."

Joe came forward and offered his toil-hardened hand to the stranger.

"You are Mr. Ames, the superintendent's son, I guess. He wrote me you were coming up for a spell, but I didn't know we'd see you till the next stage. I am glad to see you, sir," he said heartily.

A certain indifference or indolence which seemed habitual vanished from the young man's face and manner. He held out his hand frankly.

"Thank you. I have come to rusticate. I have a bad reputation at home. It arises from a slight difference between the governor and myself. I am conscientiously opposed to work." He squared his shoulders and laughed. "I am supposed to take father's place here, but I have perfect confidence in you, Bartlett, and I shall take it as a favor if you will forget to remind me of the responsibilities of the situation."

Again his boyish laugh rang out, and the others laughed in sympathy.

He was unmistakably a good deal of a dandy. His linen was as immaculate as it would have been in the city, and the hand from which a diamond flashed, was as white and shapely as a woman's.

"We must be good friends, Bartlett," he continued, "for I want you to let me down easy on the labor problem. Dad wants to make life a treadmill for me."

A broad smile from his hearers greeted this statement.

"I hope you know what work is, young feller," said Carter, his smile ending in an audible chuckle.

Clay Ames never knew what reply he made. His eyes for the first time had met Kitty's, and he forgot everything else but the tall slip of a girl with the wild rose face.

In less than a week everybody in camp knew that the superintendent's son was in love with Kitty Carter. Half the men in the camp were his rivals, but they all liked the young boss, who had made himself one of them from the first night of his arrival.

Kitty's ways were maddening. If her willful heart favored any one, even her handsome city lover, she discreetly kept the knowledge to herself.

Joe Bartlett had just left the office and was on his way to the mine. Looking up, he saw Kitty's flying figure speeding toward him. He knew at once that something was wrong. She was breathless, her lips were blanched and her eyes wild with terror.

"Kitty, what is it? Anything wrong at the mines?" he asked anxiously.

She caught his arm to steady herself. "There's been a slide!" she gasped, "and Clay!"

A sob choked her voice, and the agony in her face went to Joe's heart like a knife stab. His face whitened.

"Is Clay anything to you, Kitty?" he asked huskily.

"Everything—all the world to me," moaned Kitty. "My heart will break if he dies!"

Joe unclasped her trembling fingers from his arm.

"Please heaven we won't let him die, dear," he said gently, and a moment later he was gone.

How the men worked to reach the death trap where six of their comrades were entombed until, exhausted, they were compelled to fall back, while others filled their places! How one man, tireless and determined, kept always at the head, never resting for a moment. To tell all this would make a story of itself.

Joe Bartlett inspired everybody and cheered and encouraged the despairing crowd that gathered about the entrance of the mine, and when, after hours of hard work, the last dividing wall of earth was penetrated and an opening made large enough for man to enter, it was Joe Bartlett who, with no thought of his own danger, climbed through into the chamber beyond and one by one lifted the half-dead men to those waiting on the outside to receive them.

Young Ames had been farthest back and was the last to be rescued. He was very weak, but he waved his hand feebly to the cheering crowd as Joe lifted him back to life and safety.

Through the opening in the wall of earth the excited, shouting crowd had a glimpse of a grimy, radiant face—Joe had caught sight of Kitty when she first saw Clay Ames—then there was a sickening sound as of muffled thunder, a horrible, underground groaning, followed by a crash. A second slide had occurred and Joe Bartlett was buried beneath it.

For a second or two the crowd was awed into silence by the awfulness of the tragedy and then a cry of horror burst from a hundred throats. Women screamed and men grew white and covered up their eyes as if thus they might shut out the memory of the brave face that but a moment before had smiled at them from its grave.

It was hopeless from the first.

Yet never did men work more heroically than the miners of Clear Creek camp for the next twelve hours to reach their comrade. Rough men most of them were, but they cried like babies when at last Joe's crushed body was lifted from under the debris and the light of day fell upon his unconscious face.

They carried him to his own cabin and laid him upon the bed. The bravest man in Clear Creek camp had given his life for his comrades, and the entire camp was in mourning.

Moonlight flooded the cabin where Joe lay. The smile which had illuminated his face in the last moment of his life rested upon it. Two people—a man and a girl—stood beside him. The young man's arm was about the girl's waist, and her face was hidden upon his breast.

"He was so good!" she sobbed. "He died for your sake and mine!"

"Yes, dear," said Ames gently, "he was the best and bravest man I have ever known." His arm tightened about her slender waist. "I am glad," he said huskily, "that he did not have a sweetheart."

"It would have killed her," whispered Kitty, laying her tear-wet cheek against her lover's face. "But Joe did not care for women. I am sure he never loved any one."

And they never knew, for eternal silence had kissed the dead man's lips.—San Francisco Examiner.

He Strikes Back.

Editor Nugget:

Dear Sir—Governments, it is said, "derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." How is that consent obtained? Independent Voter says it is purchased, and instances Mark Hanna. Did ever anyone hear of such child's talk? Is it reasonable to suppose that Mark Hanna could or has purchased the majority of the voters in 65,000,000 of people? Or, is it true that the American citizen is an object of barter and sale? I as an American utterly repudiate any such sentiment. Independent Voter not only shows bad

grace, but equally poor sense in bringing to an issue what has already been settled at the polls in '96. Was not the whole power and ingenuity of the Democratic party brought to bear on that phase of the election of '96? Was it not claimed that Mr. McKinley was personally indebted to Mark Hanna to a large amount; further, that Hanna saw no way of reimbursing himself but through the election of Mr. McKinley. Have not subsequent events proven this to be utterly false? Did not a majority of American citizens repudiate this most effectually in '96, and in such a manner as ought to have been sufficient to penetrate the density of even Independent Voter? It seems to me he has made very little use of his time, for he is not only a bad Republican, but he is a very poor Democrat.

The Democratic party has shown at least good sense in dropping as political issues what proved to be false in their calculations—the "Silver question," "Dollar wheat," etc.

My advice to him is to hurry up and get in line with the party whip before he essays to advance arguments in behalf of that party. I have no objection, whatever, in taking up and discussing a policy of either party which proves to be an issue; but I do most strongly object to wasting time on what has already been settled by a majority of the people.

I did not deny that Mark Hanna spent large sums of money in the interests of his party; but on the contrary, I frankly admitted it, showing wherein he justly did so. I also knew where some of it came from, but I was not before aware, until Independent Voter apprised me of it, that he possibly borrowed some of it from his political opponents, namely, the "paymaster in Coxe's army." Since that organization was an outgrowth or product of the Democratic administration, I suppose he will have no hesitancy in accepting this view of it. As a Republican I would be in favor of paying it back, as the party no longer needs it, and perhaps poor Richard does.

As to the "almighty dollar being absolute monarch of the United States of America" there is no greater slander on the republic, nothing so utterly and meanly false as ever before been advanced by the party which Independent Voter represents.

There is no place in the world today of the magnitude of the United States where the people generally are so well off; where the opportunity to all is so great to gain a competence; where any man, if it is in him, may raise himself to an honorable position by his own efforts and where it is so absolutely in the hands of the citizens to select their own rulers. If you seek proof of this turn to the past history of your country.

He throws bouquets at himself for his good sense in deserting a party or a cause when he thinks it is wrong. Burke says (I quote from memory), "A soldier may be stationed in a place of great physical danger, or danger to bodily health, on a pestilential swamp, swept by the deadly germs of typhoid or malaria, or some other fell disease; he may remain and die at his post, but he must not desert." So with a man when he has chosen his party; there may be great evils in the party, what party is without them; but I ask whether it is not more manly, more noble, more patriotic, to seek to elevate your party than by deserting it; leave it to sink lower in the scale of national degradation; or leave it Phoenix-like to rise from its own ashes to nobler empire?

Away with this rot and froth about expansion; we are all Americans. Away with this bogie of imperialism; does not our empire extend from sea to sea? is it not established in the hearts of the people? Have we not a president who is clear, statesman-like and honorable, capable of guiding the destinies of the nation, and placing it on a level with the best governments of the world?

Then, like a true American, drop this cavil about trusts and combines, about free silver and free trade and do honor to the nation by electing the noblest American of them all, Wm. McKinley.

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