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NAN
AND OTHER PIONEER WOMEN OF
THE WEST.







FRANCES E. HERRING

[Frontispiece

NAN

And Other Pioneer Women
of the West

BY
FRANCES E. HERRING

ILLUSTRATED

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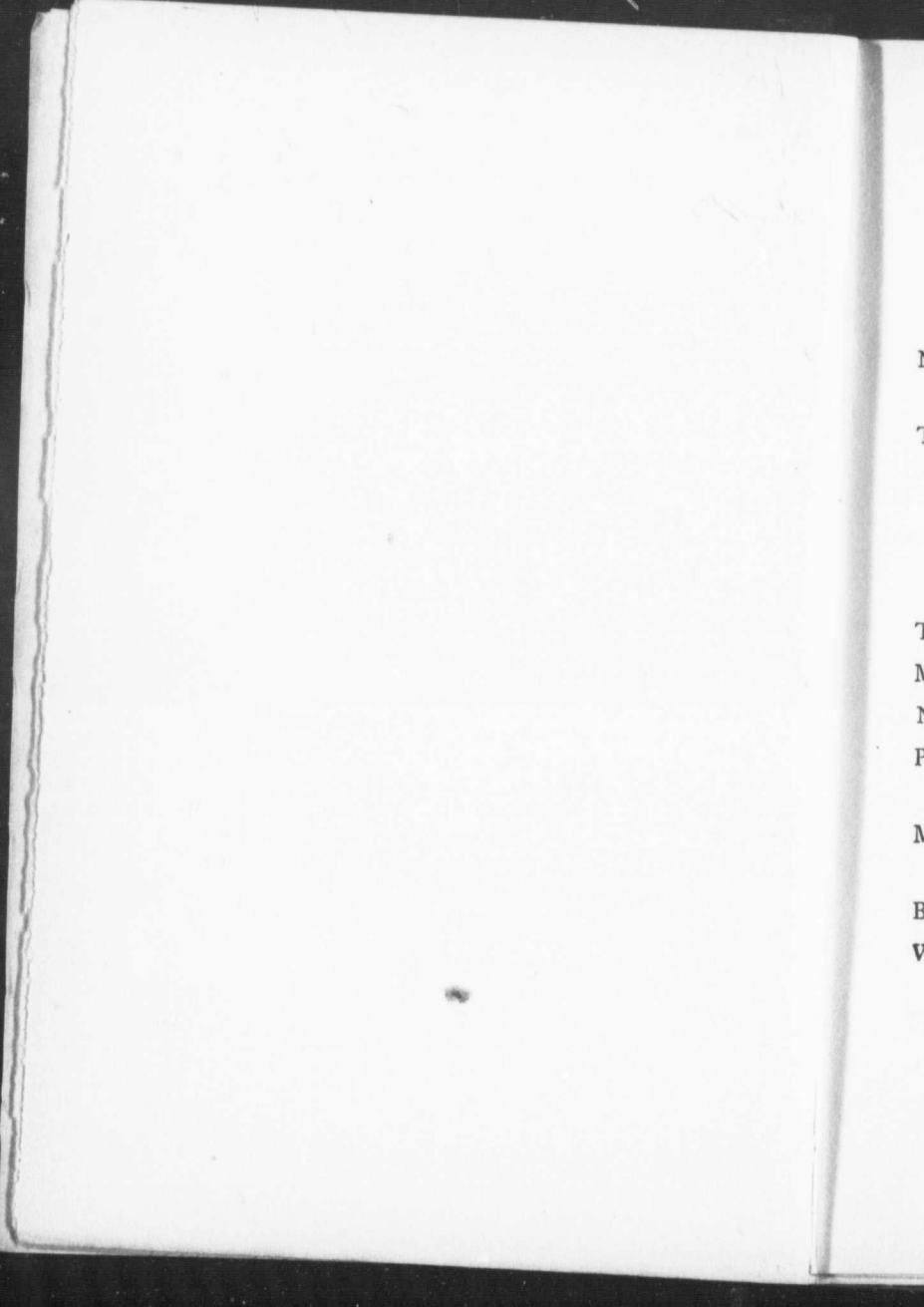
THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It must not for a moment be supposed that the British Columbia life from which my sketches are drawn, is the life of to-day. These sketches date back forty and even fifty years, and are the result of many reminiscences of which careful note has been kept by the writer for at least thirty years.

The episodes recorded are grave, gay, or tragic. In a new country as in a savage one, the burden and heat of the day falls, as a rule, more heavily on the 'weaker vessel.'

In this period of the emancipation of our sex, from the over-thralldom of men, and the recognition of our rightful place in the economy, not only of the household hut of the national life, it will surprise some of our younger sisters to look back upon the pioneer life of a comparatively new country, as is this 'Last West' of ours, and see for themselves the snares which beset the footsteps of our men when they lack the restraining force of the 'Motherhood of Women.'

March 3rd, 1912.



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NAN

A TALE OF CROSSING THE PLAINS TO CALIFORNIA IN THE RUSH OF '49

CHAPTER I

AMONG the nondescript element that lent itself readily to the reckless stampede for the California Gold Fields, was a family named Lickmore. Luke, the father, Tryphosa, the mother, with Polly and Nan, their hopeful progeny.

No one seemed to know whence this family came, or how they travelled, only that they had joined a western bound caravan, somewhere on the great plains. Trailing into camp one night after sunset, without asking anyone's leave, they out-spanned and cooked their evening meal. Next morning their ox cart fell into line behind the more pretentious bullock wagons, (prairie schooners), with their white covers, and the mule teams. The strangers evidently wished to cast in their lot with the rest, and with them brave the dangers of the unknown trail, a country swarming with hostile Indians, and all the uncertain elements of nature.

Tryphosa, or as her husband called her Try-phosy, with a long accent on the first syllable and a pause after it, had a sharp tongue of her own, but she had learned in the school of adversity that 'silence is golden.' Like the cat, watching her opportunity, that comes quietly in and takes the warmest corner by the fireside, without disturbing anyone, she is allowed to remain because unnoticed; whilst the dog, which snarls for his place, is promptly driven out; so Mrs. Lickmor worked her way, dragging her good natured but helpless husband in with her.

Several companies of men had joined this same caravan, but, finding it over-burdened with women and children, they had left what provisions they could spare from their own outfits and hastened on, some of them falling into the hands of marauding savages, as relics they came across showed; others passing carelessly on to the diggings, and different fates; while this hen-and-chicken-gang, as they were dubbed, went scatheless. They raised their voices night and morning in prayer, praise, and exhortation, under their leader, the sound travelling far and near, but never a Redskin did they see. In these services the Lickmores joined, Try-phosy from policy, Luke because he loved the music, and the little girls because their mother took them.

This being the only instruction, religious or secular, they had ever known or ever did know, the girls, especially Nan, looked back upon it in after life, and still marvelled at the power of these people to sing lustily, talk long and loudly, and pray without ceasing. Thus they journeyed.

Their leader was a good man, and an upright, but he had never been over the trail before, and was indulgent with his flock. A day in camp was allowed when a little soul arrived among them, to give the mother a chance before she travelled on again in her bullock-wagon-home. Or he

camped an hour or two ahead of time to give some unfortunate member of the party, who had succumbed to the hardships of the weary way, decent burial, with prayers, psalms, and exhortations over the remains, so soon to be left in their lonely grave.

Few horses or mules remained with them, and the man who had been hired as guide, sneaked off one night with the owners of those remaining, and left the caravan to its fate. He had frequently warned the leader of the risk he ran of being caught in the mountains by the winter storms, if they did not make better progress. The bullock wagons were slow enough without these delays.

But time was no object, they argued, so long as the 'grub' held out; and they dawdled on their sunny way, killing their oxen for meat as their dunnage grew lighter, feeling that the summer never would pass, and that they were journeying not only to 'a land flowing with milk and honey,' as their leader daily reminded them, but to a country where gold could be picked up without the trouble of working for it. So they took things easy, careless of the mountain difficulties which lay between them and their 'land of Canaan.'

The mountains had looked so beautiful in the distance, furnishing many a poetical allusion to their leader, that the party had no apprehensions as they commenced the upward trail, but with fewer oxen they found it necessary to throw away everything that could be spared from their outfit, and the ascent became slower and more arduous every day, till one morning the camp awoke to find itself buried in snow, and the storm still sweeping around in dark and blinding eddies.

Several of the more hardy advised to push on, but those who knew anything of mountain travel refused point-

blank, for as yet the summit had not been reached. Those who were strong enough followed the daring few, and were soon lost to view in the snow clouds.

The leader counselled that they try to find a cave large enough to shelter them and their animals, and that they make themselves as comfortable as possible till the storm had passed, saying in conclusion, that a week or ten days' rest would do none of them any harm, he thought, except it might be the animals; and for them their owners must 'get out and hustle.'

One of their number had noticed such a cave, somewhere off the beaten track, and volunteered to find it.

While he was gone camp was struck, and all made ready for moving, so when he returned with a favourable report, they eagerly followed him.

They found the cave both large and well sheltered, and the wanderers soon made themselves at home. Part of the men and boys attended to the animals, others brought in and stored the supplies, whilst strong arms swung heavy axes and brought in fuel.

Soon fires blazed cheerily, bacon frizzled, pan-bread stood baking over the coals, and the bean-pots of the night before were put to heat.

Here they enjoyed the rest for one, even two weeks, but the snow continued to fall, and it was impossible to get food of any kind for the oxen, so they had to be killed to save them from dying.

There was natural cold storage to have kept the meat good for months, but those who owned the cattle ate to the full, and sold to their neighbours at big prices all they chose to spare, with neither thought nor care for the future.

The leader, who, as we said before, was a good man, honest in his convictions, was scarcely a fit person to rule

over others; he lacked the strength of purpose, the firmness of will and the power of initiative, which go to make the ruler of men. He had prayer meetings both morning and night, with lengthy exhortations and much singing of hymns and psalms.

This kept the minds of the people occupied and saved much bickering and quarrelling, whilst the remainder of the waking hours was spent by the men in digging themselves out for the wood supply, and by the women in cooking and gossiping, washing and mending. For some sixty persons require a great deal of looking after to keep up the general comfort.

The children of course were happy so long as their natural protectors were by, and the pinch of hunger as yet unfelt.

A month passed thus, then the elders began to look at the weather very gravely, and at the fast diminishing supplies.

It was agreed to lump all the provisions, and allow them to be rationed three times a day, then morning and night, then once a day. But they all clamoured for more than their proper allowance, and contentment was at an end as soon as the rations fell below the satisfying point.

The people murmured, threatened and quarrelled, berating their leader for having lingered by the way, and laying all disasters at his door.

Many refused to join in the long services, but they could not help hearing those who did, and thus their minds were somewhat diverted for the time being from their calamities.

The weaker members died and were buried away back in the caves, that being the only unfrozen ground available.

Looking for a burial place, they came across a rippling

spring flowing into a self-made basin, thus they were saved from the ills of snow water.

Then there came the fateful morning when the last bean was served out, and starvation stared them gauntly in the face.

For five days they had nothing but water, and they sat huddling over the fires, there was little strength to keep up.

More deaths occurred; and as they looked at the stiffening bodies, the thought occurred to some, 'If they were only cattle.' Surreptitiously the bodies were taken, cooked and eaten in the far recesses of the mountain caves.

The leader sat with his head between his hands, feeling powerless to restrain, but he prayed and exhorted, being too weak to sing. All to no purpose, when the pangs of hunger again passed reason, and no one died, they demanded that one be killed for the day's supply.

Shuddering with horror: for this leader, grotesque as were some of his methods, had the courage of the old martyrs, and would have sat with his followers praying and awaiting release by merciful death, glorying in the providence that took him and them on a nearer road to Heaven. He refused to consent, and actually put them off till next day. Then, insane with hunger, and ignoring him, they cast lots, and the lot fell upon a woman.

With wolfish, pitiless eyes, they stood by while she was blindfolded, killed and divided by weight among them.

One of those present (from whom this narrative was obtained), saw the daughter of the unfortunate woman, ravenously devouring a part of her mother's heart, and he 'wondered what her feelings must be!'

The leader formed the next repast, he fell forward while engaged in lonely prayer, and his soul returned to

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its Maker. Starvation itself could not force him to break the laws of nature.

For a week longer they subsisted in this ghastly manner, each one eyeing the other suspiciously, and speculating as to who would be to-morrow's victim.

Then, as one of the men, almost a skeleton, was weakly trying to get more fuel, he was hailed by two men in a sleigh, drawn by a pair of horses.

Getting the strangers to give him something to eat first, he guided them to the starving community, who, in their madness or hunger, would surely have eaten them, had they not been provided with both weapons and supplies. While one dealt out what they had, the other stood with a loaded gun, and made the community pass one by one and receive its small allowance.

The two men drove away with only one horse, leaving the other for food. It was easy to see the regret with which they parted from the animal, but to these starvelings, who had daily been called upon to sacrifice one of their number for the subsistence of the rest, the slaughter of the horse was an easy matter, and not even a drop of blood was allowed to go to waste.

Some days later when mule teams arrived with provisions, they found the unfortunates of the cave, chewing the hide of the horse, and clamouring for lots to be again cast. So easy is it for poor humanity to descend even below the level of the 'beasts which perish.'

Those who brought the supplies had taken the precaution to cache the greater part of them at different places on the way.

Again the rescuers had to stand behind their guns to keep off the starving crowd, now reduced to some thirty people, make them take only their own share, and not

steal from each other the necessarily small allowance made. As they followed their rescuers, though some dropped by the way and were buried, the insanity of hunger died out from their wolfish eyes, and they were themselves again.

Their benefactors were a religious body which had established itself in a neighbouring valley, and thither they took the survivors of the caravan, but needless to say the members dispersed as soon as possible, none caring to come in contact with others of the party who had known of their fearful experiences.



CHEAM MOUNTAINS

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CHAPTER II

HAVING passed through such scenes of horror, Tryphosa was scarcely likely to be filled with the milk of human kindness, and her naturally hard character grew harder and more grasping.

Now her husband, poor Luke Lickmore, had been born with an incurable disease. It permeated his bones, went untiringly through his circulation, and his very flesh was under its potent sway. He would look up sadly from his usual occupation of sedulously doing nothing, and say mournfully, "I comed of a consumpted fambly, and taint no use'n you goin' on Tryphosy. I was borned 'ith a" —when Tryphosa would break in with "Yis, yis, I'n got good cause ter know as yu's borned 'ith a bad enough disease, an' thet's nothin' but laziness! bone laziness! ! durned laziness!!!" her voice growing shriller at each repetition of the word "laziness."

Seeing him about to open his mouth she would raise her hands, and, knowing from experience, that anything it might contain, from a hot teapot to a bucket of cold water, would come flying his way if he continued his plaint, he generally made discretion the better part of valor, and contented himself by pretending to choke back a cough.

"Durned laziness that's what yu's borned 'ith, an' yer gels is es bad es yu be."

From the same cause Luke never worked more than a day in any man's mine or camp, and Tryphosa had to wash and mend, bake bread and cake for the miners, and

get along as best she could,—but never for a moment allowing her lord and master to forget that he depended on her efforts for every mouthful he ate. His dress cost him nothing, for he was not in any way proud, and would wear whatever old clothes the miners chose to throw his way; consequently, though a tall and rather well made man, he usually looked like a scare-crow.

There had been several stampedes to fresh diggings in the mountains of Nevada, and the good woman became tired of following up her work, so she made the best of her way to 'Frisco only to find herself and her 'famby' more out of place than ever.

People were now coming North to British Columbia, in steamers, barges, sailing vessels, sloops, and even row-boats and canoes, for they could follow up the coast all the way, the only danger being that sometimes they went up the Columbia river, or Puget Sound, instead of the Fraser river, the latter being then the entrance to the Cariboo country, where the placer mining had been struck, this being the mining where any man could stake his own claim, and wash out the gold for himself, needing no other machinery than a hand rocker and a shovel.

Tryphosa shipped herself on a good size schooner as cook, her man as deck hand, and the two little girls were readily taken by the good-natured captain as super-cargo.

They carried as many passengers as could crowd in, and lie under tarpaulin on the deck at night.

Tryphosa was a happy woman, for her hands were full of good supplies, and she cooked all day, and would have kept on all night if necessary. Thus she brought her 'famby' to Victoria, then called.

Here the Captain decided to go on to Port Douglas, then the head of navigation for the Cariboo diggings, for

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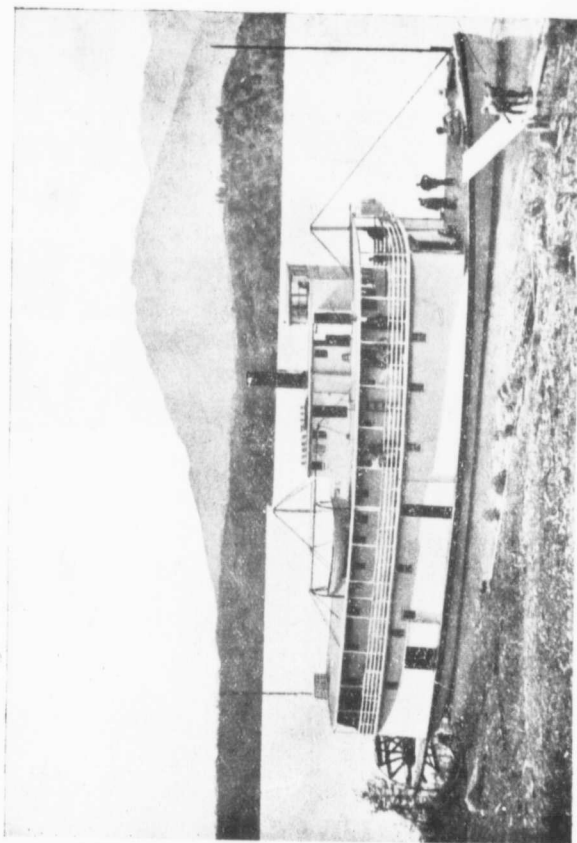
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THE WIDE AND BEAUTIFUL FRASER

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to that port he could get eight cents per pound for all the freight he could stow, and ten dollars per head for each passenger. He was anxious to keep so thrifty a woman as Tryphosa on board, and actually went so far as to suggest "it would be better to chuck that freckless Luke overboard," figuratively speaking, of course, and "take up with him," for he was fond of the little girls, and would make her a good man.

Tryphosa spurned his offer, although she continued to make use of him. She had plans of her own, and 'sending herself to the dogs' was not one of them. She had married her man before the priest knowing what he was, and she meant to stand by him, in her own way, of course.

Passing on up the wide and beautiful Fraser, whose virgin forests of splendid pine and maple reached the water's edge, she kept a lookout for some deserted cabin, on land which had been taken up and abandoned, such as she had heard some of the passengers talking about, who had been up that way before.

Just such a place she saw a few miles below the mouth of the Harrison River. Here she made the reluctant captain put them ashore with her few belongings, and all the groceries she had brought with her or had confiscated from the liberal supply on board the sloop. These consisted of tea and coffee, a sack or two of potatoes, a little sugar and molasses, a sack of beans, vegetable seeds, nails, blankets, and so on.

When Tryphosa reached the cabin, she found four good walls of logs, but no roof, no floor and no fireplace.

Nothing daunted, she made Luke cut wood to keep a fire of logs going outside, while she and the girls raised a couple of blankets for shelter inside.

What mattered it that there was no roof? It was May,

and all the country was green and fresh, only a little snow here and there in the thick forest and up the mountain sides.

Much against his will, Luke had to cross-cut some fallen cedar trees; 'shake' lengths (4ft.), and split them for roofing.

Nan held one end of the saw, and helped to split the cedar with an instrument called a 'frou,' while Polly and her mother constructed a 'Miner's oven,' and baked some pan-bread over the ashes of the camp fire.

Any one might have noticed when Tryphosa landed, she had been very particular about the safety of a certain barrel; this was with a view to her miner's oven, and many a savory meal she cooked in it.

The usual construction of a miner's oven was in this way:—You secure good clay and build it up about two feet high, and four feet square. Wood of equal length is then laid upon it, and finished with an arch of supple cedar or vine maples placed close together; this again, is covered with clay, and plastered neatly over. Then you fire the wood inside and burn away the arch, which leaves an oven of clay. You heat the oven by burning wood or sticks inside till it is sufficiently hot, then you remove the ashes, and bake whatever you require, and your oven lasts a long time.

It may be that fresh air, out-door exercise and hunger furnish a better sauce than one finds in the confines of civilization, but let any one try a sockeye salmon just drawn from the Fraser, and baked in one of these ovens, and he will see for himself how good it is.

Tryphosa, not knowing what wood might be obtainable in a new country, had therefore brought this two hundred pound sugar barrel along, for with that she had



TRYPHOSY'S CABIN

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been sure of making a good job of her oven, and one of the ends could be nailed together to form a door, which otherwise would have to be cut from some good sized hard wood tree, and she knew, though Luke would relish what was cooked, he would grumble at a 'consumpted' man having to cross-cut an oven door of hard wood.

It was not long before some of the Cheam tribe of Indians came over to see who was in the white man's cabin.

This greatly delighted Tryphosa, who had no fear of these people, for she had been brought up near them on the plains of the United States, being a soldier's daughter; and Luke, for all his slovenly appearance, had drilled and marched with the army. It was the fact of his desertion therefrom, which made them say so little of their antecedents, and at the same time accounted for their sudden appearance among the ill-fated caravan. Tryphosa knew better than to truckle to the Indians, she felt safe, too, for she had taken the precaution to 'cache' or hide, her provisions.

With such a river flowing by, Tryphosa thought there ought to be plenty of fish, so she made the Indians understand she was hungry, that she had no canoe, and she wanted them to go and catch fish for her.

Off they paddled, and up a small stream or slough running into the main river. There they waited, spear in hand, for salmon are never taken by hook and line in the Fraser. The big spring salmon, weighing from forty to sixty pounds were running, and soon one of these gladdened the eyes of Tryphosa.

She sent the Squaw to clean the salmon in the river, and the Buck for fuel. Soon the savages were squatting on their heels gravely watching the mysteries of a miner's oven, and patiently waiting the course of events.

Tryphosa had made a huge tin of tea, that is, she boiled a small quantity of tea in a large pot of water.

When all was ready, she seated everybody on the ground, and served each of them with a bountiful supply of fish on a clean piece of bark. Sweetening her tea plentifully with molasses, she handed it round in large tin pannicans, and with copious draughts of this decoction, they washed down the delicious fish and the soggy bread; the Indians burning their throats in their eagerness for the sweetened delicacy.

"Whether you be consumed, or whether you be not, Luke Lickmore, you kin allest eat a good square meal, when it is set afore you," remarked Tryphosa, to her better half, as a kind of indispensable sauce to the repast.

Wiping the grease of the salmon from his mouth on the back of his hand, Luke slowly remarked, "It's allest good when you cook it, Tryphosy." Which compliment so astonished the good woman, that she forgot what she had intended to say.

Luke, who could see his way to some help worth having from the stalwart savage, took him off, and Tryphosa muttered to herself, "Well, he hes got some sense arter all," for she caught his idea.

Beckoning the squaw, she followed the men. Ordering Luke on the roof, she kept the buck splitting shakes, the girls handing up nails, (which her foresight had provided from the cargo of the sloop) while she and the squaw kept Luke supplied with shakes.

That night they had a good tight roof on their cabin, and next day a chimney, the lower part of stones plastered together with mud, the upper of green wood, was added.

When others of the tribe paid visits, Luke tried to get them to help him to dig ground for potatoes, beans and

corn, but the noble savages were afflicted with Luke's own disease, perhaps even to a greater extent, for in those days they could still make their squaws work for and wait on them; so he got the squaws to help, and then only by the bribe of some garment or other from the general stock, which, needless to say, was small.

Tryphosa went over to the ranch-a-rie, or Indian village, at the foot of the mountain, and found she could exchange some of her clothes for chickens and a young sow in pig. Also that a buxom squaw would give her a young heifer for the dress she wore. So Tryphosa promptly closed the bargain, and returned to her cabin minus her outer garment, for she knew the mind of woman, especially savage woman, is apt to change, and this bargain was too good to tamper with.

Then poor Luke had to dig and delve with Tryphosy on the spade beside him, and he found it really hard work to keep up with her, for she was as the Indians called her, 'hyas skookum, tecoup kloothman' (big, strong, white woman).

Thus they worked for several years, till Tryphosy had butter, eggs, chickens, vegetables, and sometimes a whole pig or calf to sell to the steamboats as they passed.

They began to be what they considered, 'very well off,' especially when you come to think that butter was fifty or sixty cents per pound, according to the season; eggs, from fifty cents to a dollar per dozen, and all the other articles in proportion.

Tryphosa had found that the original squatter had never proved up on his claim, and so she took advantage of the fact, counted his improvements in with her own, and obtained her Crown Grant, perhaps all the easier that she was a woman, and a comely dame at that.

Here the girls grew in stature and in ignorance, for Tryphosa's one idea was to hustle everybody, and the girls never saw the inside of a school or a church; but were kept incessantly at work, and few beyond the inhabitants of the ranch-a-rie, knew of their existence.

Some ten miles above them was a cord wood camp, run by two white men. They cut trees from the forest, floated them to a rude landing they had made, cross-cut them in four-foot lengths, split and piled them close to the water's edge, and here the steamboats put in for their supply of fuel, as they were all fitted to burn wood, it being before the discovery of the vast deposits of coal at Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island.

One of these men, the elder, had taken to himself a maid of the forest, without banns or license, named Kehala, whom he called Kitty, and for some years she had patiently borne his blows and vagaries of temper, had toiled to raise potatoes, catch and cure fish and keep together some kind of a home according to her lights, leaving him the greater part of his hard-earned money to spend in saloon and dance-house orgies when he went to town.

The second man was younger, of large stature and great strength. He had set his mind on a good-looking half-breed girl, and was doing his best to get her to come and live with him, as poor Kitty had done with his 'pard.'

But Juanita had come under the influence of the Roman Catholic Mission, which had been established among her people, and refused utterly to have anything to do with him, unless he put upon her finger a plain gold ring, "same as white woman," she said, and that with the blessing of her own Mission Priest.

This angered the insolent bully. On his return from one of these unsuccessful expeditions, he came across Nan

Lickmore, hunting her cows through the woods, and struck up an acquaintance with her.

He drove home the cattle and tried to make himself agreeable to her mother, but that thrifty personage could see in that transaction only the loss of Nan's services, and little profit in a son-in-law like Long Ned. She ordered him roughly off the premises, and threatened Nan with vengeance if she dared to meet him anywhere else.

This was unfortunate for the poor girl, because, if she had had a chance to see more of him, his utter wickedness, and his shameless disregard for all the decencies of life, even as she knew them, would most likely have disgusted her, for she would have seen him as he was, not as her inexperienced fancy pictured him.

Her whole being longed for love and sympathy. She was of a gentle, yielding disposition, as guileless as a fawn, and therefore an easy prey.

She frequently met Long Ned now, when she was hunting the cows, and he had several times proposed that she should come with him and look after his cabin, promising her plenty of new dresses, that she should go to town whenever she had a mind to, and anything else he thought likely to tempt a young girl.

One thing Tryphosa had done beside make the girls work. She had impressed upon them the necessity of rectitude with regard to themselves, and we have seen her pass through 'much tribulation,' but with her good name unsullied. This, she had taught her girls, and Nan had remained true to herself, and would only consent to go with Ned upon condition, that they went first to town, and got a 'passon' to marry them.

Town was a city of wonders to this shy girl of nature. She had only been there twice with her mother, and its

few wooden stores were like enchanted palaces to her: she had never thought so many fine clothes, and such imposing supplies of groceries, hardware, boots and shoes, crockery and so on, were to be found in the world.

The girl's clear skin, blue eyes and auburn hair, which hung fluffily about her face, received many an admiring glance on the second visit, and thrifty Tryphosa determined to "keep her away from that," for Nan was her best worker, Polly being as lazy as her father, who had now the real excuse of rheumatism, which he had contracted by lying down on the damp earth and going to sleep when sent after the cows, so as not to be on hand for any 'chores' before milking time.

Tryphosa would say to him, "Yous aint consumed wuth a cent, Luke Lickmore. Ef yu hed, I cud a gotten a better man, an' now yu hev ben an' got the rheumatis, an' I guess yer mean ter hang on, whether ur no."

The cabin had been enlarged by the addition of two shake rooms, one on either side; they had board floors now instead of earth, and an iron cook stove stood in the original cabin, which was parlor, dining-room, and kitchen. Here were brought a sickly calf, a neglected pigling, or an early brood of chickens, so the place had an odour all its own, but it was home, and Tryphosa was content, for had she not succeeded? What more does any one want?

Some klis-klis, or Indian mats, made from the dried tooley, a kind of rush, which grows in swampy places, were on the floor. These the squaws usually wove in squares of different sizes, the main portion being in the natural colour of dry straw, with bars and borders of brown strips of smooth cedar-bark.

The rough cedar table was covered with an oil cloth. There were two rocking chairs of wood, several smaller

chairs, shelves upon the walls, on which were arranged cups, plates, and dishes of earthenware, with which the battered tin had been replaced, curtains and flowers in the one window, and a cheerful fire, showing through the open front of the cook stove, which shed a general air of comfort over all.

Tryphosa's mornings were busy in making butter, dressing turkeys, chickens or ducks for the steamboat; her afternoons in sewing, patching and knitting, or by way of pleasure, she allowed herself time for sewing carpet rags and 'hooking' these laboriously into mats and rugs.

Long Ned had met Nan a few days before, and set a limit to his time of probation. Nan must leave her cabin home and go with him to the 'passon,' or he would take Juanita to the priest.

The day had arrived, but Nan was still undecided. One kind word from her mother would have been enough, but it had been drive, drive, drive, since daylight that morning, and the girl was weary and heartsick.

"Nan set that theer bread. Run, Nan, hookey's in them cabbages. Ef on'y yer pare'd stir his stumps and nail up that fence. Nan dig taters fer dinner. Nan start on thet theer wash. Wheer is thet good-fur-nothin' Polly?"

Never a word of approval, nay even a continued dissatisfaction with her efforts. Some flour was spilt as she kneaded the bread. She used too much soap and too little water for the wash. She had picked on the smallest 'taters' to dig, and so on, while Polly, after chopping some wood, had made excuse to go and hunt a stray pig or two, which she knew were in the barn, and was herself taking things easy on the sunny side of that structure.

Dinner over, and the precious cups, saucers, and plates of thick white ware washed and returned to their shelves,

Polly and her father had gone to cut wood at their leisure, and Nan had put together her best clothes, wondering to herself if she would go with Ned if he came for her, sometimes longing for him to come, then hoping he would stay away and take the half-breed girl.

Now it was "Nan! Nan! Them cows be waitin' in the barn. They'll jest be most eat up 'ith the meskeeters. What kin the gel be a doin'? Fixin' up some of her clos, I guess. She's dead stuck on thet theer Long Ned, but he's no good, no good."

Mrs. Lickmore got up from her carpet rags, and went to the girls' room. "Yes. I jest thought so. Fixin' up, aint yer goin' tu milk tудay? Yer father fetched them cows inter the barn half an hour or more sence, an' they'll be most tu wild ter milk, 'ith them theer skeeters an' flies."

"Mare," said the girl, as she turned her pretty, youthful face pleadingly to her mother, "Do you ever think anything of us gels 'ceptin' the work we kin git through?" Without heeding look or tone, with only the milkin' on her mind, the mother replied unfeelingly, "Yer kin bet I think er yer, when I've gotten shews an' clos, an' wittals to pay fer, an' taint much work as any on yer does to pay fer it. Ef yer hed'nt got me ter look arter things yer'd starve, thet yer would, an' I don't know es the world'ed be much the wuss off ef yer did."

These outbreaks were not at all unusual on the part of Tryphosa, but Nan's pretty blue eyes hardened as she took up an old jacket and put it on over the cheap, clean cotton dress she wore. Her auburn hair lay in curls on her forehead, hidden by an old hat of her father's.

"You be'nt goin' inter the barn wi' them best boots on, be yer? An' yer be comin' right back arter the milkin'?"

asked Tryphosa, suspiciously.

"Wheer else shud I be goin'?" asked the girl, tears of defiance now in her eyes.

"Oh, I dunno, yuse fixin' up so much, I 'lowed you might be goin' off tu suthin' or other wi' that feller they call Long Ned; an' ef yer du, don't yu be acomin' round heer no more, thet's all; for yu'll be no gel o' mine ef yer du, mind thet now. Jest let me ketch him anywheres round heer, thet's all. He's arter no good, an' I tell yer so."

She shook her fist in the girl's face, and went off satisfied that she had done her duty, and warned her daughter. At the same time, Nan knew that the die once cast, and her lot thrown in with Ned, that, as she expressed it, her mother would "have no more use for her." "I shant disgrace yer, Mare, niver you fear," called out the girl.

Then she hurriedly put out her best boots, hat and jacket through the one pane of glass, which served as a window in the girls' room, and passed out with a great show of dirty boots, and clatter of milk buckets. The mother, for all the hard experiences of her life, must have had a soft place left in her composition, for she sighed as she looked after her and repeated, "Niver disgrace me, I aint 'feared o' thet, but I be afeard yu'd git hard usage 'ith thet great hulks of a feller, thet's all my gel. All the same, ef yer go, yer stay."

But the girl passed on to her doom, all unconscious of this latent kindness, and fully convinced that her mother was as hard as she seemed.

"Oh, is thet yu, Ned?" and the start the girl gave was not feigned.

"Skeered to see me, be'nt yer? Didn't expect me, did yer?" Then catching the slim figure in his arms, he

kissed her repeatedly, a liberty, callous as he was, he had never dared to take before.

As she struggled unavailingly to free herself, he said, "Why don't yer yell, call the old woman. She'll soon turn me out."

"Why couldn't we be married right from hun, like other people," she found breath enough to say. "I don't like sneakin' off like this, and Pare away, tu."

"You won't niver want him, when yu've got me. Come on, I'll take yer fixin's."

"Polly," called Mrs. Lickmore, "what be talkin' 'bout in the barn? let Nan git thru 'ith her milkin'."

"Hear that?" he whispered. "The old woman'll come herself presently, an' then there'll be a rumpus."

Nan stood undecided. She half wished her mother would come. Ned saw this, he made a dash for the 'fixin's,' picked up the girl and deposited them and her in a row-boat, jumped in and began to pull up river, under cover of the overhanging bush.

Nan had been looking wistfully, but fearfully up the path, and did not at first notice this.

"What be goin' up fer?" she asked.

"To camp, where else?"

Nan stood up, and seizing the branch of a tree, stopped the boat.

"Well, what be doin' now?" he asked slyly.

"Goin' back. I aint goin' to no camp, 'cept I go to passon fust."

"Allright," he returned with assumed carelessness. "It's all the same to me." Then seeing Nan was not satisfied, he added, "I thought you might want ter fix up a bit, and the steamer stops at our place." This the steamboat did not do on her down trip, and that Nan knew very well.

He turned the boat, crossed the river which is very wide here, and rowed down to the point where a steamer was sure to stop, and Nan turned her attention to her own personal appearance, and dressed for her wedding, as she sat in the rickety old boat.

* * * * *

"Long time milkin'," grumbled Tryphosa, as she sat sewing on her carpet rags, in the shade of the cabin.

Another half hour passed. "She aint brought none in yit, wonder what she's at." Then seeing Polly, she called, "Go an' see ef Nan aint done milkin' yet, I dunno what's keepin' her so long."

"I aint a goin' to help her, I'm dead beat out," returned Polly, as she reluctantly went to the barn. But forgetting her assumed tiredness, when she reached the barn, and running back breathless, she panted, "Nan aint theer, an' no milkin' ben done."

Together they returned. There lay the old hat, they found the worn jacket by the river, with the marks of a man's footsteps, and a dent in the clay where a boat had pushed in. They raised their voices and called, "Nan! Nan!" till river and forest rang with the name. No answer. Nan was steaming away down river, her heart sinking, and wishing herself back among the mosquitoes, milking in the barn.

The passengers seemed to understand the situation. Women stood away from her, while men plied Ned with whiskey, and 'chaffed' him coarsely on his matrimonial venture.

"Ef on'y your Pare was to hum," said Tryphosa, turning to a broken reed for support, as for once in her life she felt powerless to act.

"Theer's no boat an' no horse anywheres round heer," returned Polly, "an' if theer was, they've got the steamer fer town more'n an hour ago. I seen her pass when I was at the p'int."

"Do you think they've gone to town?" questioned the mother fearfully.

"Niver yu feer, they're gone theer, sure enough. Our Nan aint the gel to go any wheer's else."

"Did yu's know es they was goin' then?"

"No, I didn't know, but I 'lowed es much from the things she said in her sleep. Suthin' 'bout nary a body carin' 'bout her heer, an' work, work the hull time. Then tellin' Ned to marry her frum hum like any one else."

"Thet he niver would," exclaimed Tryphosa with decision.

"No, I 'lowed not, an' thet's why they're gone off like this."

"Well, she stays off, an' ef yuse go anigh her, yu kin stay off tu, an' so kin Pare."

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CHAPTER III

NEARLY a year had passed and Nan had never left the lonely cord wood camp by the river, with the big mountain towering behind, and shutting off the afternoon sun early, from the soppy low-lying land, between it and the river.

The high water of the spring freshet had carried off her chicken house, and she had not been able to replace it, and Ned would not trouble; that was her business.

"Why don't yer fix up a gardin, an' hev some taters an' truck growin', like Juanity, an' some o' them other wimmen. All yer du fum mornin' till night, is ayther to set an' cry, or else spile good flour makin' bad bread. It's a nice thing fer a man tu keep a wife an' hev ter cook his own grub an' hearn tu. Here! Fetch in some water an' wood, yer ———. Ef I'd on'y hed sense enough tu marry Juanity, 'stead a lettin' thet loafen half-breed get her, I'd a ben alright. I hed to go to passon wi' yu, an' thet's all she wanted. Ef I hedn't a bin fule enough to du thet, yu could a gone home ef they'd a tuk yer, or any wheers else, an' good riddance tu bad rubbage." She took up a kettle and dragged herself to the river to fill it, thinking sadly, "ef he on'y hed a took Juanity, ef he on'y hed," but she dared not answer him, for it was plain he had gotten liquor off the passing boat, and was just far enough gone to be brutal. As she set the kettle on the rickety old stove, she looked up at him, trembling, for fear of a kick or a blow, for poor young thing she was drawing nigh to motherhood, and longed for some woman's

presence, especially her mother. Taking her courage in both hands, she asked, "Don't yer think, Ned, Mare'd come, ef yer went an' told her what was the matter, I du feel powerful bad."

"Yer Mare," he shouted with an oath. "She aint goin' ter set fut in this shebang. I've hed enough o' one o' the fambly, I don't want no more on 'em. Ef any o' them crowd come a'round, I'll chuck 'em in the river, an' thet'll be one better'n the old woman, orderin' me off'n the place like a dawg."

Nan began to cry.

"Yes cry. It's all yu iver du or iver hev done, sense yer come heer. I haint no patience wi' it all."

He gave her a push as he spoke, which sent her full length on the floor, over a broken chair. He was astonished at the effect of his blow, for it must be remembered that he was very strong, and Nan very weak.

She screamed in mortal agony, for there, lying where the blow of her husband had sent her, a babe arrived in this world of calamity.

"What kin I du. Tell me what to du. I didn't mean to hurt ye like thet."

"Fetch Kitty," she said faintly.

Glad to have something to do, he ran down to his partner's shack. Kitty was sitting in a canoe, away out in the river, patiently fishing. Even after she heard him and comprehended that she was wanted, it took some time for her to paddle in.

She returned with him. Nan was lying, very faint and weak, where she had been left.

Kitty lifted her upon the bunk, gave her some tea sweetened with coarse sugar, and made her as comfortable as she could.

Nan drank the tea eagerly, and presently feeling somewhat revived, asked, "Kitty, wheer's the baby?"

"Mamalushe (dead)," said Kitty, laconically.

"Let me see it."

The girl mother stroked it tenderly, kissed the lips, through which the breath of this life had never passed, and said, "He can't hurt you, my poor little feller," apparently relieved to think it was beyond his power.

Kitty went out and buried it.

After lying quiet for awhile, Nan asked again, "Shall I die, Kitty?"

"Halo!" (no).

"Oh, how I wish I would," she sighed wearily. "I be'nt twenty yit by two year, what shall I du? Life is orful long. Mare was hard on me, or I'd a niver took up wi' Ned. Polly allest made me du my work an' hearn, but Pare was good to me, when the others didn't know it." Kitty nodded comprehendingly, she understood very well what was said, but like most of her people, would never speak English if she could help it.

Nan seldom waited for her to answer, but rambled on, as she had gotten into the way of doing, from being whole days and weeks alone, with only Kitty to come, in her bare feet, silently up the muddy path from the river, often bringing Nan a basket of berries, a string of fish, or a loaf of her own bread. Sometimes Kitty's bread was very good, just as it happened; at others, the yeast had gone bad, and Kitty had taken the chance of making good bread with bad yeast. The art of making yeast with potatoes and hops, being a process which needed careful calculation. She usually made biscuits with baking powder, thus saving herself trouble, and being less likely to raise the ire of her lordly white man.

Kitty would sit silently around on her heels for hours at a time, and Nan was very glad to have her.

Occasionally she had a fit of industry on, and would make a batch of bread, clean up the shack, wash some clothes, and do other things around. She even suggested to Nan that she would help her to dig up a patch of ground to plant potatoes in; but poor Nan seemed to have no energy for anything. Hope was dead within, and her young life a burden too heavy to be borne.

This was all very well till Ned came home one day, the worse for drink, and found his partner, who had come to look for Kitty, there. A fight ensued, and Ned threw both Kitty and her man out of the shanty, and gave Nan a good beating for having them there.

"Nice kind o' company yu keep," he sneered, "don't yer?" "I aint got no other," she replied, with her ragged apron to her eyes. "What decent white woman'd come wheer sech as yu be?"

"Look out," he growled, and raised his hand to strike her again. For once, Nan did not flinch, and like the coward that he was, the blow was stayed.

"I aint fit fer decent folk to come anigh. Look at me! An' niver another rag to my back, 'ceptin' what I'm got on."

"Well, heer's some money," and he threw down ungraciously a ten dollar bill, "Go an' git yerself suthin."

Ned earned plenty of money with his cordwood. The steamboats were regular customers and good pay. He spent it freely enough in town, on the same unworthy objects as his partner did, but he seemed to think that if he kept the shack supplied with tea, sugar and flour, his duty as provider ended there. If Nan wanted anything more, she could "raise chicken and garden truck," and supply herself.

Nan dragged on a miserable existence for a few months longer, then another little soul threatened to find its way into misery.

She could bear her isolated existence no longer, and without saying anything to Ned, she thought she would go and see if her mother would not be friends with her, and come and help her out, or perhaps let Polly come.

She pulled herself to the landing, from which she had eloped only two years before with Ned.

Any one who had seen her then, would not have recognised her now. She had sent Kitty to buy her some boots and a piece of woollen goods, with which she had made herself a dress. She wore the same hat and jacket in which she had left.

Having moored the boat, and stepped heavily out, she made her way to the old cabin home.

It was a palace to the place she had left it for. She went in and sat wearily down on the home-made settee. A brood of chickens occupied the floor, a weak pigling grunted comfortably from his straw in an Indian basket near the brightly burning stove, and she thought to herself, how much better cared for they were than she was.

The general air of comfort went to the poor exile's heart.

"Lord Nan! is thet you, I'lowed it were yer ghost come back," exclaimed Polly as she entered.

"I wish it was my ghost," said Nan sorrowfully, as she gazed upon the plump, strong girl before her.

"It's good fer yu, as Mare and Pare be gone to town. She's gone tu get suthin' fer his rheumatis, he kearnt du nothin' now.

"But I wanted ter see 'em so powerful bad. Kearnt yo say a good word fer me Polly! Yu kin see fer yerself, I'm most dead wi' hard treatment."

"I dunno. I hearn her say to Pare, when he wanted to go an' fetch yer hum, ef yu put fut inside heer she'd chuck yer in the river, an' be done of yer."

Nan began to cry, partly because her father had pleaded for her, and partly because of the hopelessness of it all.

Polly continued. "Don't yer know es folks heer been talkin' 'bout yer an' Kitty's man?"

Nan started up to speak, but Polly would have her say.

"They du be sayin' es how Ned ketched him to your place, an' most killed yer both. That was when Pare wanted ter get yer fetched away."

"Oh, Pare is good to me, he allest was. But thet's nothin fer Ned tu du. Kitty's man on'y come theer fer her; theer wasn't no harm in thet."

"Well, folks say es theer was, an' thet gels es is in sech a hurry to git married, an'll run off wi' one feller, aint perticeller 'bout another. Pare, he stuck up fer yer, but Mare said es she'd done wi' yer fer good an' all, an' yu oughter know Pare kearnt say much when Mare sets on, special now he kearnt du nothin' ef he would."

Nan got up without a word, and went back to her boat, her husband's camp and her old life. Only now the hope that her people might some day make up with her, was gone, and she had hoped, even more than she knew of, for a reconciliation.

If her mother had only seen her, she must have had some pity, for we know that there was more kindness in her composition than she owned up to; but everything had gone wrong with poor Nan, since her one misguided step, and she had neither the courage nor the strength to right herself; she could only suffer dumbly, and await she knew not what.

Polly, from purely selfish motives, never said that she (Nan) had been home, for she thought if Nan was allowed to come home again, there would naturally be less for her, and she had been out more, had more dress and less work since Nan went. Tryphosa had had to pay the Indians or half-breeds to dig plant and sow since her husband had become helpless, and a half-breed boy, whom she had adopted, paid dearly for his keep.

But Polly had still another motive. She had now a beau of her own, who was allowed to visit at the cabin. This young man brought very ill news of Ned, and spoke slightly of Nan, for he had an eye to the future, and thought that a whole farm with Tryphosa's improvements, would be better than half.

"Wheer hev yu bin?" asked Ned angrily, as Nan came up from the boat.

"Down to hum."

"An' they turned yer out," he sneered.

"No they didn't. On'y Polly was theer, an' I come out myself."

"What fer?"

"Polly said I was no good; an' yer know, Ned, whatever mistake I made goin' off wi' yu, I niver did no wrong." "I dunno anything 'bout it. Folks'll talk any way, 'specially when a gel is in sech a hurry to git married es tu run away wi' a feller."

"But it was yu over-persuaded me," she pleaded piteously, quite astonished that he should take the same stand as Polly had done.

"Yu didn't tek much persuadin'. Oh, yes, cry; I hate the sight o' yu, an' yer everlastin' cryin'." Nan turned and walked deliberately down to the water, intending to jump into the river, but Kitty met her there and told her

that her man had gone to town, and she was coming to stay with her if Ned was not there.

"Never mind him, Kitty, I want yu, I'm sick. Come an' help me. You're the only one hes bin good to me"; and to Kitty's astonishment, the girl kissed her.

Ned remembered the last time, and without a word, went off and left the two women in possession.

Kitty brought in wood and water, made hot tea, and sat silently round for hours. Before morning a puny mite of a girl was born, and Nan hugged it to her with all her little strength, she was so heart-hungry for love.

"Oh, ef yu on'y grow up, I'll be so good tu yer, so good."

The squaw, squatting on her heels by the stove, shook her head as she heard these words, for she knew it would never grow up. Kitty stayed with Nan till her man came and fetched her away. Three whole days, the happiest in Nan's married life.

She lay in weakness, cuddling the almost inanimate babe to her breast, and drank deep draughts of that mother-love, which is the deepest and holiest of mortal passions opening up a world of possibilities to the woman who is content to rule only through her husband and children.

Women's rights outside that are only a need created by fallen manhood, which is apt to run to sensuality, and so to abuse the 'weaker vessel.' When manhood has learned self-control, there will be no necessity for any 'protection' for women; but, when that time arrives, the millenium will be at our door.

Kitty, the savage, left everything as handy for Nan as she could, although she puzzled herself greatly over the weakness of her white sister.

Had it been herself, she would have gone as she had

done, into forest when her time came, prepared with a sufficiency of bandages, for the new arrival, and a papoose basket. Could we have followed her, we would have seen her rest by a flowing brook or stream; then after she had washed the papoose in the ice cold water, bandaged it to the resemblance of a mummy, with nothing movable, but its large fawn-like eyes, she would strap the stiff little figure in its papoose basket, prop it up by some tree, and throw over it the woollen shawl, which all squaws wear over their heads and shoulders at any season of the year. Her only other garment would likely be a short skirt. Out of this she would step, take a bath herself, resume the skirt, (and perhaps a kind of loose jacket besides), sling the papoose basket over her shoulders, keeping it in place by the prettily woven band of coloured grasses placed across her forehead, throw the shawl over her own head, thus enveloping the papoose, and swing back at a jog trot to her man's shack, in time to prepare his supper.

The only refreshment she would need, might be a hearty draught of the cold mountain water, and if she could get it, a pipe of tobacco between her teeth.

But why this tenas tecoup kloodchman, (little white young woman), was as helpless as her babe Kitty could not understand.

Now began Nan's troubles. For two days no one came near her, and she had to get up and help herself. A fire was out of the question, she drank a little water, and ate a small piece of bread, which had been left, but she grew too weak to rise even for that.

When Ned came home on the third day, she was lying across the bed, where she had fallen after the last attempt.

"Well, you're a lazy varmint, sure!" was his greeting, "'stead o' gittin' up an' makin' suthin' tu eat an' drink.

I'm a mind tu jest leave yer theer, till yer du git up."

His words fell upon unhearing ears. Before going away again, he went over to look at her, there was something in the silence, which struck even his dull sense.

"Looks mighty bad," he said to himself, and taking a flask from his pocket, he mixed some of its contents in a cup, and poured it down her throat.

Next day Kitty came, and stayed this time for a week. Poor Nan brightened up, and could get around with her weakly little baby by that time.

She was so cross and puling, Ned said he couldn't stay where it was. One night he came home in his usual condition, and as it cried and cried, every time Nan laid it down, to try and get him some supper, Ned gave it a smart slap, which almost sent it into convulsions. Nan caught up the sobbing babe, and running out into the bush, hid till morning.

Ned thought she had gone down to Kitty's, and went after her, intending to show his authority; but, when Nan walked in next morning, saturated by the heavy dew, he could see she had been in the forest all night.

That day the baby died. Nan always thought it was from the effects of the blow, but Ned accused her of killing it, by taking it out into the bush.

Which ever way it was, Nan developed a terrible cough, and wasted almost to a skeleton.

Ned said, "Ef she wasn't coughin', she was cryin'; an' ef she wasn't cryin' she was coughin'. So he stayed home less than ever, and, but for Kitty, Nan would have starved.

"Git up an' git the breakfus yerself this mornin', Nan," he said roughly. "I'm done it offen enough."

"Theer's no wood an' no water," she said, between coughs, "an' it du rain powerful hard."

"Let her rain. You git up. I kearnt git no rest wi' thet infernal cough o' yourn, an' I aint goin' ter git up."

Nan went to the river for water, and was wet through when she returned. Trying to bring in wood she fell almost fainting.

She dragged herself back again, and laid down on the bed. "I kearnt do it, Ned," she said piteously, "Ef yer kill me, I kearnt."

With an oath, he sprang out of bed, saying, "You'll git yer own, you bet, or else, stay athout."

As he was going out of the door, Nan said feebly, "Send Kitty to me," but whether he heard or not, he took no notice, and no Kitty came.

There, alone, in weakness and misery, she lay all day, unable to help herself.

Towards evening her head began to wander, and when Kitty came in, she thought it was her father.

The squaw lighted a fire, gave her some tea, made her as comfortable as circumstances would permit, and then paddled off at her utmost speed to Nan's old home.

They were sitting down to supper as Kitty noiselessly opened and closed the door, only making her presence known by the gust of wind and rain which entered with her.

Luke looking up saw her first. "Nan!" he exclaimed, rising as quickly as his rheumatism would permit.

Kitty nodded.

"Papoose?" asked Tryphosa coolly.

Kitty nodded again, and said with a long, sadly drawn accent on the word, "Mam-a-lushe" (dead).

"Nan mam-a-lushe?" they all asked with a start.

"By and bye," returned Kitty. "Papoose mam-a-lushe."

"Is Nan dyin'?" gasped Luke.

Kitty nodded again.

He got his hat and an old military overcoat, and said decisively, "Come on, Mare."

"You kin go back 'ith Kitty. I'll git some things together. I dessay she'll git on alright 'ith Kitty. Polly an' me'll come arter. Them young pigs hes got ter come in to-night, or mebbe the sow'll eat 'em," and she proceeded leisurely with her supper.

Luke hobbled out into the pouring rain, followed by Kitty; and in her canoe, they quickly made their way back.

Nan knew him as he entered, and brightened right up.

"Yu'll git better my little gel," he said reassured. But she shook her head.

"What does the doctor say, my lad," he enquired, turning to Ned, who had come during Kitty's absence.

"Aint had no doctor, Boss," he returned sullenly.

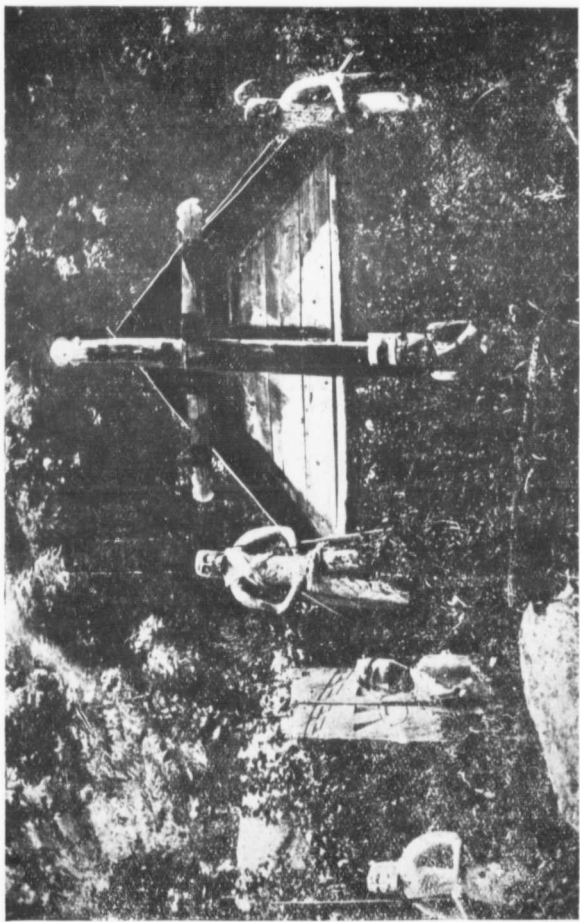
"Best fetch en quick then, lad."

Ned slunk out, wishing he had stayed away; for this wife of his would 'stick' him for another forty or fifty dollars.

He paddled down with the swift current to town, went to a doctor, who was moving into the upper country by the morning's steamboat, and told something of Nan's case. The doctor promised to go ashore at the cordwood camp, if the boat would wait for him, and see what was the matter with Nan.

Luke made as if he would get up when the doctor arrived, some half-hour before the end, but she clung to his twisted fingers, with her poor emaciated hands, and he sat down again.

The doctor looked her over, and made short work of his diagnosis.



NAN'S GRAVE

[facing page 45]

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"Galloping consumption. Nothing can be done. Fifty dollars." And he was gone to catch his steamer.

Nan beckoned Kitty to kiss her; clung to her father for a moment, and became unconscious.

Her mother and Polly came in time to lay her out.

Looking scornfully at Ned, Tryphosa remarked, "I niver thought a gel o' mine'd live and die in a hole like this. Well I warned her. I warned her afore it was tu late."

They carried Nan's light form out and laid it in the general burying ground of the few white people and many Indians across the river, with its broken down fence, where the pigs from a neighbouring ranch disported themselves, and rooted to their heart's content, giving special attention to any newly-made grave.

But Nan was resting in peace with her children, who had gone before, with nothing to come between her and her mother-love.

Her time of trial had been short and sharp, but she had lived even beyond her lights. Her probation was over.

Happy Nan.

THE CONVENT GIRLS

CHAPTER I

ELLEN JANE

QUICK COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE IN THE MINING DAYS
OF CARIBOO

"OH ELLEN JANE, think what a serious thing getting married is, and you only sixteen."

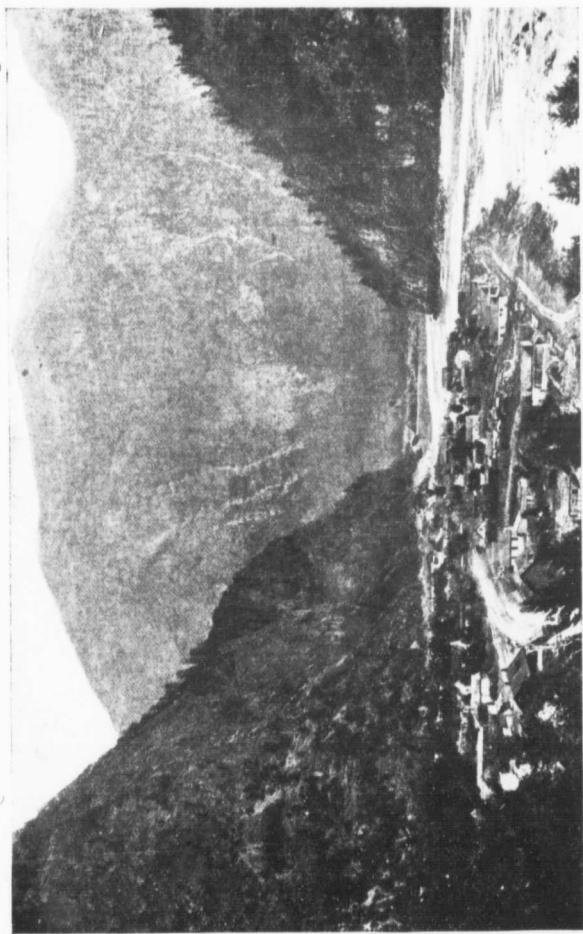
"Not half so serious as taking the veil, mind you that. I know who'll put a stop to that kind of thing. Take the veil, indeed! and you such a terrible age, too, just eighteen." She tossed her pretty head, looking up and down the single street of the mining town, to satisfy herself that she was being duly observed and admired.

Ischbel blushed and turned away, for already her father had spoken to her of the doctor.

The girl's mother being an invalid, and a devout Roman Catholic, quite agreed with her daughter's desire to become a nun; not so her father, who had set a time, saying, "If you are unmarried at twenty-one, I will consent, not otherwise. *When you are eighteen you must leave the Convent, come home, and look after your sick mother."

Two men stood talking at a respectful distance. One was a miner who had just 'come in with his pile.' He was somewhat stooped in figure, but with the hue of health on his bronzed cheek, and in the sparkle of his bright blue eyes. His hair was bleached to a tawny yellow with the action of the sun and weather, and his years might have reached thirty-five.





SHE WAS WALKING TOWARDS A CANON

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The other was a man somewhat carelessly dressed, but still with professional air, and few women would pass him without taking a second look at his grand physique.

The face was that of a man who had 'lived,' and there were the beginnings of 'crows-feet' about the corner of his eyes, which were darkly gray, black, when anything roused him either to anger or passion. The dark brown hair showed a sprinkling of grey.

They watched the girls and talked disjointedly of anything, just for an excuse to stand there.

The girls parted, and Ellen Jane came towards the men. Throwing a saucy glance at the Doctor, she smiled at his companion, who stopped in the middle of a word, and stood gazing after her with open mouth.

She cast a glance over her shoulder as she went, which completed his subjugation, and without more ado, he left the Doctor, and sauntered after her.

"All men are fools, and I'm the biggest one of the lot. A man who has seen what I have, pshaw;—and yet I'd give my head for that sweet little snowflake of a nun; and I don't think she'd know me again if she saw me. She took so little notice of me the evening I spent there. Ah, well, I suppose I shall go again, and get my wings clipped for a change."

So thought the Doctor as he stood alone upon the sunny wooden sidewalk.

Cariboo Jim followed Ellen Jane at a distance. She was walking towards a canon through which the waters of the mighty Fraser were tumbling, roaring and rushing, making the rocky chasm moist with spray, and polished smooth as marble.

Some giant rocks reared their heads in the midst of the waters as they broke and lashed themselves to fury at the

obstruction, covering them with glistening foam, thrown high in silver torrents, breaking white against the blackness of the sunless canon. Here no word could be heard, and no living creature appeared, except some Indians who stood out over the foaming torrent on slender boards of split cedar, holding out their dip-nets, and waiting for the salmon which the waters hurled back as the fish struggled upward. They made their way slowly, cautiously against the current, hugging the huge boulders, sometimes passing them, more often hurled against their relentless sides, and sent pell-mell down again. There they would swim and gather strength again and again until the rapids were successfully passed. But most of these fish were ragged looking specimens by the time they had reached the spawning grounds in the higher stretches of the Fraser.

Here Ellen Jane stood looking down upon the scene so familiar to her, then turning suddenly, she gave a little scream as she found herself face to face with Cariboo Jim. He took off his hat, apologised profusely, protesting by all the powers, if any one else had 'scart' her like that, he would hurl them into the seething waters below, and if she said so, he would jump in himself, making a movement as if he intended to do it.

Ellen Jane caught him instinctively by the sleeve, and they were friends at once. But mindful of her Convent tuition, she drew back and introduced herself, "I am Miss Ellen Jane Trundle," and as he hesitated, she added, "Who are you?"

"Blamed if I know, they've called me Cariboo Jim so long, I most forget my own name."

So this was Cariboo Jim. She had thought as much, and cast a sidelong glance at him to see if he was too old or too ugly, remembering the remark which had called

forth Ischbel's warning upon the sanctity of marriage.

She settled in her own mind that he was alright. She asked a few commonplace questions about Cariboo and so on, and they turned and walked back together.

He dragged along more slowly as they neared the family shack, and finally blurted out, "Can't I come in by and bye and see you? In the evenin', I mean."

"I guess you can." Adding demurely, "Pa'll be glad to see you."

Happy as a sand boy, he sauntered back among his companions.

Cariboo Jim appeared in the evening with the most expensive gold watch and chain he could get, and other jewelry for which he had bartered his good gold nuggets. He told them of how discouraged he and his 'pard' had become. How the timbers had washed out on them, and all their labor seemed lost.

It was a 'toss-up' as to whether they should resume work on their own claim, or go to work for some one else.

They decided to sleep over the proposition, and then resolved to wash all the dirt from the dump box, and wait for the freshet to subside.

This panned out better than they had expected, and they risked going into the wrecked tunnel.

They carried their candles, one took a spade, and one a mattock, in the forlorn hope of digging themselves out should a cave-in occur behind them.

Thus they started to explore what they then looked upon as a forlorn hope. They worked gingerly along, afraid even to stumble, lest tons of earth should entomb them.

Stepping over some of the fallen timbers, Cariboo Jim touched his pick on something shining in the jagged wall.

The perspiration stood on both their weather-beaten brows, for it was a nugget as big as a hen's egg, with more back of it. In fact a "Pocket."

They waited only long enough to get their breath, for in the moment of discovery, a sound came from behind them of falling earth, that fairly made their blood curdle.

Instinctively Cariboo Jim blew out his candle, as they turned to ascertain the extent of their disaster.

They had very little distance to go before they met the wall of dirt, and wasting not even a word, they stuck a candle in the debris, and set to work with pick and shovel.

It seemed hours and hours to them that they were at work, and the air was getting foul before they heard other picks at work, and knew their comrades had missed them, and were now on their trail.

Gradually their own hands relaxed as the air grew thicker, and their last conscious act was to light the longer of the two candles, and stick it in into the earth, that their rescuers might see its gleam.

Shortly afterwards a rush of fresh air blew in on them, and when a hole big enough had been made to drag them out, they were soon brought round, and afterwards put in a merry night with their rescuers.

It appeared they had tunnelled just outside the pay streak, and walled out the gold with their 'laggin.'

Cariboo Jim passed over a handful of nuggets for Ellen Jane to look at, and when she would have given them back, told her to put them in her pocket 'to buy candy with.' This she did, and the old folks smiled with pleasure.

Now was his time to make the other offerings; and these having not only been accepted, but put on by the dainty little charmer, Cariboo Jim ventured to press his

suit, and came away not only an engaged man, but the wedding day was set for that day week.

Ischbel was bridesmaid, and the Doctor best man, by Ellen Jane's request.

How happily the two went off on the six-horse mail stage several weeks later to spend some time in Victoria.

They then took passage on the 'Pacific' for San Francisco to have more fun, before returning to settle down on a cattle range, which Cariboo Jim had secured.

Every one knows what became of that ill-fated boat.

The weather was fine, the night calm, and the music of a gay dance floated over the sparkling waters, when without sign or warning of any kind, the bottom of the rotten old hulk dropped out, the machinery and boilers tore their way into the ocean, exploding as they struck the cold water, and all that freight of poor humanity, sunk to a quick and watery grave.

CHAPTER II

ISCHBEL

A WIFE, FAITHFUL AND TRUE

Such a calamity as the loss of the Pacific brought sorrow to almost every household in British Columbia. Those who had no relatives aboard, had friends and acquaintances on the ill-fated vessel. People who live in the crowded centres, where alas, such disasters are only too frequent, can scarcely imagine the effect the loss of this one ship had upon a white community, isolated as it then was, with San Francisco nearly a thousand miles to the south, and the then almost unknown and illimitable spaces of country stretching north.

Large rewards of money were offered to the coast Indians for any bodies they might bring in, and they searched the shores of the north Pacific for the remains of the victims.

Of those brought in very few were recognisable. One beautiful young girl, who was going down to be married, and make her home in the Sunny South, was identified by her lovely, long, fair hair, and the curious engagement ring she wore.

Naturally Dr. McEarchan went to the home of Ischbel to discuss the sad news of her school friend's untimely death, and an acquaintance began, Ischbel treating him with the same distant courtesy she accorded the other visitors, who came with designs matrimonial.

If she sang or played for a church entertainment the hall would be crowded. If she worked a piece of needle-

work, no matter how useless to them, some one of her admirers would buy it at any price, for there was plenty of money then, and but few pretty girls to spend it upon.

The distant courtesy accorded other men was not sufficient to satisfy the Doctor, who, as we have said, was a very king among men; he resolved to conquer this 'sweet little nun,' as in his own heart he called her, and was himself subjugated in the effort.

Ischbel still held him at a distance, and it was only when her father pleaded the Doctor's cause, that she consented to listen to him if he made the same request, some six or eight months from then.

In the meantime 'construction gangs' had followed the quiet course of the Surveyors, and the road bed of the mighty Canadian Pacific Railway passed through the sleepy little mountain-locked town; when—what a transformation!

Rents went up, and land which had been used to graze a cow or two on, could not be bought for love or money on the erstwhile principal street.

Hotels, stores, saloons and places of amusement sprung up like a mushroom growth. When it had been C.P.R. pay day, one had to step over and among men lying like dogs on the side-walks. They had been in a hurry to spend all their hard-earned wages, before their minds could be sufficiently at ease to allow of them returning to their work. The bar tenders just loaded them on to wheelbarrows, and trundled them out, dumping them on the side-walks like so much refuse as soon as their money was gone.

Ischbel's father, among the wiser ones, had sold his land and made quite a comfortable fortune.

At the end of the six months came the Doctor for his answer, and Ischbel seemed nothing loath to give it. They

were married in their own Church, and everything seemed bright for their future.

Of course there were serious accidents and much sickness of all kinds, and many doctors followed up the iron trail of the railroad.

Dr. McEarchan had served in the ambulance corps of the United States Army and was of necessity a man of great surgical experience.

Wealth rolled in to him. Ten dollars a consultation, and fabulous prices for operations; and, as money came easily, it was freely spent. In fact he knew little of its value, and in the Doctor's eyes, nothing was too good for his wife.

One little daughter appeared, and to her father's delight, she was the image of her mother; a son with the sturdy frame of his father, and still another.

But evil days were now in store for them. The Doctor, in going to visit a patient in the mountains, was thrown from his horse. No bones were broken, but he laid where he had been thrown for a day and night before anyone passed that way; and when after some delay a stage was secured, and he was taken home, it was found he had sustained some spinal injury, from which he could never recover, and which confined him to the house. He, however, continued to prescribe and so on; but the rustle and bustle of railway construction had passed on, and he could not go with it.

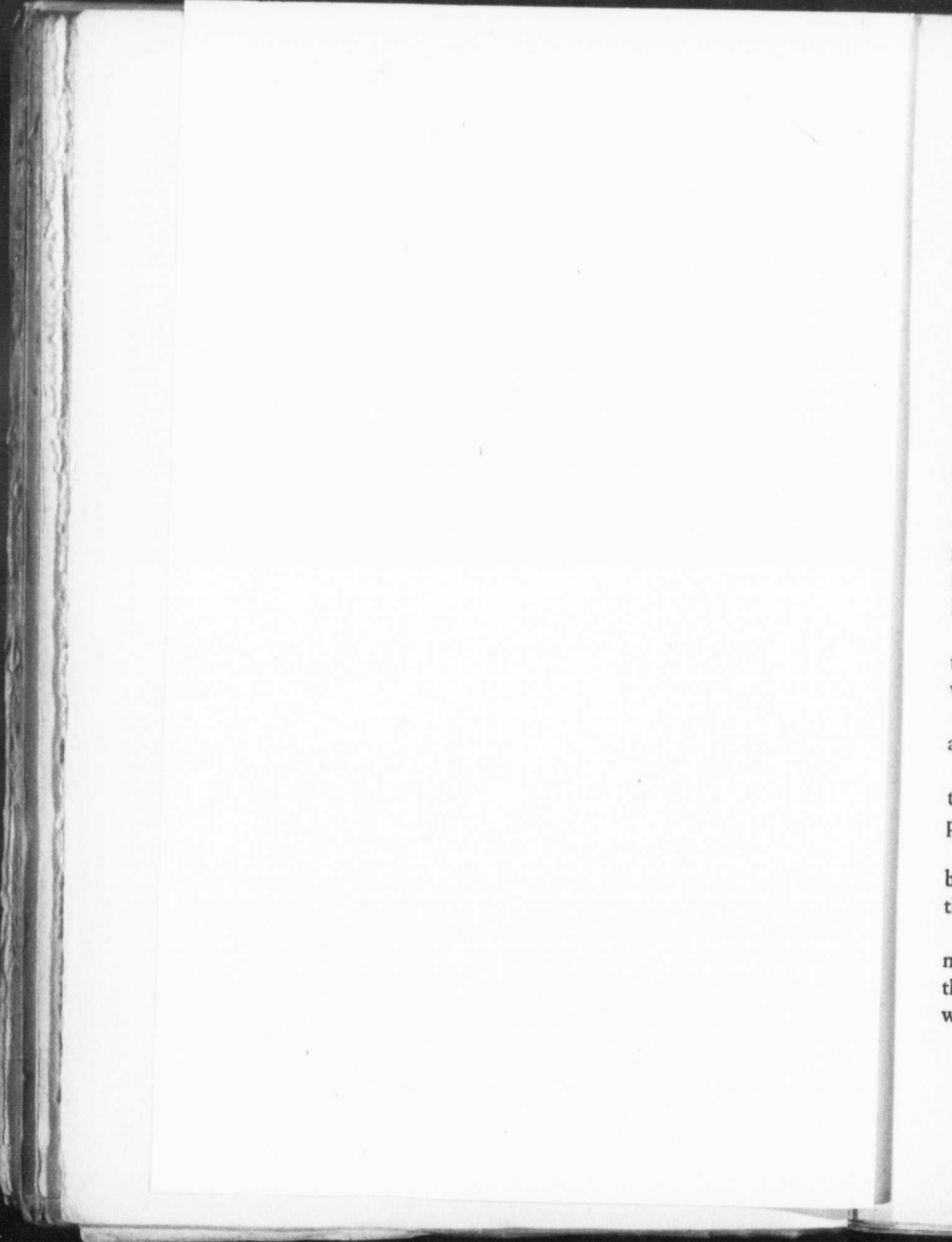
The mushroom town died down to a little wayside station, with deserted stores and buildings whose delapidation only increased with time.

Finally, the Doctor removed to a coast town, but partial paralysis set in, and it was pitiful to see the wreck of his manly form, and the drawn features of his once handsome face. The deep grey eyes looked out wistfully from their



THE DESERTED STREET

facing page 54



pallid depths, and sometimes he was irritable even with Ischbel. Here her true womanliness showed itself, and her steadfast heart never failed.

Their money was all gone; her father was married again to an extravagant woman, who thought only of getting all she could for her own pleasure; but poor Ischbel worked for her little family, sewed and embroidered for other people. Those who had frowned upon her in prosperity, had no helping hand for her now, and sometimes she went hungry, and the little ones were but scantily fed.

In turning out some old papers Ischbel came across the deed of a farm which had been given the Doctor some time in payment of an account. He remembered about it when he saw the deed, and they resolved to move out to it. That would at least save house rent and fuel. They hired a wagon and had themselves and their few household effects taken out to this place.

The Doctor had never seen it. A small house was said to be upon it, and he took it for granted that this place would still be in existence, if not in repair.

After hours of jolting in a springless wagon, they arrived at nearly dark, upon the cheerless domain.

Giant stumps and great blackened tree trunks, bearing the impress of one of our terrible forest fires, stood out like phantoms in the twilight.

The driver, sorry for his charges, tried to find their house, but the walls of a shed, some twelve feet square, was all that rewarded his search.

They covered this place with a carpet and some sheets, moved in the beds and bedding, and soon the sick man and the children were made comfortable for the night, and were all sleeping in blissful unconsciousness.

Not so Ischbel, she sat long by the camp fire, and

pondered over what she could do. It was summer time and the weather seemed to promise fair, but how long could they exist like this. Finally, she said her prayers, commending her loved ones to the Father of All; feeling assured that He who fed the sparrows, would not leave them without shelter and sustenance. Then she laid down as she was beside the children, and slept the sleep of those whose "conscience accuseth them not."

At daylight she heard the driver moving, and went out to pay and thank him for his kindness; but she found him busy, axe in hand, splitting a cedar tree. Soon he was joined by other settlers around, and when the poor Doctor opened his eyes, it was upon quite a busy scene.

These handymen of the forest soon had enough cedar split to build an addition to the shack already there, and in a couple of days all was ready for occupation.

Ischbel timidly approached the driver, telling him how little money she had, and begging him not to loose any more time over her and her family.

She offered him the price agreed upon. He looked at the money and then at the tearful quivering face, saying abruptly, "Is that all you've got ma'am?"

"Yes," was the reluctant answer.

He turned on his heel and left her without a word. Ischbel felt this keenly, for without his aid, they would have been practically homeless. But he was gone before she could recover herself. She went to a distance, on pretence of collecting and picking up wood, so as to get a quiet cry to herself.

In about two hours the driver returned, and, taking from his wagon, flour, bacon, tea and sugar, with a sack of potatoes, and a mat of rice, he deposited them inside the shack, and was just sneaking off as if he was ashamed of

himself, when Ischbel came in with her arms full of wood.

"What are you doing?" she gasped, catching him by the hand.

"I aint a good man, Ma'am, by no means, and I aint fit for sich as you to touch," and he withdrew his hand; "but I've only got my hosses an' meself ter look arter; and when I leave them things fer you an' the kids, I aint robbin' nobody." He scrambled into his wagon and was gone without another word, and Ischbel prayed every night that the soul of 'our good driver' might rest in peace. She didn't even know his name.

They lived for more than a year in the cedar shack, when the Doctor received some money from an unexpected quarter, and insisted upon building a more comfortable dwelling on the land. Ischbel knew it was not wise, as they were far from schools for the children, but she gave in, and shortly after her husband died, leaving her with a baby only a month old.

Ischbel did a little dressmaking for the few settlers, for which they paid in potatoes, or butter, several chickens, and so on; but try as she would the stony soil on her holding would grow nothing.

One day things were becoming desperate, and Ischbel felt she must work or go mad. She collected the scant family clothing, placed a wash tub between two chairs and started to wash as if life depended on her energy and speed.

"Here's the place," said a gruff voice, and a buggy stopped by the stony roadside, and an elderly gentleman got out. He thoug't he had spied some children sitting on a log looking curiously at him, and although his sight was growing dim, it seemed his own little Ischbel's earnest, deep set eyes, were watching him. One by one they dropped out of sight, and the old gentleman turned a

puzzled gaze upon our old friend 'the driver.'

"Look under the log, I guess you'll find 'em there."

Sure enough there they were, but all took flight to the house and burst in upon Ischbel and her washing. She was startled by the shadow in the door way, and looking up met the eyes of her father, bent kindly upon her.

Engrossed in his own domestic trials, he lost sight of his daughter, and had only now traced her up.

As he had managed to save something out of the general wreck of his property, they moved into civilization, where the children would receive the education they needed, and the now thrifty Ischbel could help herself and her father.

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CHAPTER III

MARTHE ANN

THE PET OF THE CONVENT

"YES, Lena, I will go out with you to spend Easter. I don't care what Mumma says. Dad'll be away on the boat, and I'm just goin' to keep on talkin' and talkin' till she says I can go."

"'Talkin', Lucy Jane," corrected a softly stepping Sister, who had entered the Convent schoolroom unobserved by the girls, who were discussing this Easter visit for about the fortieth time.

Lucy's mother was a widow with a large family, living on a ranch some twelve miles from the city where this convent school was situated in which Lena was studying everything that came her way with all her might, including painting, music, and fancy needlework, in the latter of which the Sisters greatly excelled.

She knew her time at school must be short, for though the farm produce brought in a fairly good living, there were younger sisters to have their turn, and brothers to be assisted in taking up their 'claims,' besides the wages of her mother's hired man.

Lena, with her great black nervous eyes, and her coal black hair, was a great contrast to her friend Marthe Ann, whose eyes were grey blue, her hair a tawny red, and her fair complexion plentifully sprinkled with freckles.

Marthe Ann never troubled to work hard, but got all the fun she could out of life as she went along, with no care for the future.

Her father was Captain and part owner of one of the river boats, which brought their owners good returns, and

Marthe Ann being the only child nothing was considered too good for her, and her father was never happy if she was long out of his sight during his short visits home.

This latter propensity of his brought him into collision with the good sisters at one time, and afforded Marthe Ann a whole lot of fun.

Coming home one evening, and as usual when he entered the house the first words of the bluff old Captain were, "Well, old woman, where's Marthe Ann?"

"Over at the Convent as usual," he was told somewhat sharply. "And its about time she was home."

The Captain thought so too, and undertook to fetch her.

The gardens and grounds of this building were surrounded by a high wooden fence, through which a gate admitted any one from the street, and then closed with a bang. A spring lock had been contrived that only someone from within could open it, and the key to this was held by a deaf old man who acted as steward to the Sisters.

Hearing voices, but seeing no one, the Captain roared, "Marthe Ann!" loud enough to be heard all over the garden, and through the wooden walls of the convent.

A silence fell, the Sisters were afraid to go out to him, the girls fled from sight, the deaf old steward slept, and Marthe Ann who recognised the voice, went quietly out by the front gate, and ran home.

"Marthe Ann!" he roared again several times with the same effect, and feeling somewhat uncomfortable in the silent place, thought he would go back home.

He returned to the gate, it was locked. He searched the walls all round for another. Strange to say, though he had lived within a stone's throw of the place for years, he had never been inside.

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The front gate was as unyielding as the other had been.

Quite a high flight of stairs, leaving a basement beneath, lead up to the principal entrance. The Captain marched up, and came face to face with a French Sister newly arrived from the East, and who had been arranging flowers in the Chapel on the third floor, and consequently had heard nothing of the uproar made by the Captain.

She understood no word of English, and when the Captain, heated and puzzled, shouted "Marthe Ann" into the hallowed precincts, the startled Sister gave him one look and fled precipitately to the Superior, telling her that a mad man had broken into the front entrance.

"Like a flock of geese," soliloquised the Captain, in a stage whisper that could have been heard a block off.

"Well, I'd like to know how I'm going to get off this sand bar. Got to find a pilot some how. Guess I'd better climb the riggin'."

Suiting the action to the word, he stamped up the bare white stairs, vociferating as he went "Marthe Ann."

He thought he heard foot steps now and again, but never a soul did he see.

On he kept, and up some narrow steps leading into the clock tower.

"Guess this is the pilot house," he said, and stepped into the semi-darkness within.

The deafening clangor of a bell near his ear made him start, and take a step backwards, when down he went, rolling over and over, and picked himself up from the landing below.

The bell of this clock was used by the Sisters to call for Vespers, and one of them was waiting there to give the signal, when the Captain made his appearance.

She hung on to the bell and clanged a quick alarm.

The old steward awoke and hobbled into the house, and as he could see no one went on up to the clock turret.

Marthe Ann and her mother hastened over in time to hear a vociferous "Marthe Ann," and to see the meeting of the deaf steward and the Captain.

Off come old Mike's hat, and he asked the Captain in oily tones, what he could do for him.

"Do for me?" roared the Captain, "Why let me out of this man trap. I guess the gals are safe enough in here. But if ever I get out of this, Marthe Ann can stay here all she likes and be hanged to it."

"Captain," puffed his wife, as she reached the top landing, "What are you raising the neighbourhood for, and frightening the Sisters and the girls out of their wits. Marthe Ann has been home ever so long."

"I only want to raise out of this that's all. I steamed in easy enough, but when I came to turn her bow for home, never an outlet was there, and you know old woman I couldn't a been seen lowerin' my jib over the wall in broad daylight; the whole town would a had the laugh on me."

"Come and see the Sisters," insisted his wife, as she opened the Chapel door, where they and the girls were cowering, expecting they knew not what, never thinking of the Captain, whom they knew by sight, but taking it for granted, that Sister Mary Zoe knew a crazy man when she saw one.

Marthe Ann had gone off without enlightening them, and only when the bell rang, and she knew they were really alarmed, did she persuade her mother to go over with her.

"Well," apologised the Captain, "I'm real sorry, I scared you all so. I was only tryin' to make Marthe Ann show her colors. But, "a happy thought striking

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him, "I'll tell you what I'll do. Just as soon as you'll give the gals a holiday, I'll engage to take them for a trip on the Marthe Ann. I'll make her behave herself when I get hold of her wheel; but this Marthe Ann," pointing his thumb towards the girl who was shaking all over with laughter, "I aint got no wheel as'll control her. I guess I'll have to leave her to you Sisters, till she ships another Captain."

But to return to the girls and their plans for Easter.

"Yes, Lena, I must go. Oh Sister Lucia, you know it would be such fun to go on a real ranch. I go up and down the river on Popper's boat till I'm sick of it. Don't you think the ranch would be better?"

"I certainly do," returned the Sister in her precise English. "I never approve of your going up and down the river as you do; it is not the place for girls."

"I'll tell Mummer what you say, Sister, and then she'll be sure to let me go with Lena."

"No, do you not tell your mother, I will see her myself, and try to get her to consent."

"You're always a dear good Sister," asserted Marthe Ann, and giving the Sister a bear's hug, the girl waltzed out of the room, to the music some one was practising on the jangling piano.

The Sister succeeded where Marthe Ann had failed.

The girls spent Easter Sunday in town, and on Monday, an express wagon was hired to take them out.

Lena's elder sister who lived in town was going too with her three-weeks-old baby to show it to her mother, and also to be near her husband, who just then had a logging camp about two miles from the ranch.

The driver went for Mrs. Rivers and her baby first, and the girls made their way to the grocery store, there to be

taken aboard with some of the other things both necessary and good.

As they waited along came a farm hand who had worked for Lena's mother. He had a place of his own now, but Lena always filled a soft spot in his heart. He had a whole litter of young pigs in a crate, and when Lena admired a sprightly little spotted fellow in the closely packed pig family, he was delighted and exclaimed, "You shall have him, Lena." Accordingly he hauled out Mr. piggie squealing lustily, got a flour sack from the grocer and put in the noisy animal. But he had forgotten to get a piece of string or rope with which to tie in the obstreperous youngster, so the man hoisted up a Siwash boy, who had stood with solemnly inscrutable eyes watching the proceedings, and instructed him to sit upon the mouth of the same, and keep piggie in until a piece of rope could be obtained. They had a keg of beer to take up further on, and could doubtless get something to tie up the sack at the brewers.

On they jogged in the pleasant morning sunshine. The driver, Mrs. Rivers and the baby occupying the front seat; the two girls, the Siwash, the pig and the rest of the commodities in the back of the wagon.

They stopped for the keg of beer, and the Siwash, thinking his task was done, or fearful he might be carried off for his exceeding beauty and cleanliness, jumped down and ran away.

Out came piggie, delighted to regain his freedom. He galloped and grunted, bolted here and there with spasmodic efforts, and threatened to outlast both the patience and breath of his pursuers.

He brought up in a restaurant; rushing between the legs of a colored boy, who was coming out of the kitchen carrying a well laden tray; he made his last stand among

the pots and dishes on the floor, was caught by the good-natured cook, and returned to his sack once more, where he was securely tied, and the wagon moved on with its load.

Front street was built up on piles, on the bank of the river, and as the wagon drove along, Marthe Ann was dismayed to see her father's boat sweep in to its wharf, with her stern parent in the wheelhouse. As yet he was too busy landing his boat to notice anything on shore.

Marthe Ann took matters in her own hand. "Whip up as fast as you can," she urged the driver, "for Popper won't let me go if he sees me."

"Don't you dare look at the boat," she commanded Lena, "or it will make him look our way."

All this time she was watching the boat herself. As it was tied up, her father caught sight of the hurrying team with Marthe Ann seated smilingly upon it.

Out he bounced from his wheelhouse, and began gesticulating and shouting orders. Marthe Ann heard none of them, but waved her handkerchief in a laughing farewell, as the wagon turned a bend in the road and disappeared from the choleric Captain's sight.

"Say, old woman," he remarked in a fog-horn whisper, as he entered his home, "Marthe Ann's a crowdin' out a hog and a barrel of beer in an express wagon. Where's she bound for any way?"

"She's going to spend the Easter holiday with Lena on the ranch," returned his wife in a mildly pacific tone.

"Thought she was goin' along with me? They're expectin' her up at Yale."

"Sister Lucia thinks she's too big to go up and down the river the way she does."

"Oh, she does, does she? Pray what business is it of

Sister Lucia's I'd like to know. Can't I look after her?"

Convinced that his wife and the Sister were right, but not satisfied by any means at the loss of his daughter's company, he turned round and without a word or a thought of the good meal awaiting him, he stalked back to town, half a mind to hire another rig and fetch the girl back; but he thought better of it, and only remarked to himself, "If the driver pilots that load out there safe, he'll have his hands full," and went about his own business.

Sure enough the man's hands were full.

Besides the mudholes, whose depths were deceptive, they had several very roughly constructed bridges over deep ravines, with approaches of corduroy to pass over. The latter had a log out here and there, and the horses, always afraid of getting their hoofs caught, shied unpleasantly, while they pricked their ears and looked with horror at the hurrying foam on the water of the ravines beneath the bridges, seeming to think it probable they would fall between the chinks of the rough hewn logs, and be swept away by the small fury of the hurrying rivulet.

In the best parts of the road the trees met overhead. Between the two-horse tracks brush had sprung up, and kept a continual rustle and scratch on the bottom of the wagon as they went.

"Look out!" shouted the driver, and the next instant one front wheel was over its hub in a mud hole, and the horses were plunging.

Mrs. Rivers screamed, and in catching hold of the wagon, let go her baby, which slid down between the horses and the wagon, and lodged in the mud.

Both girls jumped instantly, and the driver was at his horses heads in one leap. Lena bounded under the wagon,

seized the long, white robe of the baby and drew it out at the back. Once more they breathed freely, for master baby was none the worse except for the mud on his clothing.

"What is that, piggie out again?" exclaimed Mrs. Rivers.

Yes, piggie was out again, and Marthe Ann's long legs were striding over brush and logs in pursuit. Presently there was a squeal and then smothered grunting. Marthe Ann had fallen over brush and pig, and lay there with piggie securely beneath her, till the driver, having drawn his horses out of the mudhole, came to her assistance, and Mr. piggie was again returned to his sack, and too securely fastened to escape again.

Arrived at the outskirts of the ranch they had all to alight, for the season had been unusually wet, and the road was impassable for wheels. They loaded as much stuff as they could on the horses, left the wagon under a spreading tree with the remainder, and proceeded on their way. The driver went first with one horse, Lena followed with the other, Mrs. Rivers came next with her poor, muddy baby, and Marthe Ann brought up the rear with piggie scuffling and squealing in his sack.

Lena said she didn't know which made more noise, the pig or Marthe Ann, for she laughed so at the comic procession, she was in danger of letting piggie go.

They now came to a place where the axes of the woodsmen could be heard quite plainly, so they halted and shouted hoping to make Mr. Rivers hear. No answering shout came, and Mrs. Rivers thought her husband was too far off to hear them. At this moment Mr. Rivers, who had evidently been on the watch for them, strode out of the bush and confronted them.

"Couldn't you hear us calling?" enquired his wife.

"Hear you," with a knowing wink at the driver. "I should think so, but I didn't trouble to come at first. I took you for a band of Siwashes out from town, who had brought something along to make them merry."

Mrs. Rivers cast him an indignant look; but seeing he was only in fun gave him the baby to carry, and they soon reached the ranch, where the first grandson was petted and fussed over by his new grandma enough to satisfy the vanity of any young couple.

The ranch was a clearing cut out of the solid forest. The largest stumps still remained; potatoes, corn and garden truck being cultivated between them. The house was a long low building made of hand hewn logs put up by the father some twenty years before. Beside bedrooms and a lean-to kitchen built on of split cedar, it contained one large room which was used as dining and sitting room, the carpet for which was only put down when visitors were expected. A small organ stood in one corner with a violin lying on top. Brackets and shelves and little fancy things on the walls gave it a cheerful and cosy appearance and the bright wood fire burning in the stove added to the comfort and cheeriness.

All the family, with the hired man, who was a very well educated young Englishman, sat down to a plentiful and well cooked supper of boiled leg of pork, with kale and potatoes, and a dessert of apple pie and coffee.

After supper, the cattle all being disposed of for the night, the hired man took up his violin and Lena sat down to play an accompaniment, whilst the elder brother and Marthe Ann started to foot a Scotch reel, but first, for economy's sake the carpet must be rolled to one side. Marthe Ann knew nothing of the steps, but she imitated Alfred, occasionally varying the proceedings by daintily

raising between finger and thumb, first one side of her dress, and then the other, as she had seen ladies do in pictures.

They were dancing, twisting, turning, yelling, and snapping their fingers in a great state of excitement to the delight of their audience, when Marthe Ann in her recklessness stepped beyond the limits, caught her foot in the carpet, and went sprawling under the table. Over it went, smashing the only lamp in the establishment in its fall. Darkness and silence ensued, but not for long; they lighted candles, and with fun and laughter went to bed.

Next morning the widow was moving bright and early. She had heard bees humming round a fallen tree in her peregrinations about the farm, and had been further goaded by a bachelor neighbor for whom she had great contempt because of his shiftlessness. This obnoxious man had asserted that the bees were on his side of the trout stream, which meandered between their ranches, and that it was his intention to find their treasure and market the same; wild honey being fifty cents per pound.

Accordingly when Marthe Ann followed her out somewhat sleepily, she found the good lady with buckets and axe prepared for the fray. Of course nothing suited Marthe Ann better than to join in the fun, and off they went leaving Lena to prepare breakfast.

It was no fancy walk in the forest that awaited them. The dew had fallen heavily, and every leaf and twig was dripping diamonds as the sun showed itself over the snow-clad mountain top, and they had to push through brush, over and under logs, round stumps, and wade small streams as cold as ice water.

At last the widow came in sight of the bachelor's shack. Nodding towards it, she remarked with scorn, "I wouldn't put one of my sows in that."

They sat down and listened for the hum of the bees, when Marthe Ann started up with a shriek, she had been stung by one of them. "You stop that noise, now, Marthe Ann, or else go right back. I aint goin' to have none o' that." Marthe Ann squeezed the juice of three different herbs, that being the formula, on the burning spot, and said no more; for the widow had opened a hole in the rotting tree upon which they had rested and the honey was trickling into her bucket.

Each carrying a bucket of the rich yellow-brown fluid, they went back for breakfast, and that night all hands turned out, but kept at a respectful distance, while the boys, swathed in mosquito net, smoked out the poor bees, and confiscated their hoarded treasure.

The week passed only too quickly for Marthe Ann; the express wagon and its driver appeared early one morning with a peremptory order from the Captain, for Marthe Ann to report in town. With the easy hospitality of the times, the young man had come out with the intention of having a day's fishing. He put up his horses, got some lunch from Lena and started out. It was getting dark, Mr. Rivers was home from the logging camp, and all began to feel some anxiety for the lad's safety.

The mountain stream at this place is very treacherous; being so very clear you misjudge its depth, and if the lad had essayed a bath, he might have stepped in, thinking the water little over his knees, when in reality it would be above his head, and rushing along at such a rate, that it would be impossible for any person to regain their footing; besides, its icy coldness soon leaves them helplessly benumbed; for this stream, or river flows from a glacier in the snow-clad mountain, we mentioned before.

Rivers ordered ropes and lanterns and a search party



SNOW-CLAD MOUNTAINS

[facing page 70]



was just starting out, when in walked the culprit. He was greeted with words more forcible than polite, and ordered off to town without any supper. Lena could not return until the following Monday, and Marthe Ann went off reluctantly with the youth, and the night closed in dark under the overhanging trees.

To amuse Marthe Ann, or to keep up his own courage, the lad related all the yarns from penny dreadfuls he had ever read; when a light appeared swaying dizzily along as some vehicle came at a dangerous speed over the uncertain road. Marthe Ann's courage forsook her and she screamed frantically, for she thought surely this lawless bandit would ride them down in his furious quest for booty.

It was well she did scream, for the ship's lanterns on the Captain's wagon made him blind to anything else by the way, and Marthe Ann's driver had succeeded in losing his own nerve too completely to call out

The Captain knowing the voice, imagined he had arrived just in time for the rescue, and called out a string of commands, only ceasing when Marthe Ann scrambled into his wagon and sank down at his feet crying and laughing in one breath.

The driver being called upon to explain, made such a bungling statement, the Captain ordered him to tie his tow behind, and take the helm to town. With which order the boy was only too glad to comply.

Nestled down at her father's feet, and resting against his knees, Marthe Ann chattered nineteen to the dozen, and told of all her adventures, to her Dad's infinite delight.

THE TWINS

GIRLS ON A CATTLE RANGE

"WE are the twins, Dora and Nora, and no one but Mamma and Grandmamma can tell us apart. If one of us gets a freckle upon her nose in the summer time, and Papa thinks he has found something to know Dora from me, he has only to call my other self and 'sure as fate' as Grandma says, there's a freckle on her nose too.

"He gave up trying to know which was which, and got Mamma to tie a blue ribbon on me and a pink on Dora. We know ourselves of course. Then he'll say 'Nora fetch me my slippers, Pet,' and the pink-ribboned twin gets up and goes for the slippers and the kiss to follow."

"Then he looks puzzled and we laugh.

"We changed our ribbons to see if you would know us, Papa," we say. Then we'd run for we knew he would chase us with his slippers, and then there was lots of fun.

"Papa and Mamma and Grandmamma came out to this country many years ago, and we are on a cattle range three hundred miles away from general civilization, although there are other ranges near with families living on them and we take our ponies and ride with Papa fifteen or twenty miles to spend the day. Every thing is so sweet when we start in the early morning, and wave our whips to Mamma and Grandmamma, who stand in the wide verandah, and watch us out of sight."

In winter we all bundle into a big wagon with plenty of hay in it, and cuddle down in the buffalo robes. Sometimes we put in two, most times four horses, and away we 'go,' its just like flying.

Then our neighbors are so pleased to see us you don't know, and we play games in the evening, and have music and singing. But the day time is the fun.

Mrs. Grantley has a lake near her place, and we all go on with brooms and spades and clear away the snow.

We just pile it in the centre, and have a regular racing ring all round. The cow boys come out and help, and although Mamma can't skate, she walks all round and round our rink till she's tired, with the colliers following her.

Then the men put down their fur coats, and Mamma sits and talks and rests awhile, and Mrs. Grantley's Japanese cook comes smiling out with a tea basket.

Dora says Harakama smiles to show his beautiful white teeth, but Mamma says its the Japanese philosophy to take everything with a smile.

As soon as the tea basket appears, the signal is given, and every body comes up for a cup of tea and a sandwich or cake.

It is funny to see a great red-headed Scotch man, a short stout English man, and the slim set Canadians, all taking tea out of tiny china cups, and stirring round and round with little afternoon tea spoons, when you know any one of them can ride the half-wild horses, throw the lariat and lasso the big steers on the range, and hold a four or six horse team as easily as we can kittens.

Grandmamma says some of them come from good families, and some of them don't. Grandma minds that kind of thing, we don't.

As soon as it begins to get dark, the men had to go and see to their horses and cattle, and we, of course, had to go in. But first we begged to go with Annie and Bettie and their brothers to bring in a herd of yearling calves, which

were driven across the lake by a well trodden path of their own every morning to a sheltering clump of trees, where a lot of wild hay had been stacked in the summer.

Here they burrowed themselves in as they ate the hay, and so got food and shelter at the same time.

Holes were kept open in the edge of the lake, and they drank to suit themselves.

We like to see the long, long string of them crossing single file like little dark specks on the snow of the vast lake.

Then all four of us girls went in to the lighted dining room, and Grandmamma was saying it was Hallowe'en.

Such a storm as started over the country that night, snow, sleet and hail, driven by a biting wind.

After supper we curled up on the bear skins near the brightly burning fire on the open hearth, and begged Grandma for the story of the Haunted Castle, all of it Grandma please.

She took off her spectacles, settled herself back in the chair, and four pairs of attentive eyes were fixed upon her.

"When I was a little girl I used to live with my father and mother on the east coast of England.

"We had a pretty house and an old garden that opened upon the beach at low water. When the spring tides were extra high, or it was stormy as it often is upon this coast, some of our stone fence would be washed away.

"Fishermen's huts, our own house, and the Castle, were the only habitations within several miles.

"The Castle stood upon a cliff above us, that is all that was left of it. At some early date it was said to have been connected by a subterranean passage with our place, and of course thus formed a secret communication with the beach.

"Little Lady Lucy and I had searched in vain for the

entrance, while her governess sat contentedly with sketch-book and pencil, indifferent alike to subterranean passages and little girls.

"Of course the castle had its ghost, which was said to be that of a former owner, who had been very wicked.

"He had led the life of a pirate, bringing in his stolen goods and prisoners by way of this underground passage.

"Some of the latter he put in dark, damp dungeons where their wealth was hidden, and then again, those who were as wicked and cruel as himself, he kept to assist him.

"Above the cliff upon which the Castle was built, arose other and higher cliffs, and as the Castle had its secret exit to the sea, so it was provided with another which found egress upon the common above.

"Once upon a time the daughter of a neighbouring Baron disappeared, and no trace of her was found.

"Then one of the outlaws was wounded and carried to the Castle of the missing girl. He was so overcome by the kindness of the ladies in this abode that he confessed to the crime of his master.

"He told how the poor girl had been taken by the robber Baron while riding on the common near her own home in company with her old nurse,—how they were both gagged, bound, and carried down into the Castle by the secret entrance from the common,—how the robber Baron had forced her into a marriage with himself, and how that after about a year a little son had been born, the lady had died, leaving the infant to the care of her nurse.

"This boy was now nine years old, the idol of his father, and the pet of the outlaws.

"The father and brothers of the Lady Elizabeth who had been kidnapped, were brave, determined men. They gathered together their retainers, and guided by the rebel

outlaw, went to the Castle, made a simultaneous attack from above and below, and after reducing it to its present ruinous state, marched back with the little boy and his nurse.

"The robber Baron thought his boy was killed, and became so low spirited that after a little while he hanged himself, and every Hallowe'en you may see him floating along the corridors of his Castle, all in white, a rope round his neck, his eyes starting from their sockets, his lips and cheeks swollen and purple; and from his nose, mouth, and ears, whence the blood had spurted, blue tongues of flame licked back and forth.

"In consequence of this story the maids of the Castle were afraid of trying Hallowe'en charms lest they meet this hideous apparition on their way to bed.

Now Lady Lucy's mother had come into a goodly fortune, and her father essayed to restore parts of the Castle for use. So the old couple, who had waited upon them for years, were given a pension, and a new set of servants arrived by Stage Coach from London in the last week of October, and of course the story of the Castle ghost was unknown to them.

"This happened when Lady Lucy and I were about twelve years old. Lady Lucy's nurse, who had also acted as lady's maid, was retained, and she told us of the next adventure, but never a word did she say to the new servants of the legends regarding the Castle; indeed she felt herself far above them.

Now it seems that Hallowe'en charms are supposed to work with far greater efficacy when the person trying them is in a new place.

The cook and head housemaid arranged to walk to the church which was situated about two miles from the Castle, carrying some hempseed in their aprons.

They were never to speak to each other on the way, nor indeed till next morning, no matter what appeared to either, for in silence the charm must be performed, and silence alone, that the charm be not broken, only the words of the incarnation must find voice.

They reached the old churchyard, filled with graves, marked and unmarked, the ancient monuments standing in mournful grandeur beside the simple grass covered mound.

At five minutes to twelve they commenced their walk around the edifice, one behind the other, sowing the hempseed and singing softly as they went,

“This hempseed I sow,
This hempseed I hoe,
Hoping my true love
May come after me and mow.”

This they were to do three times; but on the second round the cook, who lead the way, heard a fall, followed by an awful scream.

She stopped, spell bound with horror. The screams continued; but could she believe her ears? They sounded muffled and distant. Listening more intently she realized that although it was the voice of her companion, the screams came from the bowels of the earth.

Only one thing could have happened. His Satanic Majesty had been let loose with the other spirits and had carried her companion down alive into the pit.

Horror leant wings to the stout and comely cook, and she neither looked behind, nor stopped to see if her lover would come after her to mow, but ran into the Castle kitchen, white and breathless, and told the footman what had happened.

"'Ere hin this horful hold carsel we never knows w'ats agoin' to 'appen. H'ive 'eard to-day as a ghost walks these 'ere corridors hevery 'Allowe'en. 'E stands height foot 'igh, an' the blue blazes and sulphur his pourin' hout hall hover 'im, an' 'e allest ketches some pore gal and takes 'er down with 'im, hevery year. She don't never come back, 'e keeps 'em hall together down below, dontyer-know!"

Cook seated herself by the fire and declared:—

"Well I'm agoin' to set right here till mornin', an' then I'm agoin' right back to London. Old Nick's got Susan this time for sure, an' 'e aint agoin' to git me."

But the footman didn't want either of these things to be done, for my uncle and he had been at great pains to dress up a figure to resemble the fabled ghost as much as possible.

Uncle was hidden away to watch the effect upon the two women, but as only one had returned it was difficult to know what to do.

Uncle had very nice manners, and went down to cook and persuaded her there was nothing in it, politely offered her a bedroom candle-stick, and volunteered to escort her to her room, where he suggested she might keep a light burning till morning, reminding her that ghosts only appear in the dark.

She secured another candle and went up stairs, but the footman ran lightly up the front stairs and joined uncle in the hall above.

Cook went gingerly along, until she saw in the dim distance of a deserted corridor (the door of which had been set open for the purpose), a white figure with hideous features, a rope around its neck, and phosphorescent light issuing from its head.

She uttered a fearful scream, dropped her candle, and fled she knew not whither, till she crashed through the lath and plaster of a ceiling, and a light streaming through, showed her portly figure firmly wedged between two beams, her feet and hands protruding below, working frantically.

The astonished lady and gentleman, whose privacy had been so suddenly invaded, rang the bell for explanations, and were informed by the bland footman, that one of the maids had let her candle drop on the way to bed, and had wandered into the room above from which the floor had been removed for repairs.

Uncle hurriedly removed the offending ghost, and securely fastened the door leading into the disused wing.

The footman went to assist in extricating cook, who told such a wandering yarn, the Master thought she had been imbibing too freely, and went into the kitchen to see what had been going on there.

As he did so the housemaid was lead in by the sexton, more dead than alive.

Her dreadful screams had called him to the churchyard. He was an old man, and knew the ways of women pretty well, so he went straight to a deep grave he had that day dug, and letting down the coffin ropes, helped the terrified girl to scramble out.

They were forgiven this time upon their confession, but cook didn't stay long, for she declared that ghosts walked other nights beside Hallowe'en, and she couldn't stand it.

As Grandma had talked by the cheerful light of the log fire on the big open hearth, the men of the family and the farm hands, having finished their chores, dropped quietly in one by one, so at the ending there was a goodly audience.

Now the lamps were brought in by the ever-smiling

Harakana. There sat the stout Englishman, the red Scotchman, the two tall Canucks, Papa, Mrs. Grantly, and last, but to us not least, Tom and Ned, the sons of our friends and neighbours.

The latter were also typical Canadians. Tall, dark, supple: with something of the subtle inscrutability of our vast country, its silent mountains, its ice bound lakes and streams, and the frozen forests which stand up in their white purity, with scarce a sound of life, but all instinct with vitality, such were these young men.

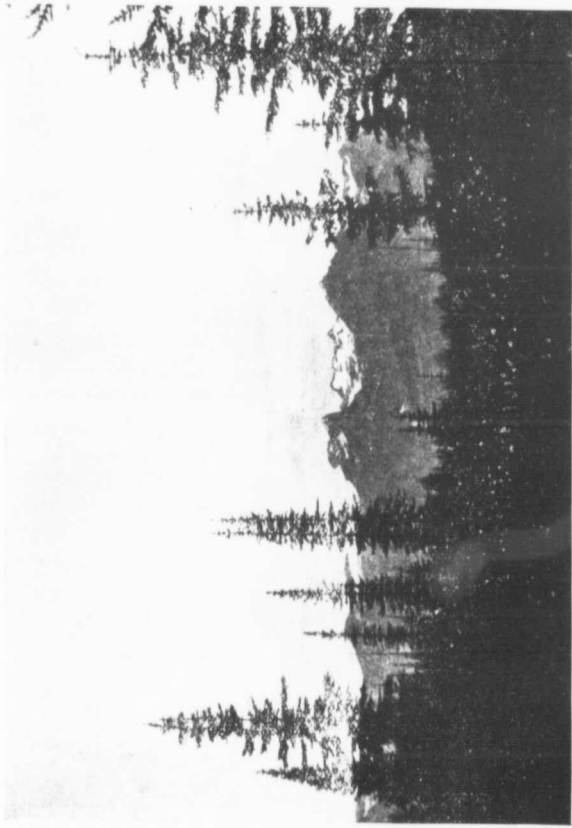
They had broken in our Indian ponies, taught us to ride in their own dare devil fashion. Side by side with them and their sisters have we ridden many a hundred miles. No branding season would have been complete had we four girls been absent.

We had grown up together, and somehow the very idea of a separation between their lives and ours had never entered our minds.

We four girls went away to a convent for two years. The boys supplemented the education of their tutor at a College in the East for the same length of time, and this was our first meeting since then. Oh, the joy of our liberty regained. Sometimes the call of freedom came upon one or other of us so strongly during our 'exile' as we called it, that the pain of restraint made us refractory and I fear we gave the good sisters trouble.

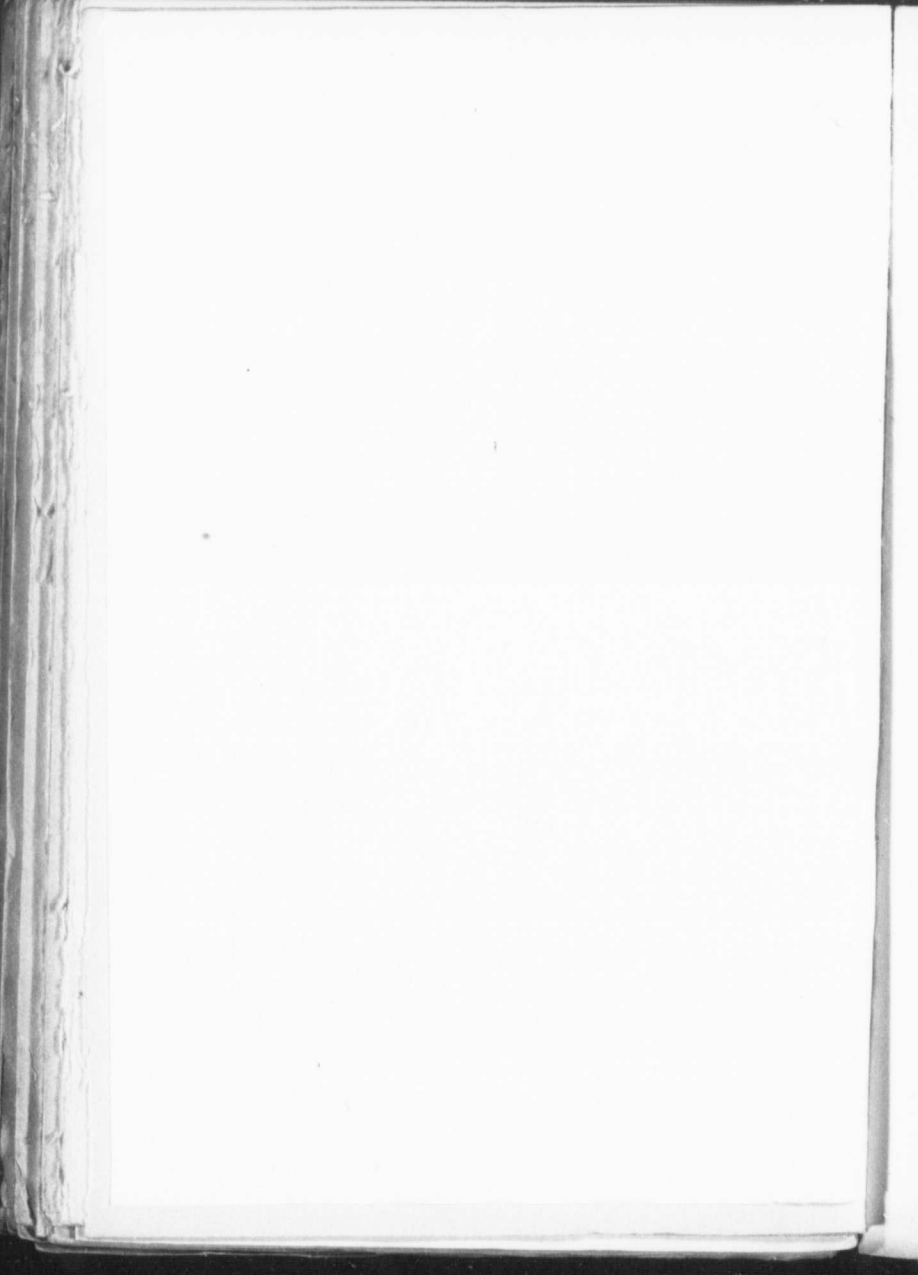
Now, there was a marked line between Dora and me. I could sing and play on the mandolin. Nora had no voice, but the piano seemed to come to her, as it were, with no trouble at all, and you may be sure the Sisters exploited the shy twins from the interior at their public entertainments to the utmost.

Annie and Bessie both did well with their music. The



EARLY MORNING IN THE MOUNTAINS

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boys were all anxious to find a way of getting instruments out for us.

No one knows the boon of music as we do on these lone ranges. Even the cattle listen, and have been quieted down when our English Ben played on his violin and sung sweet songs in the open on the eve of a storm; when something in the atmosphere seems to set our own nerves tingling, and makes the cattle ready to stampede on the least alarm.

That is in the summer time, of course. Now they are housed at night, only the hardiest of them out on the range, and we always know when a spell of bad weather is coming on, for horses and cattle come home and stand with their tails turned towards the cutting wind, their heads hanging down and their speaking eyes begging to be let into the sheltering coral, where they know there is always plenty of wild hay kept under cover, and fed out twice a day to the range cattle. On a night like this the big shelters have been left open and horses and cattle come home to be fed. When the storm has past they will wander out again. Very silent are Tom and Ned to-night, but their eyes follow us about, and a new feeling creeps over us, which we confide to each other as we prepare for bed; something new which stirs our pulse and makes the red blood mantle our cheeks.

During the evening Ned, as he sat by me held my hand, and looking over at Tom and Dora they were doing the same thing, only Tom was talking earnestly, while Ned only looked volumes. We confided all these things to each other.

Tom had said to Dora that he and Ned had found an ideal valley which had as yet escaped the eyes of white men, and here they proposed to set up a range of their own.

Dora had asked him if Annie and Bessie would go and

keep house for them, and he had got very red and said he thought they were going too, but as the wives of Ben Bayley the Englishman, and Colin Campbell the Scotchman; also that the two Canucks were thinking to send East for their 'girls,' there being plenty of room for all.

We knew Annie and Bessie had been sent away to school with the idea of testing their affection for these two men, who were somewhat their seniors, but as we had only arrived to-day, we had had no opportunity of hearing what conclusion had been come to.

"You and Ned will be the only bachelor housekeepers," Dora had said to Tom.

"We hope not," he had promptly returned; and we wondered who would keep house for them but did not like to ask.

The blizzard raged and the snow drifts piled in fluffy, ever moving heaps. It was useless to think of driving twenty miles to our home, and for our part, Dora and I were so happy, we felt as if a big storm was the nicest thing in the world.

We made cakes and helped to cook in the short day time, and the evenings were given up to music, cards, games of all kinds and general happiness. A new something was growing in us and a different outlook upon life, as we saw the happiness of Ben and Annie, Colin and Bessie, and heard them discuss their plans for the future.

"You have no plans it seems, you and Tom?" I said to Ned one day. He looked at me very earnestly, and replied, "No one cares enough for us to join their lot with ours, and a man cares but little if he has only himself to think of."

"Oh," I said inanely; then added, "Dora and I thought perhaps you had met some one while you were in the East,

who would be willing to—to—”

“To what?” he asked.

“Just keep house for you, like—like Annie and Bessie are going to do you know.”

Very good of you to think so much as all that about us, I'm sure,” he returned coldly, then he walked off, looking very fierce under his sombrero; but he turned round as he went and flung back at me, “We'd prefer some one nearer home.”

“Oh,” was all I could find to say, and I said it, just as stupidly as before.

He cast a look at me from his black eyes, that made me uncomfortable.

Bessie and Annie were like their brothers, but we twins were rather small and slim, with fair curly hair, large grey-blue eyes, and the placid disposition that good health and out-door exercise gives; besides the worries of ordinary life were utterly unknown to us, and our glint of civilization from the windows of the convent had enlightened us but little.

Our knowledge of the outer world has been derived from books, and paper troubles scarcely disturb one's equanimity sufficiently to ruffle the current of one's life.

A whole week the storm lasted, and we stayed another week. I don't know how it happened, but one evening as Dora and I sat alone by the glow of the open hearth waiting for the other women folks to come in, who should appear but Ned and Tom.

Now Ned never took me for Dora, nor did Tom mistake Dora for me. Each had come awkwardly in and sat down by us,—that is Ned by me, and Tom by Dora. We tried to chatter in our usual way, but we didn't succeed very well, for the boys only sat and looked at us.

"What's the matter with you boys anyway?" I asked. "Are you tired of us? We are going home to-morrow, so you might put up with us just a little longer."

"Look here now," returned Tom, who is a greater talker than Ned, "that's just what we've come in to say."

"That you are tired of us?"

"No, you know better than that. So far from it, we want to know if you and Dora could put up with us for ever, leastways as long as we live?"

We gasped. So this was what had been working on them and us; and we had felt as if the lads did not care a pin for us, because they were shy and backward in our presence. We said not a word.

"If you won't have us," continued Tom, "we've made up our minds to join the N.W.M.P., and chuck up our holdings in the valley."

"But we thought that you boys didn't like us," whispered Dora.

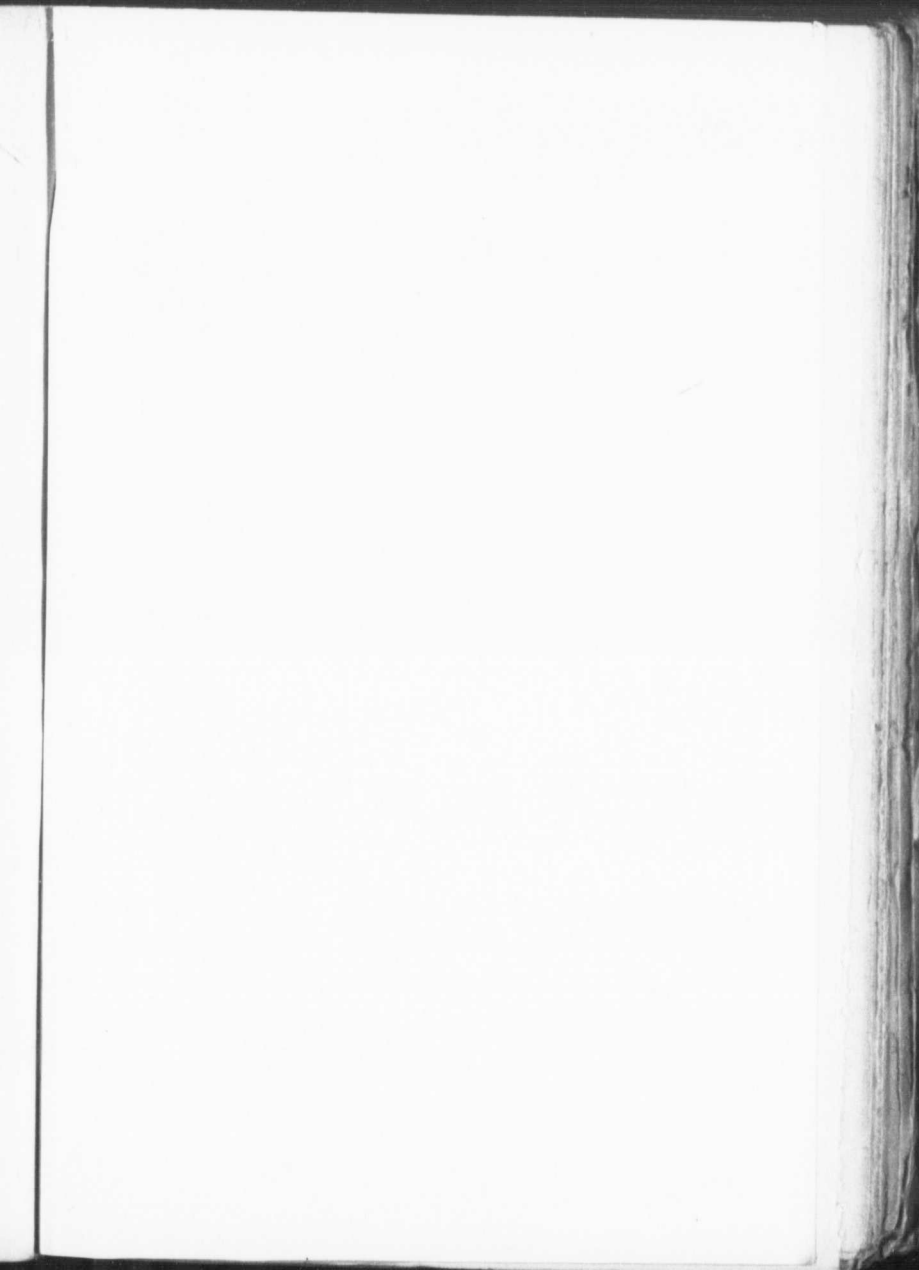
"Like!" burst from both at once. "Like is no word for it. We love you better than our own souls."

We each turned and faced the lad by us, our hands sought those of the other, and the twilight hour was spent as only that one hour of bliss is spent in the lives of any.

Of course our plans fell in with the others, and after our houses, cattle sheds and corrals are built in the spring, there will be a quadruple wedding, and we shall journey to the valley together. In the meantime there will be a visit to the coast for us.

We shall come back with all the necessities of life for the far away cattle range, and be kept busy with needle and sewing machine.

The elders seemed inclined to sell their ranges and settle nearer civilization; and indeed, they have earned





INDIAN COWBOY WITH HIS PONY

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their rest, for our starting in is nothing to what theirs was, when even the Indians were not to be trusted; and everything for house, barn, or shelter had to be hewn from the forest with axe and saw.

Now the Indians are friendly, even educated to a certain extent; and there are saw mills on the lake from which all the lumber required for our structures can be obtained, and landed by steamboat or scow, at a wharf the boys will make.

There is some talk of Ben and Colin taking their brides 'home' on a wedding trip, but the open range for us.

Our new homes are to be built near together, and as we came upon this mortal scene in company, so we hope to remain for many years without separation.

THE FATE OF MARGUERITE

A TALE OF WOE

SOMETIME in the early sixties there lived in Eastern Canada a man and his wife, belonging to the Old Country working class.

The woman was much superior in many ways to her husband. She was one of those who when nearing thirty take up with the first man, or good sized boy likely to commit matrimony; for the fear of being an 'Old Maid' is upon them.

The man was large and bony, with an ugly lean-forward, and a shambling gait. His cunning little eyes were set far back and were near together, partially hidden by the bushy eye brows which met above a nose of no particular mould. His lips were coarse and his jaw somewhat heavy. Added to these features, if you were unfortunate enough to shake hands with him, the little finger of his right hand had such a twisty kink in it, that the only thing you were conscious of was the contact of this crooked member with the palm of your hand.

The children born to this couple had died of scrofula, so they lived and scraped along thinking only of themselves.

Near them resided another Old Country family, who should have been pretty comfortable, for they received very substantial help from the relatives they had left behind; but the demon of drink had taken hold of the wife, and she would have sold her children to satisfy the insatiable craving.

Strangely enough the two women were much the same

height and color, both being of that drabby fairness which soon fades and becomes so washed-out looking.

Mrs. Scale, the mechanic's wife often went in to look after things in the Gale household, when the mother was either incapable or away on one of her periodical outbreaks.

Mrs. Scale received no regular remuneration, but she paid herself for her trouble in various ways, groceries, clothing, and loose cash were useful articles, and nothing came amiss.

At these times Mr. Gale, who was one of those utterly helpless men who think a woman's work so easy, and so far beneath their lordly attention, found himself sorely tried and completely at a loss without the assistance of Mrs. Scale.

On the final round up he made of his wife, he found her in such company, that no man with any self respect could take her back.

In this strait he applied to Mrs. Scale, and having noticed she seemed to like the eldest child, a fair little girl who might easily pass for her daughter; he made a proposition to the woman to take Marguerite, and with the child he would give her his wife's clothes, the house linen, plate, and all the small articles, and also five hundred dollars in cash.

Mrs. Scale knew, from letters she had seen that Mr. Gale had just received five hundred pounds, (some twenty-five hundred dollars) from his wife's people, and she insisted upon having the amount doubled.

The other children being boys, Mr. Gale thought he could take with him, settle down somewhere in the great untrodden wilds of our vast Canada, and disappear from friend and foe alike. He did not feel justified in taking Marguerite to such a place, and weakly relegated the

sacred trust of his poor little daughter to people practically unknown.

Mrs. Scale had heard many details of the family history from Mrs. Gale in her lucid moments, for then, nothing suited her better than to maunder along about her former wealth and position, and the terrible degradation of the marriage which had cut her off from kith and kin.

In going over the trunks of the lost woman, Mrs. Scale came upon bundles of letters, which she spent weeks in studying over. Among them was the copy of a will of a great aunt of Mrs. Gale's, making her or her heirs and assigns, the recipients of a share in a fortune of some eighty thousand pounds. In case of Mrs. Gale's death, her child or children should come into possession at the age of twenty-one.

The child mentioned could be none other than Marguerite, for the Gale's had brought her out with them, and by some of the letters she found the date of the child's birth, who was now only seven years old.

Mrs. Scale pondered the subject deeply but said nothing to her husband.

Gale and his boys had disappeared. It behoved her to keep an eye on the recreant mother. The end came sooner than expected. A woman of the restricted district had either committed suicide or been murdered; it was an open question which. Mrs. Scale went to view the body; identified it as that of a former neighbor of hers named Boston, who had run away from her husband. In that name the unfortunate Mrs. Gale was buried, and Mrs. Scale felt her secret to be safe.

"How much o' that thousan' dollars ha' yer got left?" asked Scale sulkily, for as his wife had manipulated the whole transaction, she had likewise kept the proceeds.

"It's all there." she returned. "Why?"

"Don't yer think we'd better send that brat to the police station, an' go home. I'm sick o' this. We could set up shop an' git a easy livin' out 'er what you got stowed away."

"Haint you got no more ambition 'en that, Walkerton Henery?" She always gave him his full name, it sounded "kind o' high."

"Haint you heard o' them strike o' gold out on the coast somewhere West. Why a man named Cameron Gulch, I see in the paper, has been takin' up gold by the bucket full. "What he can do, you better believe we can."

"I don't want no diggin' fer gold, its risky, and its hard. Where one gits the buckets full you talk about, hundreds'll lose their lives. But I'll tell you what I will do. If you'll fork out money enough to set up a good saloon business, I'll undertake to help some o' them miners out there to hev a good time at their own expense, and my profit."

She sat and considered a while. Then made up her mind not to say anything about the will for a while yet.

"Well, look you *here*, Walkerton Henery: If I pay our passage out there, *I* keep the girl, *and* I take her with us. *When* I get out there, I'll give you *half* the money *if* I see a good openin', *and* the other half I keep *for* a rainy day."

Mrs. Scale had a habit of emphasizing small words, which had the faculty of impressing Walkerton Henery with the superiority of her wisdom. When that was not sufficient to make him walk in the way she wished he should go, she would add, "and *you* know Walkerton Henery, *I've* had ten years more experience *in* the world than *you* have," which latter argument was always conclusive.

Walkerton Henery agreed to her terms, and quietly they

sold their effects, giving out to the few who were curious concerning them, that they were going back to the Old Country, where a fortune had been left them.

They knocked about for some years from place to place before the sagacious Mrs. Scale would put out her money on the coveted saloon for her husband, and in the meantime he had to work at anything he could get.

At last they struck a mining town in the interior of British Columbia, where the good will and fixtures of such a place were on the market, owing to a stray bullet which had missed its intended mark, and taken the saloon keeper instead.

Marguerite was now fourteen years of age. A fair, pretty, pink and white creature, somewhat stupid, very timid, and exceedingly small for her years. It was soon rumoured that her parents were very strict, not to say cruel to her. She had a great horror of cold water, and one of their favourite punishments was to strip and throw her into a rain barrel, no matter what the time of year, and then whip her dry with towels, the two of them, for her physical good and mental enlargement; then either to send her to bed supperless or shut her in a dark closet, also one of her special dislikes, till she was willing to give either of her 'parents' the properly servile obedience they required. She seemed to have retained no memory of her former home or of her own parents. Some people said she was 'not all there,' and no one suspected for a moment but that the Scales were her rightful parents.

About this time a new sect, hailing from the South, sent in preachers with a kind of Free Thought teaching, which developed into Free Love, and from out the spirit of fervor with which Mrs. Scale entered into the 'New Religion,' and her admiration for the fine sensuous looking 'Preacher,'

came to her one day the stork, bringing a morsel of a girl baby, quite unexpectedly, of course.

This girl was so much the picture of Marguerite, no one could suppose anything but that they were sisters, even the babe as it grew, was more stupidly dull than Marguerite.

As time went on Marguerite blossomed into a pretty, plump, pink and white young woman, whose fair brown hair shone with the tint of pale gold, and despite the weak mouth, and the somewhat empty smile, she had suitors galore; but all dropped off one after the other till Marguerite had reached the great age of twenty-one.

Now it was that Mrs. Scale discovered her younger daughter's eyes were in a precarious condition, as every one else knew they had always been from the scrofulous affection of her blood. Mrs. Scale decided the only thing to save her from blindness was to take her to London, England, where a noted oculist might be consulted.

More easily than she had expected her husband handed her five hundred dollars above the price of her ticket, and with what she had saved from her housekeeping, and some three hundred dollars still left of the Gale money, she found herself within a week on her way to England; the will, papers and letters of the late Mrs. Gale carefully bestowed in the clothing upon her person.

She noted with satisfaction the alacrity of her husband's consent to her prolonged absence, and the tenderness of his manner to Marguerite.

Knowing both as she did, the outcome of her journey with regard to them would be as she desired. Having held the whip-hand so long, the idea of being ousted by Marguerite, or defied by Walkerton Henery had never occurred to her.

Her plans were working well. If she failed in estab-

lishing her own identity as Leonora Gale, she still had the real heiress in the background, and completely in her power.

Arrived in London, as a poor woman, she left her child at a children's home, determined not to be troubled by a daughter who was not only threatening to become blind, but idiotic. She wrote home and told her husband the child had died under an operation. It occasioned him no grief, although Marguerite shed a few tears over it.

We next find Mrs. Scale in the quiet country village of an English shire, paying calls upon different 'relatives,' and passing as Mrs. Gale, widow. She had taken care to ascertain that no word of Gale and his sons had ever reached the old home.

Here she spoke of things that only Leonora Gale would be cognisant of, and though her tongue sounded somewhat strange to them, they accounted for it by her long absence, and the fact that she had to mix with the untaught colonists made her grammatical errors possible, although by observation she had greatly improved her manner of speech.

Soon three elderly gentlemen who had known Leonora Gale in her childhood and youth, accompanied Mrs. Scale to London and swore to her identity before the family lawyers, who fortunately for her, were a younger branch of the house.

The will was proved, and Mrs. Scale's share was a goodly sum of the accumulated eighty thousand pounds.

Then the country village knew her no more, and she spent the greater part of a year going here and there, not as Mrs. Gale, but in her own name.

Her husband, little knowing of the wealth she had acquired, sent her very small allowances, and never at one time sufficient to pay her passage out. She smiled as she

threw his pittance to one side, and decided to steal a march upon the pair. Her appearance was hailed with the disgust she had anticipated.

Till this step Mrs. Scale had made no mistake. Now her wicked sacrifice of the girl left in her charge came home in full force. She had lost all control over Walkerton Henery, and he dared her to interfere with Marguerite.

Thinking to re-establish herself she told her husband of the wealth she possessed, and how she had come by it. But the charm worked wrong way, and he threatened to explode the whole thing and hand her over to the British authorities unless she gave the property to Marguerite.

This she absolutely refused to do upon any penalty, but patched up a kind of family compact by which he was to receive half, and they were all to live together.

They gave out that some mining speculations in which they had been engaged had been so extraordinarily successful, that they must build themselves a suitable dwelling.

Nothing so magnificent as the furnishing and appointments had been seen in the colony, not even in Government House.

They employed Chinese cooks, house men and gardeners; the two old people kept their own counsel, Marguerite was only aware they were wonderfully well off, and enjoyed it in her own way, never thinking to question whence it came.

They visited everywhere, and received the best there were socially, but Marguerite had no more admirers, she was even a wall-flower at the informal balls of the place, although no one had such dresses as she; and still another thing tried her keenly, and that was she was growing not only *embonpoint* but fat.

Things dragged along for several years in this way,

Scale getting more and more overbearing with both women. His wife was suffering from some internal disease, which however lingered too long to suit him in taking her hated presence out of the house.

Mrs. Scale possessed the only phaeton and carriage in the place, and one day she had driven out as usual, looking fearfully wan and ill, but that was her usual appearance, and people thought nothing of it till next morning it was reported that a coffin had been hastily ordered for her, and that the funeral was to take place that afternoon.

It was the custom for all the places of business to close for several hours to allow the entire population to join in the funeral parade, and the townsfolds flocked to the house an hour before the time set, in order to pay a farewell visit to the remains. What was their astonishment to find the funeral had hurriedly taken place at 10.30, on account it had been said of the inability to keep so bad a corpse. This puzzled many, as the poor woman had been thin to emaciation. But Marguerite told them the unknown disease had been cancer, and that it had suddenly broken. Also that Pa felt so bad he could not be seen by any one.

Little whisperings began to go round. The undertaker, who had been handsomely paid to say nothing, hinted of the terrible looking corpse she made, how twisted were her limbs, while her lips were drawn tightly back, and her eyes starting out from her head.

A lingering tenderness for Marguerite prompted an old admirer of hers, who had lately come in with his pile, to hang around the Scale house and see for himself if there was any truth in the suspicions with which the many regarded this strange family. Hearing voices in a downstairs room he had advanced to the window, whence he

could gain a partial view of the interior. There he saw Scale half fill a tumbler with port wine and pass it to some one apparently in bed. Marguerite at the same time put her head in the door and said "Good night ma, pleasant dreams."

This he thought was alright and he left immediately; but recalled all these incidents afterwards in the light of other events.

Now the information came through the dressmaker, that old Scale was going to marry his daughter. All stood horrified, and there was talk about taking up the body of the late Mrs. Scale, and tarring and feathering the old man. Stormy meetings were held, and rousing speeches made, but as so often happened in those days, it ended in much talk, but nothing doing.

Poor, foolish Marguerite, even under such circumstances thought she must have some new dresses for the occasion.

With the everlasting smile on her lips, she said to the dressmaker when she went to be fitted:—

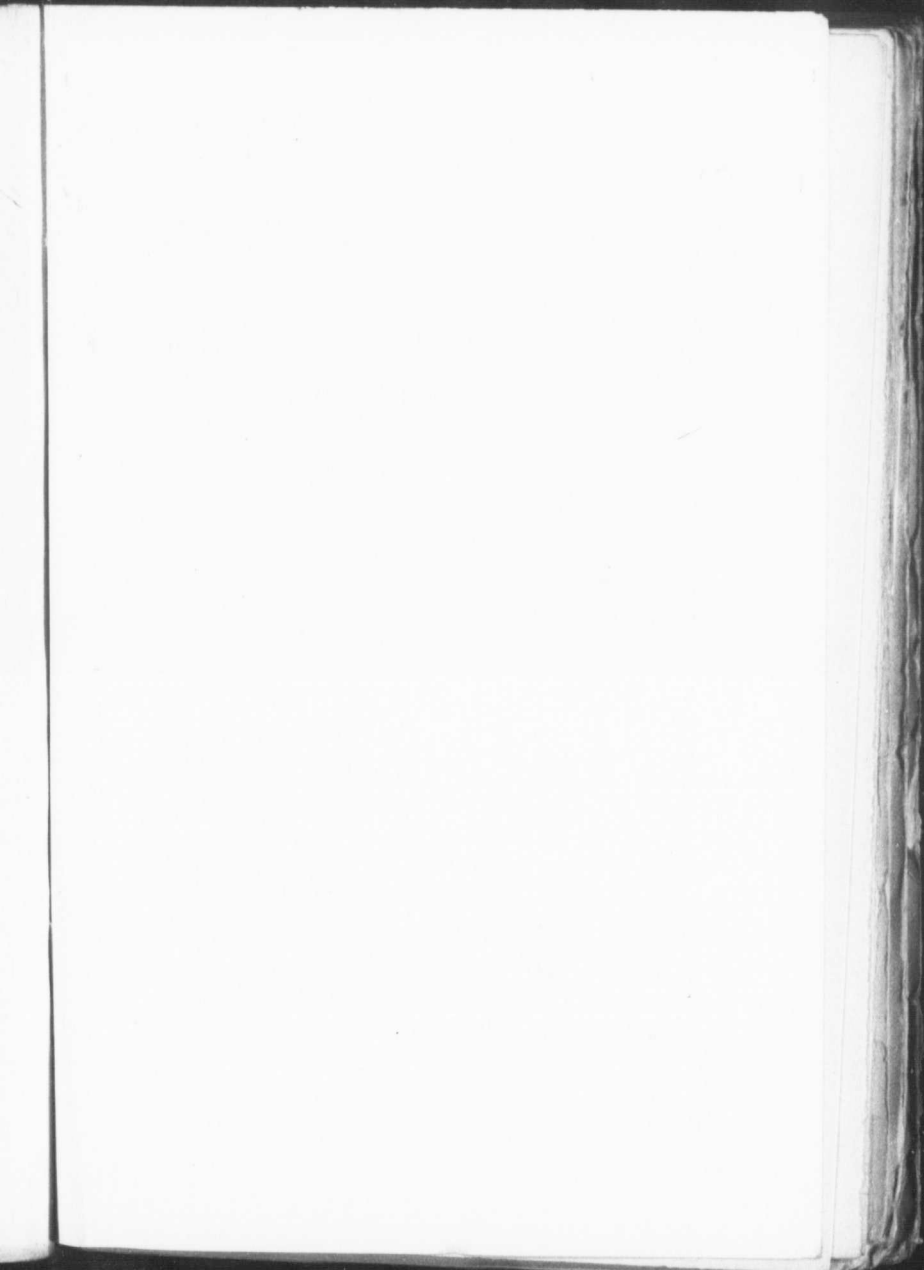
"I must have my dresses by next Wednesday, because I'm going to be married to Pa, and we're going away now Ma's dead."

Shocked beyond expression, the woman dropped the bright blue silk she was trying on, and raised her hands in protest.

"Oh, yes," continued Marguerite serenely, "I forgot to tell you my name is Gale, not Scale. I never knew it till Ma was dead; and Pa says I haven't got any money, and I aint strong enough to work. Besides, he says he won't have my nice white skin spoilt, cooking and messing around; so he's going to marry me and see I get taken good care of; for we've got more money than any body

ever thought. It was Ma that always wanted me to do dirty work."

Wednesday, a week from the burial of Mrs. Scale number one, and before the committees of investigation, indignation, and general fussiness had half discussed the subject, the pair were married before a justice of the peace and gone, no one but the agent knew where; and after he had sent the proceeds of a forced sale to them, their whereabouts only became known now and again, as some chance traveller came upon them, always on the move to leave Marguerite's admirers behind, for in spite of bolts, bars, locks and cunningly-devised bells, these pests of the old man's life, sought her favors.





MRS. HARDING CAME TO THE FORD

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NANCY BUTTER AT THE FAIR

INNOCENCE FROM THE BACKWOODS

MRS. BUTTER'S most friendly neighbor, a shy little woman, had heard of Nancy's wonderful journey to town to see the first Agricultural Show held in the country, and she must needs take a day off, saddle up the old mare and meander through the forest trails in order to hear the news.

Now Nancy Butter's farm was fair to see. As you emerged from the trail in the dense forest you came upon an open prairie, with here and there a scattered clump of wild rose bushes. Winding in and out, like a brilliant serpent was a narrow sparkling stream, and scattered over the landscape, horses and cattle feeding. This stream had no bridges, except here and there where a tree had been "felled" across, and which made a rather precarious footing for pedestrians.

Following a deeply-beaten trail Mrs. Harding came to the Ford, and made her way to a log house, built on the banks of the stream. Alighting, she was warmly welcomed by Nancy, and after the dinner dishes had been disposed of and the men folk gone back to work, the two women turned back their dress skirts, drew up close to the big box stove, and prepared for a lively chat.

Almost all the talking being on one side, quite a lot of information was imparted in a short time. The only things which seemed to concern Mrs. Harding were to see that her skirt didn't scorch, and that daylight enough remained for her to get over the ford and through the trail back to her cabin home before dark,

"You know Mis Hardin'" began Nancy Butter, "it must be nigh on ter ten years sense 'Lijah an' me went to town together, an' I aint so slender es I was then nuther; but 'Lijah he gits smaller and lighter all the time, seems to me he'll jes' dry up an' blow clean away some o' these times, an' I shant know what's got him, an' the dinner or supper or whatever it is'll git all spiled.

"Well I was goin' to tell you about that show. We jest tuk Samooel and Brindlepol. I cut down a pair o' 'Lijah's ole pants fer Samooel and they looked re-el nice wi' the stockings I knitted 'en last winter."

"We'd hearn say es small pox was to town, an' the papers made so much fuss about perfumingatin' an' all that, so we jest shet ourselves and Brindle Pol inter the wood shed and we perfumingated tell we was thet strong o' sulphur you might a struck us fer lucifer matches."

"Sich a steamboat es it were. Lookin' glass all around tell you can't rest, but hev to keep a lookin' at yourself this a way and that a way all the time. When I fust got on I see a big 'oman a com' along to meet me wi' a little boy es jest looked like Samooel eggsact, o'ny I tuk the 'oman to be almost twict es big es me. She was drest jest the same too: I stud still an' looked at her, an' she stud still an' looked at me, and we jest stared at one another, till I felt kinder mad, an' she looked mad, too. I jest thought to myself: 'I aint afraid o' you mam, I'll jest go up and ax you what it's all about any hows.' When what do you think Mis Hardin', I jest bumped up to a big looking' glass, and a feller says, 'Want to walk thru' the glass, Mum?' An' them es was settin' around sniggered; he thought he was drefful smart I guess. I didn't let on es I'd been fooled, but I jest snifted like, an' them fooks es hed got ready to laugh straightened out their faces agin."

Mrs. Harding fidgetted and asked about the town.

"I guess yu'il niver git home to-night ef I tell you all I hearn an' seen. The town is built up wonderful. They got a second street now an' the side walks hev got the up an' down tuk outen 'em, 'ceptin' on Front Street."

"Es I was sayin' 'Lijah left Brindle Poll on to the steam boat an' pioneered Samooel an' me to the Hottell. Lor' bless yer! that Hottell is two storey high, an' hes a sight o' rooms, an' then they hed ter dig a hole in the ground fer the kitchens, an' they hed them long tailed Chieneymen a cookin' down theer, I was most afraid to eat the stuff they cooked, but it was so awful nice I hed to take the chanct o' bein' pisened.

"The Hottell was big enough sure, but the rooms was awful small, an' ours was clear to the top. Samooel hed to lay down on the floor to sleep, fer the bed was only big enough fer me, but 'Lijah managed to scrouge in somehows."

"I got peekin' round an' I found es Mis' Tomlin es lives jest this side o' you, was in the next' room, an' es she often goes ter town she knowed some folks there, an' they come to see her."

"One night a Mis Byson come an' stopped. The men folks was hevin' a good time down stairs, so we sent Samooel and got suthin' warm an' comfortin' fer us, not es I'm in the habit o' takin' sich things myself, but es the others wanted it, I didn't think it looked well to make any objections."

"Mis Byson she up an' tol' all how Byson hed treated her years agone by, an' how nubbuddy but a saint cud put up wi' en, 'ceptin' her, an' how onct when he was up to the mines, the children an' her was most clemmed to death, an' then he come home dead broke, an' they hed to keep him tue."

"When she went away Miss Tomlin says tue her, says she, 'I hope you've injyed yerself Miss Byson mam?' an' Miss Byson she says, 'I niver injyed myself better, Miss Tomlin, mam.' They was main perlite to one nuther, es they'd orter be in town."

"I went to my room, blowed out the light an' got inter bed, an' was most asleep afore I tetched the piller."

"Sech a racket es somebuddy kicked up at my door. I guessed it were one o' them men folk es hed bin enjyin' hissels tue much an' couldn't find his room. I hed on my best ni'-gown wi' a lot o' croschay work on to it, an' a reel putty ni'-cap wi' a deep frill on to it, so I didn't mind lookin' out an' openin' the door a little ways."

"I says, says I, 'I guess you've comed to the wrong door my good man,' soothin' like. It's allest best not to rile a man when he's bin enjyin' hisself, 'an' I'm drefful sleepy,' I says, 'and I wish es you'd——'

"Sleepy" he shouts, 'I guess you'd a slept till the blowin' o' the horn ef I hadn't a smelt that gas. It's a new thing in this kentry, an' it's mighty strong.'"

"He walked right in athout so much es sayin' 'by yer leave'; gev a twist to the lamp an' walked out athout onct lookin' my way. It were very considerate on him, but a person don't mind bein' looked at when they are drest, or ondrest reel nice."

"We went to the show next day."

"It was in a buildin' 'bout es big es your barn, Miss Hardin'. It were cram jammed in wi' vegetables an' root crops, an' sich like, an' the walls was all hung wi' patch work quilts, rag kerpets, paintin's, chrildren's maps an' writin' books, bunches o' green corn, an' every thing you could think on."

"There was some pianners theer tue, an' Bob Kink theer

wi' his klootch, an' he's got lots of money you know, an' when she hearn them things play, she hung on his arm an' she says, 'Nica Ticky maux' (Buy me two), she tinkled her brown paws up an' down the thing an' told him he could jingle on one an' she on the other all winter, an' what good times they could hev. I guess he did buy one, fer I seen him talkin' to the man es hed 'em there, an' handin' out a heap of bills."

Sugar beets was piled everywheres an' they hed a keg o' fine white sugar at the show, an' told how they made it outer sugar beets, an' ast enny buddy to go an' see how it was made, an' ter put their money inter the consarn. Now you know Miss Hardin', sugar is mighty dear, twenty-five cents. a pound, an' we 'uns kin grow plenty sugar beets es good es thairn, so I ast to go an' see fer myself. 'Yu'll ha' to go over tue the island in a canoe says the man.' 'Thet's alright,' says I, 'canoes aint no new things tue me.'

I went off wi' a Siwash to an ole buildin' an' there sure enough was two scow loads o' beet fine an' full o' sugar alright."

On to a platform was three Indians an' a root cutter. One Indian passed up the beets, one put 'em in the cutter an' tother turned an' turned the handle. "Well, I says to myself, speakin' out loud, 'Ef them beets is cut wi' all that dirt on I kearnt see how they comes out clean white sugar like thet to the show!'"

"Thet's jest what I was a thinkin' Mam," says a man ter me very perlite. He had his senses about 'im ef he wuz half-seas-over. An' I says to 'im, 'I don't see how yer kin make clean money outen so much dirt.'"

A man es wuz tryin' t'git 'im to put five hundred dollars inter stock looks at me mad like, an' he says, "Yu

mind yer own business ole 'oman, I know what I'm a talkin' erbout, an' you don't. This aint no place fer a respectable 'oman anny ways."

I says: "It's women es hes ter use sugar, an' I don't think it would be respectable ter use sich muck es thet. My cows 'ud turn up ther noses at it."

He said some very on perlite things ter me, an' tole me ter take my ole nose outen thet: but I jes went an' looked behind o' the thing, an' them beets wuz droppin' on ter the muddy ground. But lor' bless yer, the per-moters sold est many shares in their dirty stock es set 'em up fer life, an' yet they never made a pound uv sugar arter all, fer it cum out, how thet sack o' fine sugar was made in Honey-lulay. Thet must be a great place fer bees I guess, but what thet's got ter do wi' sugar, I don't know.

"I went back to the show. It were grand to see all the wagins an' stages comin' in wi' all the ladies an' the fashons. They hed little bunnets an' hats like saucers an' plates turned down on their heds, wi' bows o' pretty ribbon, an' feathers an' flowers stan'in' up back on' front; on'y it rained pitchforks an' hammers, an' all them pretty things wuz drippin' wet. Some o' them ladies dresses hung tu 'em thet close, I says tu 'Lijah, 'Them gels might most es well wear pants to onct an' done wi' it.'

"'Hush Nancy B,' says he, 'I guess,'—but he didn't git no further fer I give 'im an ondignant look, an' he jes shet up.

Our Brindle Pol do give slathers o' milk to home, but down to town she didn't milk worth a cent, an' she didn't tek no prize nuther. I don't know ef it were because we perfuminged her wi' so much sulphur, er ef them town folk jest milked her 'tween times; however it were,

we jest hed our pains fer our trouble in takin' her.

"I were tue sleepy fust night tue look under the bed es anny 'omen should du, in a strange place, 'specially I wuz thinkin' what a good time we'd a hed es well es the men folks an' forgot, but to-night Mis Tomlin she were gone to spend the evenin' wi' Mis Bison an I felt kinder lonesome. Samooel wuz sleepin' tue es ef he was the forty sleepers rolled inter one. I jest stooped down, an' thet is hard work fer a 'omen o' my heft tue du, but Lor'! I jumped up quick enough, fer I seen an alingator theer apointin' straight fer Samooel. I jumped on ter the bed an' yelled, but Samooel he wouldn't wake up an' I felt drefful, fer I thought thet critter'd come out anny minit, an' may be sting 'en ter death, an' we'd hev to hire some buddy in his place. I couldn't du nuthin' but yell, an' sure in come a fine dressed young 'omen an' she says, says she, "Phwat's the matter Mum? I thought some one wuz a murtherin' of yez, shure an' I did."

"Not some buddy," says I, "but that critter onder the bed, he'll——"

"It's a mouse, is it Mum," says she, "an' she jumps on to a cheer an' on top o' the burer table. I shell allest think thet burer table hed a caster offen it fer it come down ker-flop wi' her, right on top o' Samooel an' bruk ter smithereens. It woke up Samooel though, an' jes es he crawled out, a man comes runnin' in an' says, "What's the durned ole gowk up tue ter night? She blowed out the gas one night, bust the sugar beet bubble yesterday, an' what's next?"

Then he seed the broken burer an' lookin' glass, an' the gal on her knees a comin' out from onder the pieces. Thet man said some very bad words, an' I says to 'em,

"Air yer aware theer's female ladies in this heer room, Mister?"

"Female divils," he yelled, "what's hit hall about hony way?"

"Yu ort ter know what it's all about," I says, kind o' dignified, "when yu let sech critters loose in yer Hottell es is onder the bed, an' me asettin' up in me best ni-close a shakin' an' a trimblin' wi' the cold."

"Tremble away yu ole scarcecrow," he says, "but yu'll hev tu pay the damages afore yu leave this Hottell." He dove onder the bed, an' hauled out the critter. "Hit's honely a hiron boot-jack, hain't yer niver see sich a thing afore?"

"Drefful bad grammar he spoke tu.

"Would you believe it? 'Lijah hed ter buy a new burer, but I tuk all es wuz left of the ole 'un an' fetched it ter hum. I've hearn say, 'it niver rains but it showers,' an' I wuz drefful glad I hedn't a broke the lookin' glass myself, fer sure es hogs is pigs, thet gel'll hev bad luck for seven year.

"I wuz gettin' most tired o' seein' so many folks, an' thought I'd like ter be gettin' back hum, on'y the music wuz so awful nice. Them fellers blowed an' blowed till theer cheeks stuck out, it wuz reel good, on'y I'm pretty heavy on my feet an' du git so onmerciful played out. I seen a table es hed a lot o' potted plants on to it, an' I Jest set down on the edge to enjy seein' them music men, when up comes a man in a hurry an' he says, "Git offen thet my good 'omen, yu'll break the stand."

Then I jest peeked around at the geranums an' things an' sniffed an' sniffed an' smelled round ter see ef theer wuzn't some little snips I might tek hum, when up comes anuther man an' he says, 'Move along theer, move along,

yu fills hup the halleys.' "I says to 'im, 'Then why don't yer make 'em bigger'?" he says, quite sassy like, 'Hevery buddy haint a woman mounting ef yu are.'" I says ter meself, I'll try agin, an' see what I kin find ter set down on. Theer wuz some rolls o' nice kerpets an' some orful pretty cheers, an' I jest bumped down on ter one, so glad ter set down. Then a man comes bustlin' up an' he says, "Git up my good 'oman. Yer gound is all wet, an' them cheers aint ter set down on."

"What be they fer then?" says I.

"Jest ter look at," says he.

"Lor," I says to 'en, "I wouldn't want a lot o' them things settin' around my place, they'd be a drefful bother ter keep clean, an' then on'y ter look at."

The apples an' pears an' plums wuz a sight fer blind eyes, 'specially the plums, an' I thought it'ud on'y be right ter sample 'em. Well, well, ef a big perliceman didn't shake a stick over my head, an' order me off like I were a pickerpocket. I went right after 'Lijah an' tole him he'd best settle wi' thet feller fer treatin' of me like thet. I told him what wuz the use o' hevin' a husband ef yer hed ter look arter yerself, an' be treated like yer wuz a lone 'oman. 'Lijah says, "The man is on'y doin' of his dooty." "Fine dooty," says I wi' all my dignity on. "Threatenin' female ladies, when he aint afeared ef their husbands is."

I wandered round a bit more, when I sees 'Lijah settin' on a beer barr'l. I goes up to 'en an' says, "Yu've gotten the right place at last, I'm thet petered out, I couldn't stand another minit." "Mind yer don't bust the barr'l, ole 'oman," he says, on respectful like. I looked at 'en kind o' meanin', and he didn't say no more. He knows who came home onct wi' his close all soaked thru wi'

beer, an' thet frum a prohibition place, an' tole a hen and bull yarn about a barr'l bustin' in the up stairs loft of the boardin' house es didn't keep nothin' on hand but tea and sech. Said the heat busted the barr'l an' the beer all come down ker-slop on to the dinner table, an' them all so innercent, an' nubuddy knowed how it got theer. He knowed what I wuz thinkin' erbout, an' he didn't say no more, but jest made room fer me. The barr'l wuz set like it wuz ready ter use, an' rested on its side jest on a rack. I stepped on ter the rack an' set down flop, I was so glad tue git the weight offen my feet. Jest how it happened I don't know, but suthin' gave way onder. 'Lijah an' we went down, settin' right in the middle o' thet beer rack, our head a standin' up one side, an' our heels a stickin' up the tother, an' all thet good beer a soakin' the outside on us. 'Lijah picked hisself out, an' three or four hauled me out. I never seen 'Lijah so mad. He says, "I'm a goin' hum termorrow ole 'oman. I've hed enough show fer onct, an' it'll be a long ten year afore I tek you offen the ranch again."

Pretty Mrs. Weldon

A TENDER-FOOT IN A CROWN COLONY

CHAPTER I

Among those who came up to British Columbia with the earliest rush of gold hunters from California, were two Brothers—big, dark, silent men.

The elder had shipped around the Horn as an able-bodied seaman; the younger held his papers as mate in the merchant Marine.

They were somewhat morose, and unfriendly in their habits, so what success they had had in the gold mines of California, or how they came by what they possessed, was known only to themselves.

The genial, openhanded miner generally avoided them. One took up land on the banks of the Fraser, the other secured a beautiful piece of prairie several miles inland.

A stream where trout leaped and sported in their season and salmon crowded up to spawn, meandered through it; the forest primeval raised its sheltering arms around, breathing of pine and cedar, wild honey-suckle and many a fragrant herb. No sound broke the stillness save the cry of a squirrel, the thump of the grouse or the crack of rotten wood as the heavier animals passed along; for in this country the feathered tribes are singularly silent.

Here the brothers cut small trees of a uniform size, and built for themselves a log hut, or, more properly speaking

in those days, a house, for it contained two rooms in the log-built part, whilst along the whole length of the back ran a lean-to of shakes, which served as kitchen and wood shed, much to the general convenience of the silent pair.

Everything was 'ship-shape,' two beds or rather bunks nailed to the wall, two on either side of the log-built rooms.

A stray cattle-man passing through noted this, and great was the conjecture as to why so many beds were needed by two men, or even why more than the usual one room should have been built at all; for men in general only needed shelter, comfort they hardly looked for.

The mate appeared in New Westminster, and took out a post office order for a considerable amount, and the post-master, under pretence of business, insisted upon knowing to whom he was entrusting so much money in Liverpool.

Then it was whispered abroad that this sullen man had left a wife, and may be children behind him, and that he had sent money home for them to follow.

Had they seen his letter they would have stood aghast, for it said:—

"Mrs. Weldon, I hereby send five hundred dollars to bring you and the children out to me. Don't you try any sharp tricks such as cutting off with the money and the children, thinking you can keep away from me, for I'll follow you if you do and kill you and them on sight."

Then the loving husband gave full directions for the sale of their furniture, the outfit, and the *modus operandi* of the journey out by way of Panama.

He laid in a stock of provisions, bought two cows, a number of chickens, several pigs, and a few farming tools; if you can call spades, rakes and hoes by that name.

He drank heavily while in town, but never asked another

man to take a drink with him, which act of unsociability might be construed in two ways: either he felt himself superior to his fellow-man, or he was too mean to pay for anyone else.

The liquor seemed to take little effect upon him, except that he grew more silent, if that were possible, and too morose for anyone to take the chance of crossing him.

His strength was prodigious, and he knew his business perfectly; this induced a river Captain, who had been having trouble with his half-breed deck hands, to approach him with an offer of employment on his boat; because, he argued, "That Weldon could chuck any cantankerous beggar of a half-breed or drunken miner into the river without turning a hair."

Such a mate he wanted, for, although a good Captain as river Captains went, he was small of stature and possessed little physical strength; which left him at the mercy of the swift riffles on the Fraser if his half-breeds got sulky and refused to work.

Weldon could see the Captain was 'dead anxious' to secure his services, so he held out for one hundred dollars a month, and although it was some twenty dollars more than the usual sum demanded, Captain Sikes was fain to give it to him, for on his last trip up river he had been put out of his pilot house by the burly half-breed who acted as mate.

The Captain looking down had remarked to the man that the cord-wood he was getting on board needed ballasting, as 'she was listing to starboard.'

The half-breed mate looked at the cordwood and then up at the face of the Captain above him. Seizing a stick four feet long and about six inches square, he rushed up to the pilot house, and had not his superior beaten a hasty

retreat he would certainly have sustained bodily harm; for the mate was highly indignant at receiving what he considered a public reprimand.

Lord of the situation by reason of his unquestionable strength, the half-breed took charge of the wheel and landed all safe in town.

The Captain naturally objected to such treatment on his own boat, and when he cast his eyes on Weldon he knew he had got the man who could handle the masterful Skookum Dan.

The latter was greatly astonished when told his services were no longer required.

"What's the matter with you and Sikes?" asked an acquaintance, as Skookum Dan sullenly made his way off the wharf, cash in hand, prepared to make a trip to Victoria to 'blow it in.'

"Oh! I dunno; he bullied me over loadin' cordwood, and I guess I can load cordwood with any white man. I just run him out of the pilot house with a cordwood stick and brought the boat to town myself. I can handle a steamboat as well as he can, you bet! He kinder got mad and sacked me, but he'll be glad to take me on again."

"He's took that big Englishman on I heer," returned the other, "and you'd better git in all the good time you can right now Skookum, my boy, for you won't git much of a time with Weldon."

Time went on, and any one could see that Weldon was getting restless; not that his affections troubled him, but he was afraid he might be 'fooled' by a woman, his intention having been in the first place not to let his wife know if he was living or dead.

One day as he was standing on the deck of the up-river steamer, watching the freight come aboard, he was

hailed from the guards of the incoming Victoria boat by a pretty little woman, who was waving frantically to attract his attention. Two children stood by her, looking anything but pleased to see their father.

CHAPTER II

WE will let the little woman tell the story of her coming in her own way, as she sat by the fireside of friends many years after.

"You see my husband's brother William came out as mate on board one of the Hudson Bay's ships. William tried his fortune in the California diggin's, and he did well, so he wrote for my John to join him.

"They were both good men to have on board ship, for they were strong and fearless, and kept the sailors in order, so John had no trouble in findin' a ship outward bound for the gold diggin's.

"They made some money there, and then they both came on up to British Columbia, and John thought he'd send for me. I never had a word from him, but the letter and the money he sent from here, and my funds were runnin' pretty low by then, careful as I could be.

"William objected to my comin', for he said there would sure to be trouble if John sent for that 'pretty little wife of his,' those were his very words, she repeated; 'Pretty little wife of his.' As she looked up she caught the merry twinkle in the eye of her host, who said, "True for you, Mrs. Weldon. You was as pretty as a wax doll, and lively as a kitten."

Turning to his daughter he continued: "Why, Molly, you with your black eyes and quiet ways wouldn't have been seen where this little woman was; and women were mighty scarce in those days, let me tell you. Pretty or ugly they counted for something."

"Don't they now?" asked Mrs. Weldon coquettishly.

"Of course they do, we couldn't get along without them," and he took a puff or two at his pipe. "But I was going to tell you, Molly, what she looked like. A round little tot, like your mother in figure, with yellow hair all in curls on her shoulders, blue eyes, and the regular pink and white British complexion. All the men lost their heads and their hearts, and John soon hustled her off up country to his brother's ranch. I can tell you he was scared she'd get spirited away."

Mrs. Weldon laughed naively at the old recollection and said, "He needn't have been a bit alarmed, there was only one John in the world for me. But it was orful temptin' to tease him sometimes, though he wasn't altogether safe."

"Let me see," ruminated her host, between puffs, "you had to go up river on the steamboat to William's place?"

"Yes, and when we got there we found a mule in a rough two-wheeled cart, not half big enough for our boxes and things, and a cow tied behind it, and what do you think William said to me?"

"I thought you'd have a lot of truck along or it wouldn't be you, so I brought this fine cow for you and little Sukie to ride.' Her uncle always called her Sukie to tease me, as you know, her right name being Florence."

"Poor child, she was standin' on the muddy bank in her nice white frock and blue sash, with blue shoes and stockings. She was hangin' on to my dress, frightened to death at the dark forest around us."

"The steamboat was backin' her way out, and there was my things in the mud, and that unaccountable lookin' mule cart, with William, all rough and not shaved nor anything."

"I flopped down in the mud, holdin' on to Florence,

and began to cry and say I wanted to go home.

"John and his brother didn't take a bit of notice of us, but went on loadin' up the things; then John comes over to me and he says (poor man he's dead now)—he says, 'You won't do much flirtin' here my lady. Now you just get up, and either walk or ride on that cow.'

"I ain't one to be down in the mouth long, and I saw it would be best not to make a fuss, so I got up, and I says, I'll walk. It ain't far to William's farm, I suppose? I was thinkin' all farms were like I'd seen when I'd been out in the old Country at home. A good big house, plenty of milk and butter, home-made bread, good fresh eggs, and all that sort of thing.

"But William says, 'It's nine miles to the ranch, and the road ain't as good as this far.

"Flo and me was stickin' in the mud every step then, and could hardly pull along. So I says, put the child in the cart and I'll get on somehow.

"No, they wouldn't do that, the boxes might shift they said, when they came to the trail through the forest, and may be crush her.

"I dragged on a bit farther, I hated to give up. I had been watchin' the cow and she seemed to be quiet enough, so at last I said, 'If one of you'll hold me on, I'll try what ridin' on a cow's like.'

"Glad enough I was to get on I can tell you, and the cow went taggin' along at the tail of the cart, and you could hear a big suckin' noise like a giant eatin' soup, every time she pulled a hoof out of the mud.

"When we got to the forest the trail was drier. But my! you had to look out for the branches of the trees hittin' you, after the cart had separated them. So I nearly laid down on the cow's back. Then Flo began to cry for

something to eat, and the men got tired and cross. It was a nice gettin' home I can tell you.

"However they say it's a long lane that hasn't a turnin', and we'd been turnin' and turnin' and turnin' for nearly six hours. I could have cried myself, but I just kept quiet and hushed the child. When I tried to think, I didn't very much care what happened, I was so faint and tired.

"'Whoa!' says William, and we stopped before a zig-zag fence with a little log cabin inside; it had small windows and a rough door. When we got inside it had no floor. Some bunks were nailed to the walls, there was a bit of a rough table and some boxes to sit on.

"I just dropped down and fainted, and I never came to till John made a fire and got me some tea. If there'd been no tea I think I should have died.

"When I came round I laughed and cried, till I hadn't any more strength left. Then I went to sleep in one of the bunks.

"But there that time is past and gone." She sat silent awhile, and then continued:—

"It wasn't so bad as what followed. John went back to the boat of course, and left me and the children there with William.

"Willie was named after his uncle, but he never could abear the child, because he was small and fair like me, not big and dark like his father.

"William always thought there was no one in the world like his brother John, and since I've got more sense, I believe he was jealous of me, for I never heard of him bein' in love with any one but John.

"He made Willie hunt up the cows, and learn to milk, and there were plenty of wild animals in the forest in those days. Why we kept the chickens in big coops on

the little porch, and the cougars would come and try to get away with a coop if they couldn't break it open; they like chickens.

"I used to go with Willie very often after the cows, and we would see black bears gettin' berries, but they never came after us. I guess they wasn't hungry.

"When I told William about it he just laughed, and said, 'We wasn't as sweet as the berries.'

"I told John when he came to see us once, like a foolish little woman as I was, and he says, 'Well you shan't be bothered that way again. I'll just take Bill with me, and William can hunt the cows himself.'

"I begged and prayed him to leave the child with me. I went down on my bended knees to him, but he wouldn't listen to me.

"I wasn't very well then, and I felt I must have the boy; but his father said they wanted a waiter on the boat, and my Willie must go. If I kept him tied to my apron strings he'd grow up as big a fool as his mother.

"I stood it for two or three trips of the boat, and then I got up in the dark one morning and hitched the mule to the cart. Took Florence and went to the landin' without William once suspectin' what I was after.

"As I laid awake night after night, I could hear my Willie cryin', and I couldn't rest. I knew his father would have no mercy on him, and I made up my mind it John insisted on keepin' him there, I would just tell him, I'd take Flo and jump into the river right in front of the boat, and then I knew Willie would do the same, and we would all die together.

"I went all through the trail, and never once thought of cougars, wild cats or bears; and there I waited at the landin'-place till the steamer came puffin' into sight, and

as soon as the gang plank was down, I took the child and went aboard.

"John didn't expect to see me of course, and he was all taken back.

"I want Willie to go home with me," I told him. "I shall go crazy there alone."

"The Captain heard me, and he said, 'I should think you would little woman.'

"Turnin' to John he says, 'If you don't send the boy you can go yourself.'"

"Of course I didn't want that, and I looked up at John and smiled; then I turned to the Captain and I said, 'I know I'm only a foolish little woman, and the boy would be better with his father, but I'm so lonesome,' and I began to cry.

"I couldn't help it, and that always made John mad.

"Just then I could see Willie's blue eyes lookin' pitifully at me, and I saw a great bruise on his forehead too, that I knew his father had given him.

"I dried my tears and seemed to feel as much spirit in me as John. I up and told him what I would do, and I spoke so Willie could hear me, and he nodded his head as much as to say, 'I'll jump in too.' For shame's sake John had to let the boy come with me, although he threatened to pay him out when he came to see us. But I trusted in Providence and my own wits for that time, and we started home through the dark forest trail as happy as could be.

"The steward gave us a parcel of things to eat as we went along; and John actually bought a bottle of English ale and put it in the cart.

"I says, 'John do kiss me, and I'll do anything you like, only I must have Willie when I can't have you.' I've always been glad I said that, and he did kiss me."

CHAPTER III

WE return to where we left the little woman on the bank of the mighty river, waving to the dark and sullen figure in the wheel house.

It was apparent that another member would shortly be added to the family circle, and the miners who had watched the little scene, the gamblers who were going up to fleece the unwary, the sneak thieves whose only object was to rob the dump-boxes, left the painted dance-house girls to amuse themselves in the saloon, and going outside took off their hats to the little mother-woman who stood so bravely on the mud-bank, and was so happy that the surly mate had kissed her, and left the boy with her.

When the steamboat had turned the bend in the river, every one went back to their idle occupations of card playing, gambling, and drinking, for there was always a bar on these boats.

Having watched the steamboat disappear, the little woman set her face towards the forest.

On their arrival at the loghouse they were greeted by a storm of abuse, but Mrs. Weldon, who seemed to have gained a spirit of courage such as she had never possessed before, told him she had been to see John, and if he hadn't objected she didn't see what his brother had to say in the matter.

Meantime the steamboat went on its way with a swing that pleased all the travellers, for Weldon kept her head well up against the stream, hurried the laggards at every

landing, and it seemed that his would again be the first boat to reach the old Hudson's Bay station at Fort Yale.

This being the ambition of every river Captain, all steam was carried that could possibly be put on, and the safety valve weighted down to increase the speed.

The last stop they made was at Hope, where a trail over the mountains to the Similkameen Country was used to bring in cattle from the bunch grass ranges both for up and down river. The Fraser being, as the water-ways in all newly opened up countries are, the great high-way towards which all trails tended.

Weldon was angry that another was to be added to his family. He would have been better satisfied had there been no children, for he hated children, despised small men and abhorred big women. He was afraid his wife was gaining too much influence over him, as his brother had frequently told him she would.

"She'll jest twist your big hulk around her little finger afore long, see if she don't," had been his pleasant way of putting it. Why he had let the boy go with her was a mystery to him. He was angry with himself for being too soft, and no one dare approach him that day, except Skookum Dan, the one-time rebellious mate. In him, Weldon had discovered somewhat of a kindred spirit, and to him the mate resigned the wheel while he went to his meals, with the injunction not to give it up to that little snipe, (meaning the Captain). To which Skookum (Strong) Dan would reply laconically "You bet!"

Captain Sikes took his enforced leisure calmly, for his boat gained in popularity, and consequently in profit as its record of being 'first in' became established.

As neither of the men knew fear, so also was fatigue a stranger to their iron sinews. When Weldon was out

of the wheel-house he went to his state room; a little cupboard of a place he could hardly turn round in, and his feet always hung over the side of his narrow bed. Here he would smoke and drink while Skookum Dan navigated the boat in the lower and easier stretches of the river. In the more difficult upper stretches, Weldon was at the wheel, and Skookum Dan down by the engines piling in fuel and gathering steam, for it was the pride of his life to pass the other boats on the way up, and arrive at Fort Yale with a broom tied to the flag-pole indicating to all and sundry that they had made a clean sweep of the river. Here they would receive the uproarious cheers of the miners and packers, who waited on the up-river race, and staked their hard-earned money on its results.

At Hope, the boat was detained to ship a number of mules and oxen for packing over the mountains to the Cariboo Country.

This put Weldon and Skookum Dan into a fury. They wanted to leave them for the next trip, but Captain Sikes stood firm on that point, and shipped they had to be.

Both Weldon and Skookum Dan went ashore and helped to hustle the frightened animals aboard. One of the oxen became frightened, and breaking the guards started for liberty, but Skookum Dan caught him by the tail, Weldon ran for his horns, and between them, they pushed and carried the astonished creature over the gang plank and into a stall in safety.

Now to catch up their rival which had got several minutes start of them!

Some three miles above Hope stood two rocks, like pillars of fate, sheer up and down into the river, called the Twin Sisters.

The river narrowed somewhat here, which caused its



"THE TWIN SISTER ROCKS"

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always heavy down stream to rush with great velocity around the two impeding obstructions, and frequently a boat would have to make several attempts before she succeeded in stemming the mighty current.

For once, the man or men on the wheel, felt the rudder lose its grip upon the water; there was nothing for it but to let her head swing down stream, steer her clear of the rocks, and collect steam for the next trial.

The boat that got the start from Hope lost her grip and headed down, thus giving Weldon's boat her chance.

Skookum Dan made up his mind that it would be no fault of his if their boat lost her headway, so he piled into the furnace butter, fat, bacon and oil. He weighted the safety valve, and to make sure it should not give way, placed a plank over it, and seated himself and as many Siwashes (Indians) as could find room, on it.

From this coign of vantage, he told his admiring tribesmen of his adventures in Victoria after being paid off by Captain Sikes. He had bought the best suit of broad-cloth money could buy, a one hundred and fifty dollar watch, a wide fawn colored cow-boy hat or sombrero, in all of which things, the soul of the half-breed delights. The sombrero is particularly becoming, for, from under it their smouldering dark eyes and plentiful straight black hair, have a strong beauty all their own.

His vanity satisfied, he had proceeded to 'drink and cut up.'

The next thing he knew was being awakened by a sensation of cold. He came to himself, sat up and looked around to find he was near the edge of a wharf, naked as he was born, with the day breaking, and not a soul in sight.

He ran for the saloon where he remembered he had some money put away in the safe. Here he made such a

disturbance, that the squaw wife of the proprietor got up to see what was the matter.

Her man wasn't half the size of Skookum Dan, and he tried in vain to crowd his giant proportions into the white man's clothes. So Desdemona lent him a skirt and shawl of her own till the clothes stores should be opened. Thither he repaired in his scant female garb, his brawny reddish brown legs showing far below his skirt. Here he arrayed himself as well as he could from his diminished finances, and satisfied with the fun he had had, returned to his river boat, and worked in good fellowship with the man who had supplanted him.

As he talked, the steamboat was trembling in every timber, her light upper works rattling as if they would fall to pieces.

"She's making it!" shouted Skookum Dan, as the boat passed so close to the threatening rock you could have touched it with a walking stick. He laughed heartily as he saw a 'che charco' (stranger) leap from the guards to a ledge of rock in sudden, overpowering fright. "I guess he can stay there till the water goes down, if he can't swim ashore," remarked Skookum Dan nonchalantly.

The passengers were crowded round the guards of the boat, excited, speculating, betting on the result, as anxious that their boat should win as Weldon and his skookum helper were.

With his eyes on the rock, and feeling the very pulse of the boat, Skookum Dan shouted, "She's wavering boys; stir up the fire, pile in the butter, put on more grease!"

It was done; and a second later there was a sound that made the very mountains reverberate.

The boilers had exploded.

The next instant sections of boat, human bodies, cattle,

mules, scalding water, steam and wreckage darkened the air. Then all was silence.

The next boat came shuddering up amidst the floating horrors of its rival.

Not a soul escaped but the frightened che charco, and an Indian who had been leaning on the guards, listening to Skookum Dan's account of himself and his adventures.

The up-coming boat lost her grip again and again, which was a good thing for the che charco, as those on board noticed his isolated condition, and a cow-boy stood ready with his lariat, which he deftly slung over the shoulders of the young man, running out the slack to give him a chance to place it below his armpits, and hang on to it with his hands.

"Haul in your slack, boys. Look lively, or he will be under the wheel!"

Soon the half unconscious lad came dripping over the guards, and was eagerly interrogated by the crowd, but to little purpose, for all he was conscious of was the irresistible impulse to jump, and the shout of derision that went up at his expense.

CHAPTER IV

Stunned by the suddenness of her loss and the horror of John's tragic death, Mrs. Weldon gave no thought to the condition of her own health, nor the necessity for providing proper assistance when her time of trial should come.

We are told that "The wind is tempered to the shorn lamb," it certainly held good in this case.

All who knew the habits of the squaws married to white men, especially if they lived in one of the towns, will remember the overmastering desire they occasionally developed for a return to their tribe, and a resumption of their old life for at least a time.

To fish all night from a light cedar canoe, with no thought of the white man's scorn, to pick berries, cut and dry fish till their garments were saturated with the odour of salmon, gather roots, herbs, and the bark of trees for baskets, the rushes also for klis-klis or mats.

To extract the beautiful and durable reds and blues from certain plants and berries, and generally to revel in God's great temple of nature.

One of these calls from the wild had taken Desdemona, and when her tenase tecoup man (small white man) came in one night, the house was dark, and she and the children gone.

Now on one of Skookum Dan's visits to Victoria, he had told Desdemona all about Weldon and his tenase kloodchman (little woman) where and how she lived, and so on. The stalwart brave was a great gossip, and the Indians always prized a good talker or story-teller.

It occurred to the visiting squaw that she would go and see the hyas skookum man's (big strong man's) tenase klootchman. So by Providence directed, she stepped into a canoe, paddled across the wide river, and up the salmon stream to the little woman's log cabin.

Lifting the latch softly she walked in. Mrs. Weldon was not surprised to see her, and Desdemona acted as though she had been sent for on the occasion.

As Mrs. Weldon lay weakly looking at the dark brown babe on her arm, he scowled as the light struck his eyes, and the mother's memory of events came back to her clearly, as they had scarcely done since her memorable journey to the steamboat, and the awful news which William, in his own grief, had broken all too suddenly upon her.

"His living image," she whispered to herself, and speaking of it years afterwards to her friends in town she said, "Yes, his living image, and as like him now as two peas, and he took to steamboatin' too, like a duck to the water; there ain't another such a captain on the river as my John."

"John and his brother never meant to be unkind to me, but they were so big and strong themselves, they had no idea how little strength a woman's got." Mrs. Weldon wiped away a few tears, had another cup of tea, and to her friend's sympathetic remark of "Why, if most women had half to go through that you have had, it would have killed them."

"Well, you see I don't sit down and think, I'm always up and doin' something, and a person as keeps busy and don't stop to think about things, can get over lots."

"There's one thing though I can't help thinkin' about, and that's the time of the floods.

"William had got very overbearin' with us, so Willie

took up the management, and we moved to John's place on the banks of the Fraser.

"Willie got some lumber and we built a shack, and what with sellin' butter and eggs to the steamboats, and the money John left, we got along very comfortable like.

"Then we had a story and a half house, and a good barn when the flood came, and we were on the low lyin' land.

"Why the water came up that fast, I remember well. I was bakin' bread that mornin', and I made a mark on the kitchen door five feet high, laughin' like, and I says to Willie, 'when the water comes that far I'm agoin' to quit, and never come back any more.'

"I never thought for one moment it would come high enough to do any damage, but behold you! Before night, the water was up to half an inch of that mark.

"We'd put all our furniture into the half story that had never been finished; we fixed the beds there and made out to sleep.

"Willie'd made a raft and we got the cook stove and kitchen things onto that. The cows and horses had been moved to higher ground.

"We thought the freshet would only last a few days, but it lasted several weeks, till at last the neighbors got scared about us; they said the house would sure wash down, and we'd be drowned whilst we were asleep.

"I didn't think we would, and I was sure the house was all right, but one mornin' steppin' out of the roof window I bumped my head so bad, I said I wasn't goin' to sleep in there any more. So we made our beds on the raft.

"A night or two after, Willie woke up, and he says, 'Look out, mother, the house is goin'.'

"The raft was tied to the house. It was bright moon-

light, and up I jumped, ran for the axe and chopped the rope in two in a twinklin', before I was half awake.

"There went the house sailing out into the river, along with broken lumber from bridges, chicken coops, pig-sties, and live and dead cattle and hogs.

"Willie had an old boat alongside the raft, and he says, 'This is the last of this kind of thing, mother. I'm goin' to tow you to the high ground where the cattle are, and we'll make out with a tent till we can build again, and it won't be down here either.'

"It was such a good thing that we'd saved our stove and cookin' things, and the beds too. We just lived in a tent all summer, till Willie built the nice house we've got now."

MISS PHŒBE'S COURTSHIP

FUN IN THE PIONEER WEST

About the year 186—, as Mrs. Norland waited for her mail in the little shack of a post office up the many wooden steps, a letter was handed to her, deeply edged in black.

It bore an English post-mark, and the good lady hurried home to devour the contents of her missive.

It announced that her step-mother was dead, and that her half-sister, Phœbe, who was perilously near forty, had gathered up her little fortune of a few hundred pounds, and was on her way to test the possibilities of a new country, and incidentally the temper of a step-sister.

In those days women were more than scarce, that is white women. A famine in that line was oppressing the little city, and Miss Phœbe could have married any man from eighteen to sixty years of age, upon whom she might cast a favoring eye.

Many were the unnecessary visits of these swains to the Norland home, which overlooked our restless river; and Miss Phœbe all unconscious that she was the attraction, passed many a pleasant evening, when someone Mrs. Norland thought suitable happened to be bidden to stay.

One evening Mr. Norland brought in a shy back woodsman. He had a ranch a few miles out of the city, and here he cleared, fired and worked, and may be dreamed of a happy day when his shack would be exchanged for a home, and the kindly fare of a good woman should greet him when he came home from his toil, and together they might enjoy the homely meal which she had prepared; in

contrast to what it was now, when upon his return he would find there was water to fetch from the gurgling mountain stream, which had its source in a glacier lake, cold and sweet on the hottest day in summer.

When he went to make his fire, not a chip of wood left, and he was fain though weary, to shoulder his axe and sally forth in quest of fuel.

Not that there was any lack in that respect, for he was surrounded by only too much of it; but there, when a man is hungry he is scarcely philosophical.

We say he had visions of happier times, but ten years had dragged along their weary length. The few white girls in town would not look his way, and of the half-breeds who smiled upon him, he was distrustful. Several buxom squaws had signified their willingness to become his, with or without license, but from these he had turned in manly disgust.

Dave brooded over the evening he had spent at the Norlands, and blushed all over at the recollection of Miss Phœbe's coquettish glances.

Now Miss Phœbe was dainty and neat, from her fringe of black hair to her dainty little slippered feet. He felt she was too good for him, with his tall, gaunt, bony frame, his red hair and unruly goatee, his freckled face and general aspect of awkwardness.

But Mrs. Norland possessed two bright and mischievous young people, Jean and Walter, these congenial spirits invoked the aid of Marthe Ann, whom we have met before, and who now rejoiced in the abbreviation of Mattie. 'Marthe Ann' being far too much like the name of people 'in the backwoods yarns' to suit her in the growing state of the vast community of white people, now numbering perhaps four hundred.

The scrawny girl was ripening into beautiful young womanhood. Her red hair toned down to a golden yellow, the mischievous grey-blue eyes veiled by their heavy white lids, hid the fun-loving soul of their owner from the gaze of the curious. In all else she was still the Marthe Ann who saw the comic side of everything, and could assist in creating laughable situations.

These young people had seen Dave drive into town for his supplies, and had lain their heads together, brooding mischief.

Walter invited him to put 'Chips,' his horse, into their stable, to which he readily assented, hoping thereby to obtain a fleeting glimpse of his inamorata.

What was his delight when the far-seeing Mrs. Norland came out and invited him in to tea.

"Women, especially if they are no longer young, do make such fools of themselves over men, that it would be well to get Phœbe married to someone near her own age, before she had gone and persuaded herself she was still sweet sixteen, and tied some unfortunate idiot of eighteen or twenty to her apron strings for life," said this wise woman to herself.

After tea, Phœbe, Dave, Walter and Jean adjourned to the back porch. Dave attended to the wants of Chips, and then seated himself uneasily on the top rail of the fence, near enough to the back porch to carry on a conversation with 'the girls,' as in his own mind he called Miss Phœbe and the irrepressible Jean.

The summer evening was sweet and balmy, as they only can be in the land of pine and cedar forests; and taking it in to the fullest extent came our old friend Mattie, cantering up on a little Indian pony which bore the name of Hetty.

Mattie had a new cow-girl saddle on Hetty; and, as it

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differed in many ways from the old English one upon which she had learned to ride, she felt anything but easy in her mind, not for fear she might be thrown, but lest it might injure Hetty's back.

She therefore hailed the sight of Dave as a most opportune occurrence, for he was noted far and near for his knowledge of everything appertaining to horses.

Up she came in a merry canter, and down she slid by the back fence. Gathering her riding skirt about her with a natural grace, she and Dave were soon deep in the lore of front and back cynch; for these saddles have two hair cynchies, which are provided with leather thongs, and passed through rings, where they fasten with a knot that only the initiated know how to make; and Mattie, who always attended her own pony, was determined to be one of the initiated.

She made Dave cynch and uncynch, make and slip the knot.

She did it herself, but she took an unusual length of time to learn, as her busy head was planning mischief and a long ride next day.

Of course the others came down from the porch to watch the operation, and when Dave led Hetty off to tie her up, Mattie said a few words in Jean's ears that sent her off into fits of laughter.

All that an outsider might learn, were the few words spoken as Dave came back, and they re-mounted the porch.

"You just back me up and there'll be some fun to-morrow."

Dave returned to his uncomfortable seat upon the fence, when Mattie enquired suddenly, "How many will your wagon hold, Dave?"

"How many what?" he asked, taking off his hat and

rubbing up his brilliant hair till it stood on end, as he always did when perplexed.

"How many what?" returned Mattie with a scorn that withered him, and made him feel he would do anything in the world to restore the happy relations of a few minutes ago.

"How many what!"; why people of course, Jean and I were thinking how fine it would be to take a drive to your ranch to-morrow, when you went back; and we thought Miss Phœbe might like to go too, if there was only room."

Off came the hat again, and the long bony fingers swept from poll to forehead, leaving the hair standing in bright surprise.

He looked at Miss Phœbe. "What would she say to such a bold proposition?"

That lady giggled and tittered in becoming confusion, and said, "Oh, Mr. Riley I should like very much to see your ranch, and your shack you know.

"These things are so strange and interesting to our English eyes. Your big, big trees, the rutty, jolty roads, and the queer looking carts you have, and all your clever contrivances for making do, that we would never think of."

"I think it would be just too romantic for anything to go to your quarter section, as you call it, on that curious wagon of yours, that lengthens out like an extension table."

"We must take some one 'along,' as you say here, just for propriety's sake, you know, so Mattie and Jean might go, and perhaps Walter."

Miss Phœbe blushed and fluttered, quite out of breath with the audacity of her proposal, and waited to hear how it would be received.

Dave was more than delighted, but he drawled out,

"Ef yer go along of me, Miss Phœbe, you'll git jolted most inter a jelly along o' them theer same rutty roads. Then yer see that theer horse o' mine is awful onreliable, and the wagon aint got no springs. No Ma'am, none whatsoever; besides I've got ter take out some chicken feed, and grain for Chips, and some taters, and some groceries and sich. I guess there'll be some flour and some cabbage, and I don't know how much truck."

"But do you have to take butter and vegetables out to a ranch; I thought a ranch was a farm, and you got all those things off it?"

"Well, Miss Phœbe, so it should be, but yer see mine was heavy timber land, and it do take quite a bit o' clearin'. I've been sellin' cordwood off it fer ten years, and there's plenty theer yet."

"But you can't live on cordwood," said the thrifty maiden.

"No, but you can cut and sell it and make more'n you can on some crops."

"Oh, that's different, but what a crop you must have had. Do you plant more trees?"

"Lor' no, there's more'n I could cut all my life. Now you see, Miss Phœbe, that theer wagon air an extension one, es you say, and you can lengthen it out all you want fer cordwood, and comin' down hill; but ef you lengthen it out tue much goin' back, why Chips he can't pull it up hill no hows; and ef he don't like it, he'll jest back down hill, and theer you are; you might git hurt."

Dave was talking against time to try and keep Miss Phœbe by him, so he continued. "Es to seein' my ranch, why them theer stumps, and that theer woodshed, looks es much like 'em es anything."

"I aint a goin' to say mind, that the company of a certain

leddy wouldn't be awful nice, and all that, but I guess you'd be a wantin' of yer arternoon tea, and yer sofy to lay down on, and some nice kerpets, and I aint got none o' them things now; not but I've got money put by, and I could soon git 'em, ef they wuz wanted," and he gave Miss Phoebe a look which meant more than he had the courage to say.

"Oh, how delightfully you talk, Mr. David," returned the fair maid, clasping her hands and looking up at him, as he sat still perched upon the fence above her.

"You make me wish to go out to your place more than ever. I shall get up that party Mattie spoke of, and go with you when you return to-morrow; but," she went on gushingly, "you must promise to bring us back the same day, you know, we couldn't stay there all night."

"Not without bell, book and candle and priest thrown in, ay; I guess that's what you're drivin' at. I'm more'n willin'."

"How delightfully you put things, I really never, never did hear anybody talk like you," and she gave him a most bewitching look.

Poor Dave hardly knew if he was 'right side up with care'; or if he was dreaming such good luck.

"Good-bye till to-morrow," she called back as she tripped lightly up the porch steps, "we'll be ready in the morning."

"The little gal thinks she'd like it out theer with your 'unble servant for a husband, but I guess she'll change her mind when she sees the place, and it'll be 'Good-bye' for keeps when I dump her down heer to-morrow night."

Dave shook his head gravely as he went off to make what preparations he could for the eventful day; and Miss Phoebe proceeded to pack a full and dainty lunch basket.

'Chips' was a nick-name given his horse by Dave's facetious friends, for it was supposed that nothing but chips could be found on Dave's ranch, as nothing but cordwood seemed to be its product.

But the thrifty Dave kept his own council, and no one knew how his bank account had grown from the sale of the wood, which served the double purpose of clearing the land, and bringing in an income at the same time.

"Durn that Chips," soliloquized Dave as he surveyed his steed, "I guess he'll back down hill, or gallop up, turn us into the ditch, or du some cantankerous unexpected thing. I wish I could git some kind of a better rig to take her out in. Guess I must do the best I can with what I've got."

"Shan't we have some fun to-morrow," laughed Jean to her brother. "Mattie is going along on Hettie; and Dave, he's fixing his 'extension wagon as aunt calls it. She's baking a lovely jelly cake, and an awful nice beefsteak pie."

Walter chuckled, he knew his sister would make things lively, if she got the chance. Jean continued, "And she's going to wear her red rose dress, as the one she always sings about when she takes it out of her trunk, 'My love is like a red, red rose,' and that little hat with the bows sticking up straight at the back, as if they were scared like."

Jean mimicked her aunt as she said, "We can make tea you know when we get there, Mr. Dave will be sure to have lots of lovely cream, they always do have plenty on a farm. We shall see such lots of dear little ducklings, and piglings."

"Yes, and chucklings," I added. "She'll find piles of all these things on Dave's place, I guess."

"Here comes Dave"; and Jean rushed into her aunt's room next morning. "I guess you needn't stop to put any more powder on your face aunty, the sweat'll soon wash it all off; it'll be hot I can tell you, travelling through the woods to-day."

"Good morning, Mr. Riley"; and Miss Phœbe bustled out in her red rose dress and the hat with its startled bows, as Jean had predicted.

"Mornin', Miss Phœbe. Why you're an airy bird. Bin a-cookin' a'ready this mornin'?" Excuse me, but you've got some flour on yer nose."

"It aint flour, its—" began Jean.

"Hush," said her mother, and Dave remained unenlightened.

The wheels of the lumber wagon were drawn pretty close together, and between them was placed a large dry goods box, which contained the articles Dave was taking out to his ranch.

Jean and Walter got up and sat with their backs to Chips.

Dave assisted Miss Phœbe to step from a chair to a seat beside him, which she accomplished with much puffing and blowing.

"Guess you're cynched up purty tight, aint yer?" said Dave sententiously. "Don't bust yer girths on us now else there'll be a spill.

"You do say such funny things," simpered Miss Phœbe, as soon as she had recovered her breath sufficiently.

Dave, well pleased, gave his whip a crack, and Chips jumped off all fours, then with a sudden spring he started off. The youngsters were prepared for this, but poor Miss Phœbe was not, and she nearly fell over Jean who sat behind her. She clung tenaciously to the box with one

hand, and to Dave's arm with the other, whilst the jaunty hat took an impertinent tilt over one ear.

Mattie, who had waited to see the start, cantered ahead and got through the town before the wagon and its load came along.

She told several persons that the wedding party was coming on behind, and a lot of young people stood ready at the cross roads with rice and old shoes to throw at them.

"Well I'll be durned!" drawled Dave, as he caught at his hat which an old shoe had knocked off, and ducked his head when a shower of rice came stinging into his face, and which consequently found its way down his back.

"Durn you youngsters! What's all this about!" he yelled.

Cracking his whip, Chips went off at full gallop.

Poor Miss Phœbe only saved herself by hanging on to Dave, whilst Jean and Walter laughed till their sides ached.

"What do you suppose all that was about, Miss Phœbe?" asked Dave, as soon as Chips had quieted down, and given him a chance to speak. "I never seen the like 'ceptin' at weddin's, did you?"

"They might have waited till it come off," returned Miss Phœbe, demurely.

"Here's a confloption!" called Jean, as Mattie rode up.

"Dave and auntie have been and got married, and never told any of us. These people must have found it out, or they wouldn't have been here with the rice and old shoes. Hurrah! and we're all off on the honeymoon trip." 'My love is like the red, red rose,' sung Jean at the top of her voice.

"Guess she is purty red," commented Dave, as he turned and looked apologetically at Miss Phœbe.

Mattie rode up and gravely congratulated them; and

the conspirators at the back went off into fits of laughter.

Such unusual sounds behind Chips sent him off into a gallop again, and they all had plenty to do to 'hang on,' as Jean said, while Miss Phoebe clung so tightly to Dave's arm, he could hardly use his reins.

When Chips had been gotten in hand again, Jean jolted out, "I'm sure I wish you long life and happiness, Auntie and Uncle Dave."

"Well I'll be durned," began Dave, but Chips who was warmed up, started off again as Mattie galloped past him, her skirt flapping and her whip rattling on the saddle.

A few minutes more brought them to the end of the made road, and they had to follow a trail.

Mattie's little mare picked her way over the fallen logs easily enough, but the occupants of the wagon swayed this way and that, jolting them backwards and forwards, till Jean said she had had enough, and got down to walk.

They were now making their way through the burnt timber, where the blackened stumps reared their heads against the sky, and only a small undergrowth, of perhaps a year, scattered its green carpet below.

There was now no shade, and the heat became almost unendurable. To increase their distress, a giant of the forest, some six feet in diameter, had fallen across the trail.

Hettie was soon unsaddled, Chips taken out of the wagon, and both tethered to feed. Dave hoisted a sack of grain on his back, the lunch basket was seized upon by Walter, and the whole party started to make its way around the fallen monster.

"I'm not going to crush through all that undergrowth," declared Jean. "We'll get our skirts all torn, Auntie, let's climb over."

Accordingly, with Jean's assistance, Miss Phoebe got

herself on top of the log, and watched Jean climb after; then losing her balance she went toppling over on the other side; her eyes staring so wide with fright, that the whites showed all round, 'like a balky hosse,' whispered Mattie; and 'splash' went poor Miss Phœbe into a mudhole.

The girls, fearing she really might have hurt herself, hurried over after her.

"Never mind Aunty, take my hand, I'll help you along, and you'll get dry as you go; but my! ain't you got a 'draggled tail.'"

Miss Phœbe looked woefully at her skirt, for to have a 'draggled tail' was one of her horrors, and also one of her terms of reproach.

A steep declivity led to Dave's shack, and Miss Phœbe started down, following Dave, who was already on his way. She disdained Jeans' help, and being so much occupied by the condition of her skirt, and hampered by her tight waist and high-heeled boots, caught her foot in a trailing vine and rolled down, striking Dave unexpectedly from behind.

Down he came, sack and all. Over and over they rolled, the sack of grain ahead, Miss Phœbe who had stumbled over Dave next, and last came Dave, making frantic efforts to regain his foot hold, his legs and arms, his brilliant hair and his coat tails, seeming in an endless mix up; whilst the bows of Miss Phœbe's hat protested against such unlady like behaviour. The rose dress caught on a projecting stick, and Miss Phœbe came to a stand still, and Dave regained his equilibrium, but the sack of grain dropped twenty feet into the cold mountain stream below.

"Well, I'll be durned! Air you hurt, Miss Phœbe? Did them young 'uns do that now?" Picking up a stick,

he rushed up the hill to where they stood, their hands on their sides, swaying to and fro in uncontrollable laughter. They were having more fun than they had bargained for.

Dave came on flourishing his stick. "I'll pay you out. Just you wait till I come up to yer." Jean stopped laughing long enough to call out, "We didn't do it uncle Dave, it was an accident." He stopped and scratched his head. "Well, I'll be durned! Uncle is it? I begin to think there must a bin a weddin'," he said to himself.

Turning, he looked dubiously back at Miss Phœbe. "Bust her girths, I reckon," he soliloquised. "That's how the spill come I guess."

Poor Miss Phœbe's waist was rent from neck to belt, one sleeve out and the other half gone. Her hat had shied to one side, and the pert ribbons looked round one ear as if to say, "What next?"

Dave went back to her. "Never mind Miss Phœbe. I told you fust of all this mornin' you wuz cynched tue tight. Accidents will happen they du say."

Dave was possessed with the idea that the 'cynching' had all to do with the 'accident,' as it would in the case of a pack-horse, he being more familiar with the devious ways of horses than with the vagaries of women.

"What shall I do?" gasped poor Miss Phœbe, as the girls made their way down to her.

"You can borrow one of Dave's shirts," suggested Jean. "Fix it inside your skirt and say you've got an Oxford waist. Any way it'll be a Davie's waist." Miss Phœbe turned away her head and blushed.

"Never you mind that theer wild minx of a gel, Miss Phœbe, come on with me," drawled Dave. "My shack's right heer, and you be es welcome es I be, and welcomer too, to all as is in it." Bending his head so no one else

should hear, he added in a stage whisper, "The boss of it too."

"Come Uncle Dave," called Jean, "come and get out one of your shirts. Dad says the women wear the—other things—but Aunty is going to begin by wearing your shirts."

"Well I'll be——"

"Durned," struck in Jean. "So you will Uncle dear, when Aunt gets hold of your old socks. Come on Aunty."

"Not till my personal appearance——"

"Has been mended," put in Jean. "Well I'll go and hunt Dave's boxes, and get you a shirt or coat or something."

Miss Phœbe got out her pocket companion, and was busily sewing up the rents in her skirt when Jean returned with a miner's thick woolen shirt of bright scarlet. Her Aunt went behind a boulder and put it on, belting it inside her skirt. It looked very passable, but the perspiration was running down her face when she reached the shack, and sat down upon a soap box, utterly exhausted.

"Well I'll be durned! that young catamount hes bin and got you that theer hot wool thing. Why woman, I've got a biled shirt heer, es won't be so hot."

He proudly produced the article.

"Heer git out all o' yer, while Miss Phœbe changes her shirt," he commanded, and poor Miss Phœbe got as red as the shirt, and looked modestly another way.

They left her in peace, and presently she opened the door, looking cool and comfortable in the cotton shirt, which made a very good waist.

"We're off to gather blackberries for dessert," announced Jean. "You can skim the milk and get some cream ready for them Uncle Dave, before we come back."

Jean and Mattie went off with an empty lard pail they had discovered in the shack. Walter made a fire outside, Miss Phoebe spread her white cloth on the rough table, and set out her dainties, while Dave hustled about and hunted up the tin cups and plates, and two or three knives, and spoons, forks there were none, so Walter cut some little forked twigs to supply their place.

The girls returned with a tin of ripe berries, and Jean called out as soon as she came within hearing distance, "Uncle Dave, drive home your cows and get us some cream, we've got lots of berries."

"Well I'll be durned!" He looked puzzled and caught up Miss Phoebe's left hand.

"There's no ring theer yet. To be sure you do keep it up so. I most begin ter think theer must a bin a weddin' this mornin', and I'll be durned! but I wish theer had."

Miss Phoebe hung down her head with bashful grace, for she "began to realize her position," as she told her sister later.

They did ample justice to their meal, making merry as they "feasted at the wedding breakfast." Dave and Walter fetched down the things from the wagon. The horses were fed and watered, and as the day cooled off they started for home.

This time the dry goods box was empty, so it was scarcely as steady as it had been in the morning; so Miss Phoebe clung closely to Dave's arm, and as only the stars were looking out on their return, she felt "less embarrassed" although the arm had stolen round her waist.

The youngsters joke ended in dead earnest; for Dave, who was a good soul, proposed in due form and was accepted.

When the time for the wedding arrived, he had spent freely of his hoarded gains.

A small, neat cottage graced the brow of the hill. It contained carpets and a comfortable 'sofy,' also all those things which conduce to domestic convenience and therefore induce serenity, which is closely allied to happiness.

A nice buggy, drawn by our old friend Chips, was brought to the Norland home after the wedding breakfast, and though our mischief-loving young folks were in attendance to throw rice and old shoes, the happy couple drove off alone.

Mrs. Riley named the place 'Red Rose Farm,' and many years of quite contentment did Dave and his wife spend there.

You may be sure under her thrifty management, there was no lack of cream and other good things, when the youngsters paid their ever welcome visits to Aunty and Uncle Dave at Red Rose Farm.

THE COMING OF BIDDY ASTHORE

A CRANK FROM 'OULD SOD'

In 1863, when the Royal Engineers were disbanded, those who elected to remain in the then Crown Colony, could select for themselves, a quarter section, (one hundred and sixty acres) of land where ever they chose, so long as the special piece of property had not been already recorded. This was called a Crown Grant.

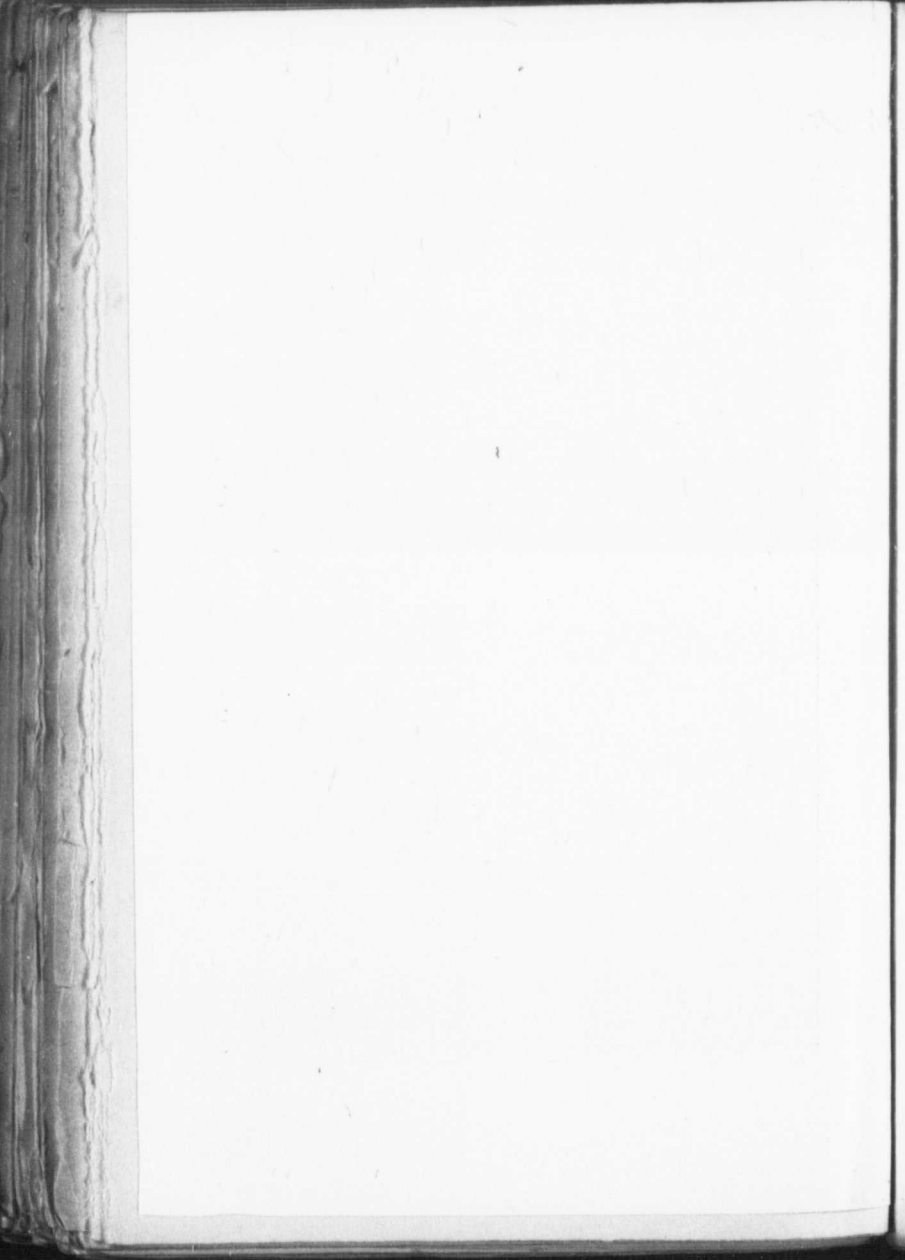
A big, good-natured Irishman made his selection; a beautiful spot in the valley of the Fraser River. All old countrymen have a weakness, it would seem for a trout stream upon their property, and if the salmon in their season crowd up to spawn, their joy of ownership is complete.

Such a stream had Patsie, as we will call him. When the good man arose in the morning, made his fire and strode to the door of his log cabin, pipe on hand, to wait for the kettle to boil, he would gloat over his domain, view the encircling snow-capped mountains, and breathe the unpolluted air of a new morning in a new country; he still felt there was something lacking, and wondered his contentment was not deeper. One morning a squaw with a papoose upon her back and others toddling along with her, came to his cabin and asked for 'kinikinink' (tobacco), and he gave not only what she asked, but a "good square meal" all round for her and the papooses. As he sat and watched the hungry crowd, he slapped his knee. "Begorra," he said to himself, "Shure an' that's phawt's wanting in me household. Oi'll mind me manners so Oi will, an' go to town this very day, an' ax Mary Shophia



PATSIE'S LOGGING CAMP

(facing page 144)



to come an' preside over me establishment." He sent away the squaw and her "Dhirty brood, shure an' they weren't fit to shtay in the house that was to hold Mary Shophia."

He brushed up his cabin first, then his clothes, lastly himself, and was pleased to observe, that although his locks were growing scant on the crown, there was still a goodly halo of auburn curls to set off his bronzed and good-natured face.

He got out his boat and slipped easily down the fast-flowing river getting to town just before noon. Going for a drink to brace up his courage for the meeting with Mary Sophia, he saw a little bridal procession coming down the hill from church, and who should be at its head but Mary Sophia herself.

"An' its no poor soulger she's bin an' got, but a rich cattle man fra oop the counthry," he observed to himself.

Not by any means discouraged, he bought presents, and went to see several of his comrade's daughters, but with no better success.

Only a middle aged widow favored his addresses, and failing any one else, he proposed to the relict of an army chum, was married, and returned by steamboat to his abode. Kezia complained of ill health and made many excursions to town, bestowing her society on her much enduring friends, and the cabin felt more lonely than before her advent.

When the good lady returned after a more than usually lengthened absence, bringing with her an infant daughter, Patsie was overjoyed.

He felt his cup of happiness was full, and although his spouse was neither young nor handsome, he would be content if she would only stay at home. This she said was impossible, unless he could find some woman or girl

to stay with her while he was away at his work in a logging camp, several miles back from the river.

He was earning good money, was not a hard drinker, and being somewhat thrifty, he had more money on one side than Kezia dreamed of, or she would have insisted on living in town.

The summer was cheerful enough for her as her old friends came out by two's and three's, bunked anywhere, as soldiers wives become accustomed to do, and made merry together. But Kezia declared her intention of living in town for the winter, unless Patsie provided 'company for her at the cabin.' So Patsie bethought him of the little sister he had left at home, and wrote to find out if she was still alive, and willing to come and live with him and his wife.

"Indade, an' Biddy would come," she wrote. "Cryin' fish on the strate was none so good a livin' "

Patsie paid her passage out, for she was the last of the family left unmarried, and all her relatives so far "had treated her shameful."

It was many years since Patsie had seen his sister, and he remembered and described her to Kezia as he had seen her last, a "tall, scrawny, freckled, red-headed wench."

Biddy took passage on a Hudson Bay Ship coming round Cape Horn, and hired to wait on the Captain's lady on the voyage. Thus thriftily saving the passage money Patsie sent her to come 'overland,' which was by way of Panama. Many a time the Captain's lady would have been delighted to be able to discharge her handmaid, for Biddy followed her own sweet will, "doin' things whin she felt loike it," which generally meant, if her mistress wished to have a quiet day's reading, Biddy "filt loike clanin' out her cabin."

This Biddy did with a vengeance, removing every article of furniture, and scouring walls, and floor and ceiling, till her energies were spent, then leaving things helter skelter till the next fit of work seized her. The cook, who is generally supposed to rule the foc'sle was powerless when Biddy 'filt loike' making him 'clane' up his galley.

Every pot, pan, kettle and dish flew out of the galley; the walls, floor, ceiling and furnace were duly scoured and 'claned' out.

Biddy's energy usually gave out after everything had been 'claned,' and the tired cook was left to rearrange his disjointed utensils, and cook his next meal as best he could.

Captain and crew were powerless where Biddy was concerned, and if the mistress undertook to remonstrate, Biddy would coax her into her cabin, make her a nice cup of tea, and tell her, "Shure, the loikes av sich fayries as the mistress was only fer an ornymint, so she was. It's the loikes av Biddy, phwat must worrk fer their daily bread."

A little man in the fo'castle was one day receiving chastisement from the giant first mate, and Biddy heard the sound of the soft Irish accents, as the man protested against such treatment. Going up to the mate, Biddy seized his uplifted hand, in which was an ugly marling spike, wrenched it away, and had hit him a smart tap with it, before the astonished man recovered himself.

Now he had a soft place in his heart for the stalwart Biddy, and only smiled at her interference. But the little man cast her a grateful look from his dark blue eyes, that told of 'auld Ireland,' and Biddy's heart was touched. From that time on, the burly mate had no chance, and Biddy sought out her shy admirer and made love to him

in her own sweet way. In due time, that is after a six months' voyage, the good ship arrived in Victoria, the men were paid off, and Biddy and her belongings went ashore.

Barry O'Flinn, the light of Biddy's life also went ashore, and proceeded as newly landed sailors did in those days (not now of course), to spend some of his hard-earned money in saloons and other places. Biddy found out where he was, marched in after him, and locked him up in his room till he was sober. Next morning she relieved him of his money, and ordered him off with her to her brother's ranch, where she proposed to marry him. Arriving in New Westminster, however, and finding that no clerical aid to the ceremony, could be obtained at her brother's home, she decided to tie the nuptial knot in town, and make the journey up to her brother's answer the double purpose of honeymoon trip and home-going.

This was in the fall of the year, and Kezia was glad enough of the 'company,' but sick of the espionage of her sister-in-law, who took a delight in twitting Kezia with her advanced age. "Indade, an' if Patsie's own mother was livin' this day, she'd look as young as you, ye spalpeen. Oi kin remimber whin she looked younger, so Oi can."

Patsie had more land than he could do anything with, so it was agreed between the families that Biddy should buy half of it at five dollars an acre, to be paid in instalments at so much per annum.

All hands, that is with the exception of Kezia, set to work to build another cabin near enough for the mutual protection of the women, and not so near that they need come into collision when their days of offence at each other were upon them. One punishment Kezia could hold over Biddy, and that was to keep little Ethelinda Jemima away from her.

Biddy idolized 'Mimie' as she insisted upon calling the child, in spite of the ire of Kezia, who protested that she had had an ugly old name put on her, and was determined her own daughter should not go into the world so handicapped.

Sometimes when Biddy was too heart hungry for the feel of the little arms about her neck, she would go over and humbly ask for a loan of 'Ethelinda Jemima.'

Then Kezia knew it was time to ask Biddy for anything of hers she coveted, and it was usually handed over for a few hours of the little one's company.

Time went on at his usual pace, bringing the changes he thought fit. Among which was the death of Biddy's brother by the untimely falling of a tree in the logging camp, and his wife, who was never strong, fell ill of typhoid fever and likewise passed away.

Biddy had the land and the child, the latter far outweighing the former, for Biddy had no children of her own. But alas! the fell reaper came in the form of croup, and took away her darling, and Biddy's heart was broken; it was even whispered that her brain had become unsettled by grief. It was now that she made periodical excursions to town herself, the little grave called, and she would lie all night, her head pillowed upon it, and in the morning she would pick out every weed and care for each flower tenderly.

Now, Biddy, it must be known, stood six feet four inches in her shoes, with breadth of shoulders to match. Her face and hands were freckled in great dark spots, her large grey eyes set well apart, indeed so well apart that one gazed sideways at you, whilst the other rolled somewhat backward, showing an immense amount of white. Her hair, which seemed to grow a darker, deeper color

with age, straggled round her countenance, in tails of tawny red.

When Bidy made one of those periodical visits of hers, the little town was prepared for any escapade that might enter her head.

She always wore a small black hat with faded flowers, in some shade of red. This piece of millinery, looked as though Bidy had thrown it upon the floor on her return home, swept the dust over it when she 'filt loike clanin' up,' then fishing it out from under a stove or a bureau, had shaken it, and fastened it on by passing an elastic under her chin. It took any angle which chance suggested, as Bidy never troubled about a looking glass, and it was as likely to be hind side before as rot.

A jacket of many years wear, which had once been fawn or grey covered the stalwart shoulders. This had two big pockets, sewn on the outside by Bidy, one on either hip; these she used for carrying purposes. Her skirts of brown wincey being full and straight; no gores for Bidy, no frills and no 'fancy fixin's.' These skirts being both ample and many, the large heavily shod feet, strode out from under them in giant strides, while the huge upper part of the body swayed from side to side on its hip hinges to such an extent, you wondered how its equilibrium could be recovered. She always carried an umbrella, rain or shine, grasped by the centre in her huge fist. On one of her jambories, Bidy had only gotten two sheets in the wind, and as she went lurching along in search of the mayor, against whom she fancied she had a grievance, she came suddenly upon her father confessor, a spare young priest.

At sight of him, a sudden fit of penitence seized upon Bidy, and flopping down upon her knees, on the muddy sidewalk, she crawled abjectly to the good man's feet;

grasping her umbrella in one hand, she held up the other in supplication, whilst from one of the pockets on the huge hip projected a bottle, the cause of all the mischief.

When she tried to kiss the toe of the priest's shoe, he hastily essayed to raise her up. But alas! whilst she could have picked him up in her disengaged hand and held him aloft, he could only move backwards and keep her from giving the salute she so ardently desired to bestow.

However, the priest leaned over and took the protruding bottle from her pocket, and holding it up before her eyes, he read Biddy a severe lecture on the evil of her ways.

She knelt in tears and penitence before him, absolutely refusing to rise without his blessing. This he bestowed, after extracting a promise that she would return home at once. The priest forgot that no boat went up river past Biddy's place till next morning, but Biddy did not, and thinking to pass the night in safety at an old-time friend's, just out of town, she wallowed off intending to give a big Scotch milkman, the benefit of her company, for his milk wagon passed her friend's house.

The milkman was driving calmly and leisurely along the principal street all unconscious of the honor awaiting him, when he was hailed from the sidewalk by Biddy and told to wait and take her along. His head popped out from under the cover of his wagon, a horrified expression stole over his ruddy features, and whipping up his horse, he never drew rein till under the protection of his own good wife.

If Biddy had on'y gotten hold of the wagon, nothing would have prevented her from climbing in, and he 'on the principal street, too!'

This episode seemed to put the promise she had given the priest out of her head, and she stepped into the first

saloon she came across, called for her whiskey, took a mighty swig, and sallied off.

Seeing a smug-looking young man stepping daintily along ahead of her, pulling on his kid gloves and ogling the girls; she leaped forward and alighted on the back of the astonished dandy, and he had carried her several paces before he had recovered himself sufficiently to shake her off.

Then he darted into the first store he came to and out at the back, to escape the covert glances of the girls and ladies who had witnessed his discomforture, together with the further attentions of Biddy.

That lady looked calmly round, found he had disappeared, and continued to visit each saloon in turn, till she had gotten over her penitence, her desire to return to the loving Mr. Biddy, her levity, and everything but a desire to 'have it out' with the City Council for some fancied wrong.

She had visited the mayor's residence that morning, opened the door, and when told he was not at home, had proceeded to investigate for her own satisfaction.

Returning later, she was seen in time to get the front door locked, but alas; the back door key was not in the lock, and before it could be inserted, Biddy was at the handle, and only the united efforts of the lady of the house, her mother-in-law and other members of the household throwing themselves as a barricade against the door, enabled the quick-witted Chinaman to set a stout chair under the lock, and thus prevent Mrs. Biddy from making another personal search for his worship the Mayor.

Thus, not getting the private interview she sought, it occurred to her that the City Council met that night, and forthwith she proceeded to the seat of civic wisdom.

When she arrived, the City Fathers were holding forth

behind closed doors, and Biddy sat down in the public Hall, to await their entrance. She grew lonely, and hearing voices from an adjoining room, she thought she would go and see for herself what was going on. Accordingly she opened the door, walking into the midst of their grave deliberations, and the City Fathers sat aghast. What could they do with Biddy?

Biddy held them in no awe, and it would have taken half-a-dozen of them to turn her out, and all would have been blue with unvarnished language, beside torn and dishevelled garments, not to mention scratched faces, and pulled and rumpled hair.

Arms akimbo, she stood and looked down upon the assembly, eyeing each in turn. Singling out a man noted for his good opinion of himself, she remarked what a very handsome man he was. This put all the other wiseacres in good humor.

She then described her visit to the mayor's residence, and gave them the full text of her complaint against civic authority.

The city clerk was a small man, but full of diplomacy. He blarneyed and coaxed Biddy till he got her to the door. She passed out and he essayed to shut it after her, when it would have been quickly and securely locked. But her suspicions must have been aroused, for alas! her big foot intervened between the door and its jam, and Biddy leaned there and descanted to her heart's content, and no one dared further molest her. As her huge form guarded the only means of ingress or egress they were obliged to listen, or run the risk of her further displeasure.

After staying as long as she 'filt loike,' and giving them as many pieces of her mind, complimentary and otherwise as she thought fit, till the pangs of thirst again assailed her,

she adjourned to the next saloon, continuing to take potatoes till it was necessary to lock her up for her own safety. Two burley constables attempted the distasteful task. Soon Biddy stood triumphant, whilst the constables mopped the blood from their noses, and the long-clawed scratches which garnished their faces.

Specials were called in, and Biddy, somewhat weakened by her many potatoes, fighting to the last, screeching and yelling with an all-blue atmosphere, and followed by as large a throng as could collect, was dragged, pushed, carried and hustled into safe keeping for the night.

She appeared before the police magistrate next morning, and declared to him her grievances, and enlarged upon the dreadful treatment to which she had been subjected.

She would then take her reprimand meekly, clutch her umbrella by its centre, and go off well pleased if she got off without a fine; which she generally did, for the fine provoked such a volley of choice epithets that the presiding magistrate preferred as a rule to be excused.

The police in charge breathed more freely, when her huge form had crossed the threshold of the courthouse, and the umbrella went flourishing along, wielded by the sturdy right arm of Biddy.

Then Biddy repaired to the relief of the waiting and anxious Mr. Biddy, with whom she worked and toiled, dug, delved, washed and scrubbed until the next paroxysm of thirst overtook her.

During one of these escapades Biddy fell into the Fraser, when the ice was floating down, and although she was in only a few minutes, the chill she sustained was so great, that she never really recovered, and in the following spring, the huge coffin of Biddy was brought down to the

Roman Catholic cemetery, and deposited by that of the child she had loved so well.

A large funeral was the tribute paid by the citizens to this eccentric woman, for they felt that she was more to be pitied than blamed.

Before the next snow flew, poor Mr. Bidy was laid beside her. "It was too hard," he said, "to live without his Bidy Asthore!"

The Widow Le Brun

A TALE OF THE MOUNTAINS

WHEN railway surveyors in connection with the C.P.R. were going out, a fine looking woman came to the coast. She was tall and lissom, somewhat near Byron's lovable age, "fair, fat and forty," and was accompanied by a lady, whose exact position the busy bodies were unable to determine.

The widow being of a stylish appearance, was readily admitted to the society of the town, despite the remark of a woman who had been one of the shipload of girls sent out to this wifeless country: "Yer don't know who her arncesters weer, ye know."

They followed the widow around, sat behind her in church, that her general make-up might be copied, and those who could, borrowed some articles of her clothing to cut their own by.

Now, as these daring ones not only cut by them, but unpicked certain parts which were difficult to copy, and which they failed to properly replace, an end came to this kind of thing, and Miss Dorie put so stern a face on such impudent borrowing, that the requests finally ceased, and the imitations had to be carried on by guesswork.

The special manner in which her hair was coiled upon her crown, puzzled them not a little, and some of them went so far as to ask her if she would tell them where they could send and get such a fixing from the hair dressers.

This matter of the arrangement of the hair, was really

serious, for it was quite possible to copy the widow's small bonnet, as it was then worn for church or calling, but it was quite another thing to get it to "set" right without the proper arrangement of the chignon. Their imitations slipped back on the head, down over the forehead, to one side or the other, as one little fellow expressed it to his mother, "All the ladies' bonnets got cwazy in church to-day, mama."

The widow's fluffy "bangs" too, were hard to place, whereas Mrs. Le Brun wore hers to hide too high a forehead, a woman having a low forehead and small face, looked in the same arrangement, as a young man irreverently remarked, "like a rat peeping out of a broom."

As the two ladies sat at breakfast one morning, a kindly officious neighbor came in to bring them their mail, which had arrived in town the evening before. They had not yet become accustomed to watching the great events of the week, which were the coming in of the mail boats from both up and down the river, and then marching up the many rickety, wooden steps to the Post Office, to see if there might be anything for them.

Then curiosity was rife, and conjecture loud, as to what two women wanted there, without any protector of the masculine persuasion.

They seemed to have money enough and to spare, dear as everything was.

Indeed, it was rumored, that some of the neighbors went so far as to steam several letters open, before handing them over, so great was their curiosity; but as these proved to be from a daughter at an eastern convent, who spoke of her brother on the Survey, they came to the conclusion all was well, and the strangers perfectly respectable, as belonging to some on the C.P.R. survey parties.

Mrs. Le Brun eagerly opened a much travel-stained letter, and asked her companion what she thought Andy wanted them to do now?

"Not to remain here I suppose, we might just as well have stayed in Montreal."

"Read that letter out, and tell me what you think."

"Dear Mother: We are stationed in a little mining town in the mountains, through which passes the stages to and from Yale and Cariboo. The country is beautiful and healthy, the little town very quiet. I could hire an empty store for you two dear old ladies to live in, that some one inadvertently built more than a stone's throw from the Central Hotel, and consequently beyond the business precincts. Agatha won't be through for another three or four months. Do come. I know you must be lonesome with no one to plague you. You must leave on the boat for Yale Monday morning, in order to catch the outgoing stage. Bring only necessities, such as blankets, plain clothes, and so on. We shall have a jolly summer I can tell you, etc., etc.——"

All the little mountain town was out watching for the coming of the stage as usual, with its six horses, bringing news from the great world of men, and greater still was the interest when two ladies appeared as "insides."

Mrs. Le Brun, in her neat travelling suit of navy blue, looked too young to be the mother of the stalwart young fellow, who caught her in his arms as she alighted, with the joyful cry, "Mother, I knew you'd come."

Miss Dorie, so neat in her plain dress of black, with linen collar and cuffs, was quite an object of interest, much to her discomfort.

The only vehicle that could be hired here, was a wood or hay wagon, although it was one of the halting stations



THE LITTLE MINING TOWN

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THE WILD MOUNTAIN ROAD

[facing page 159]

for both stage and mule teams, prairie schooners and trains of pack-horses.

A hay wagon now appeared, drawn by a pair of tall, scrawny horses, their sides painfully drawn from over strain. Some of these had been discarded from the stage service, for there were many somewhat broken-down animals in the country, as the stage had to make, in places, some eighty miles per day, in order to be on time; and as horses from the ranges were cheap, anything defective or sick, was turned out to hunt for itself, and a fresh one, generally unbroken, harnessed in its place.

Andy looked from the wagon to his mother with his merry eyes.

"Oh, pile the baggage on that," she said laughingly, in answer to his look, and Miss Dorie and I will walk, and be glad of it, after sitting so long."

"Mother," said Andy proudly, as a man with keen dark grey eyes, and white hair, approached them. His eyebrows and moustache were still dark, which gave him a very noticeable appearance.

"Mother, this is the engineer in charge of the works. Mr. Van Burgh, my mother, Mrs. Le Brun."

He raised his hat, and took the lady's outstretched hand.

"Mr. Van Burgh," said Mrs. Le Brun, turning to Miss Dorie in introduction, "My friend, Miss Dorie."

They exchanged bows. Andy walked with Miss Dorie, proud to see the effect his mother had produced upon his usually taciturn chief.

They passed along a narrow wooden sidewalk, by past shacks, saloons, hotels, and all the collection of animate and inanimate things, which congregate round a mining town; till, standing alone, with rough lumber lying about, they reached the store of which Andy had written.

"See, Mother!" he exclaimed, opening the door, and feeling great satisfaction in having secured a new clean building for her reception.

"I've had it divided off into two rooms; I think it will suit you. Across the front, you see, is dining-room and sitting-room, all in one. I'm afraid it looks dreadfully bare to you. We could get nothing but rough lumber here."

"It's just the very thing," exclaimed Miss Dorie. "Why our cretone and mats will make it so bright and cheerful you won't know it."

"Do take a chair, Mr. Van Burgh, and we will improvise a lunch."

Appealing to her son, she continued: "Only Andy I must have some tea, you know my failing don't you laddie? Then afterwards I am going to set you two men to tacking up curtains, and arranging bunks."

Andrew took a quick glance at his chief, fearful he might not like such liberties taken with him.

But he was smilingly acquiescing in the arrangement, while Miss Dorie had a hamper brought into the back, which was to be kitchen, and where Andy had put a cooking stove and utensils.

Miss Dorie spread a fine white cloth on the pine table, took out a dainty silver tea set, and porcelain cups and saucers.

Andy opened cans for cook, who was delighted to see him and forgot her sulks. Soon some pretty dishes of ham and tongue with bread and butter, fruit and steaming hot tea were placed on the table. They drew up their wooden chairs, and sitting down, did ample justice to the lunch.

"I've got a half-breed boy to do all the dirty work for

you" said Andy, who was in great spirits, to cook, as she changed the plates. "And if there's anything I can put up to help you out now, you tell me and I'll fix it. I'm so glad to see all you women folks, you don't know. I've just longed to hear the whisk of a skirt; or even a box on the ears would have been a relief in this woman-forsaken place."

After lunch they started to fix things. Only one division could be spared for bedroom, so the bunks were nailed against the wall; two, one above the other on one side, for Miss Dorie and cook, and one on the other side for Mrs. Le Brun.

A rod made of telegraph wire was passed between, and with a curtain upon it, their rooms were as snug as could be. Andy would have to take a cot in the sitting-room on his week-end visits.

"Now for the general assembly room, Mother," said Andy. "I want to see that on the way." They tacked wide lace curtains over the store window, and hung heavy dark ones behind them, looping the latter back, tacked cretonne over the rough board partition, put up some prints, laid down their mats and rugs, threw some skins over a rough settee, which they piled with cushions, and now exclaimed Miss Dorie, "all we want is a piano. You have your violin of course."

"The wife and daughter of Miller, the Central Hotel man, have gone to the coast for the summer; we might possibly get their piano; any way I'll go and see about it," came from the silent Mr. Van Burgh.

This being the only piano that had been taken into the interior, so far, it was a very precious instrument, and probably no one but the head of the Survey party would have succeeded in obtaining the use of it.

"That would be very kind of you," replied Mrs. Le Brun, "for do you know I am inclined to think we shall need one to break the silence of this place."

"Is that all you want music for, Mother?" laughed Andy.

"Well you know I'm no musician; I can play accompaniments for you, that's about all."

"Or some of your nice contralto songs, Mother."

"If I can't do any more tacking for you ladies," said Mr. Van Burgh, with more animation in his eyes than Andy had given him credit for, "I'll go and see about that piano."

"Be sure and come in for our scrambled dinner," called Mrs. Le Brun, as he was going out, "and we might find some more tacking for you by then."

"I shall be only too happy," he said, with a return to his icy manner, as he raised his hat and departed.

"I don't understand that man. I wonder what makes him so icy at times. He's undoubtedly a man of strong character, and one who has seen great trouble as well I should think."

"We all know he's a man of strong character, Mother, and suspect he's had trouble; but I never saw him unbend as he did to you. Why I was almost afraid to draw my breath when you ordered him to tack up the curtains; but he set about it as meekly as if that was all the business he had in life."

"You see what it is to be in a mining camp with no young rivals to dispute your claims. I shall make the most of my reign, never fear."

Andy laughed, for he knew his mother's love for fun, and was sure she would make the best of existing circumstances, whatever they were.

"Now," she said to Andy, "every Saturday you must bring home one or two of your comrades, and we'll spend as pleasant a time as we can. Of course they will have to sleep at the Hotel; there is no help for that."

"All right mother, it will be such a pleasure to look forward to; but see, there's a wagon with the piano in it. I wonder if Mr. Van Burgh plays; he entered into the idea thrown out by Miss Dorie so quickly.

"I'm sure I can't tell you, Andy; but while you get it in place, I'll go and make myself presentable for dinner."

"Don't make yourself too handsome, Mother, for I am going to fetch Berrick, the owner of the mines, up for dinner, and I don't want to dance at your wedding you know."

"You need not be alarmed," she laughed, from the other side of the partition, "I like my liberty too well."

"Oh, I beg you pardon, Mr. Van Burgh," stammered Andy, as he stumbled against that individual, who with dark brows and chilly manner, was standing in the open doorway.

Andy feared his chief might have heard the remark to his mother, and taken it to himself. The lad looked upon him as too old for his mother any way, and felt no fear of him; it was the wealthy, good-looking owner of the mine that troubled him, who must at least have been ten years her junior; but Andy never thought of that, he always looked upon his mother as being young and attractive.

The dinner table was set in the general room. Mrs. Le Brun came in dressed in black lace, through the meshes of which her neck and arms gleamed whitely.

Soon after to Andy's surprise, came Mr. Van Burgh, and Mr. Berrick in evening dress.

He looked down at his ordinary clothes in such comic distress, that his mother and her guests laughed pleasantly at him.

Dinner was announced, and Miss Dorie, in her usual black and white, came in and was presented to the millionaire.

What a merry dinner they had! Mr. Berrick paid Mrs. Le Brun such marked attention that her son gave her a warning look, which was received with a peal of laughter; and the young man was disconcerted, for he felt, rather than saw, that the by-play had all been observed by his silent chief.

After dinner the men went under the verandah, which had been built for the store and extended over the sidewalk, to smoke. These structures were put up in the same way, before stores or hotels, making a place to display wares in the one, and for lounging around in the other.

Mr. Berrick suggested how much nicer it would be for the ladies, if the verandah was trellised over, and the building moved back on the lot; it might be done while they were out for a walk or a drive.

Andy said he would see the carpenter, and have it done before another week.

Miss Dorie played a plaintive fantasia, while Mrs. Le Brun set out the table for tea.

The gentlemen now came in for that, and afterwards Andy said, "Mother, if you'll sing something, I'll play afterwards to Miss Dorie's accompaniment."

"Will you sing 'Douglas,' Mrs. Le Brun. Andrew said you had a contralto voice."

"If you like, Mr. Van Burgh."

He rose, led her to the piano, and sitting down to it

himself touched the keys, with what all present felt to be a master's hand.

When the last sad note had died away, there was silence.

"You play far too well for my poor singing."

"On the contrary I fail to do the pathos of your voice justice."

"Oh, come now, give us something lively, you almost brought tears to my eyes," and Miss Dorie had to run off.

"Indeed, I can't sing anything very bright, Mr. Berrick," protested Mrs. Le Brun. "I know that song touches a tender spot for my friend; though she has been true enough to her Douglas, but his continued silence has filled her with fear as to his safety. For my part, I always tell her, he will appear upon the scene suddenly some of these times, and I shall lose the dearest friend I ever had."

Mr. Van Burgh's fingers had wandered into a gay French Chanson, and Mrs. Le Brun took it up as brightly as it went.

"That's something like," cried Mr. Berrick, enthusiastically. "Do give us something else. It's such a treat to hear a lady's voice in these wilds."

But Mrs. Le Brun seemed more annoyed than pleased, and bending forward, asked Mr. Van Burgh to give them something.

He fixed his fine, magnetic eyes on hers, and commenced so weirdly Mr. Berrick raised his eyebrows in protest, but no one noticed him, and Mrs. Le Brun went back to the tea table.

The music which had begun so weirdly, brightened and swelled, then died down into a sobbing minor, till their hearts ached.

Again it brightened till it was one song of love and happiness, then subdued, it died away in peaceful harmony.

Mrs. Le Brun's eyes were fixed upon the back of the figure at the piano, and when he stopped and suddenly wheeled round he caught her intent look, and smiled back at her.

"Thank you, that was enchanting. Such a weird beginning, but how restfully you finished."

He bent to take another cup of tea from her hand, and said for her ear alone. "That is my life: how it has begun, and the way in which I hope it will finish."

She started, but made no reply by look or word, and he was not sure if she had heard him.

The following week he refused to go out with Andy, and the next.

When Andy returned the third time, he brought a little formal note of invitation from his mother, and was surprised at the pleasure with which his stern chief received it.

He went down from the mountains the following week with Andy, and found Mrs. Le Brun sitting on the trellised porch with Mr. Berrick.

She went forward to kiss Andy and welcome Mr. Van Burgh, when the latter gave her a cold, displeased look, which she felt puzzled to account for.

Afternoon tea appeared with Miss Dorie, and the conversation became general.

"What a lovely drive that was you took us for yesterday, Mr. Berrick," remarked Miss Dorie, "but really I think it upset my nerves, for I was dreaming last night we all went over the precipice, and only for Mr. Van Burgh and Andy, who stood at the bottom, and caught us all, horses as well, in their arms, we should have been killed."

"We were your good angels then, Miss Dorie, you see," returned the chief grimly. "I think Berrick, you

were taking great risks in driving ladies on such a road."

"Of course I know that the road to the mine is far from good, but my horses are perfectly safe, and Mrs. Le Brun was delighted."

"Indeed yes, the wild grandeur of the scenery was beyond description."

Mr. Van Burgh was not satisfied, and later in the evening he took the opportunity of saying to Mrs. Le Brun, "Promise me not to drive with Berrick up those dangerous mountain roads any more."

She laughed, saying it was a new sensation for any one to be looking after her safety, as she had followed her own devices so long. But she evaded the promise.

He gave her a look which brought the color to her cheeks, and annoyed at finding herself so foolish, she turned abruptly away.

When next Mr. Berrick brought his horses to the door, she pleaded headache, and sent Miss Dorie alone with him.

Things went on in much the same way for five months, and Mrs. Le Brun had to use much diplomacy to keep Mr. Berrick from proposing to her, but she managed it somehow. Mr. Van Burgh had had several opportunities, but he remained silent, and she was uncertain as to her feeling with regard to him.

"The girls have their commencement next week, and in a few days will be on their way home. Your cousin is coming with Agatha and a very dear school-girl friend, now what am I to do, Andy?"

"Put up three fresh bunks, or build an addition to this mansion, but for goodness sake don't go away, because in six weeks at the most our work will be finished here, and I can go with you for the winter, besides it will be great fun to have the girls here."

"But your aunt will be with them. I don't know what she'll say to this kind of camping-out life."

"Oh, she'll be contented; just try her any way, there's a dear mother."

So in two weeks time the merry voices of the three girls were making the 'mansion' gay with fun and laughter.

Miss Tring, the very dear friend of Agatha, was a tall, fair, happy girl of healthy proportions, and pleasant temper.

"What a wife she'll make a fellow," said Andy to himself when he saw her, "and I'm going to take a hand at winning, if I can."

Agatha was a fair, bright fairy with large blue eyes, and yellowish, curly hair.

The cousin was very dark, with flashing black eyes, plenty of coal black hair, and a rosy complexion. She was the beauty of the three.

But Andy and she were always at loggerheads, and started their skirmishes as soon as they came in sight of each other, which made the restfulness of Saide Tring's companionship all the more agreeable to the young man, and as Saide thought him the perfection of all masculine graces, they were soon on the road to a true love which would run with perfect smoothness.

A month after the girls' arrival, Andy took the blushing Saide to his mother, saying she had made him the happiest man in the world, and his mother kissed her, well content with such a daughter-in-law.

Mrs. Le Brun was sitting alone after a dinner which Mr. Van Burgh had not joined. The rest were away singly, or in couples, enjoying the cool evening air, when the door opened, and in walked Mr. Berrick, looking excited and joyful.

She kept her seat, and felt no fear that he would propose for her hand now.

He stood rather awkwardly before her, and both were unconscious of a pair of piercing eyes, which gazed at them through the trellis work of the porch; too far off to hear their words, but in full view of their actions.

"Where did you leave the girls?" Mrs. Le Brun asked, more to relieve his embarrassment than anything else, as she had anticipated this interview for several days.

"I left Agatha, may I call her Agatha? you don't mind, do you?" he asked nervously, "but I must say it all at once: I love her and she loves me, and all we want is your consent."

"I shall willingly give it, with this proviso—"

"Which is—" he interrupted breathlessly.

"That if after six months' intercourse in the world you are of the same mind, I will give you a favorable answer, till then feel yourself free. It is a very different thing to fall in love with a person in these wilds, and to keep to it in the great world of fashion."

They did not see the face in the doorway, which shrank back with a groan, when Berrick raised her hand to his lips and said, "After six months, then, I shall ask you the same question."

Then he went in search of Agatha, who seemed perfectly willing to test his fidelity.

Mrs. Le Brun sat musing after her prospective son-in-law had left her; when a slight sound at the door attracted her attention, and she started back with a little scream, as she looked up and saw standing before her Mr. Van Burgh, his face white and drawn, his arm stretched out towards her, as if in rebuke.

"What is the matter?" she enquired, raising her hand. "Are you ill?"

"Ill? in body, no; in mind, yes. I thought I had at last found my ideal in woman, and only came in time to see the homage of another accepted, after his six months' probation."

"Are you then in love with Agatha, too?" she asked, with a little quiver in her voice, while a film gathered before her eyes.

"Agatha! I'm talking about you, not your daughter."

She saw in a moment the mistake he had made, and looking up at him, as he stood like stern fate before her, asked, "How long have you been in the porch?"

"The last half hour, madam," he returned sternly.

"Then you heard Mr. Berrick propose for—"

"Your hand," he said bitterly.

"You are mistaken," she returned softly, "it was for Agatha, and I imposed a six months' probation upon him in case——"

He didn't wait to hear why, but threw himself upon the settee at her side, and looking into her faithful brown eyes, he poured out the love and fear he had suffered, thinking that Berrick was preferred before him.

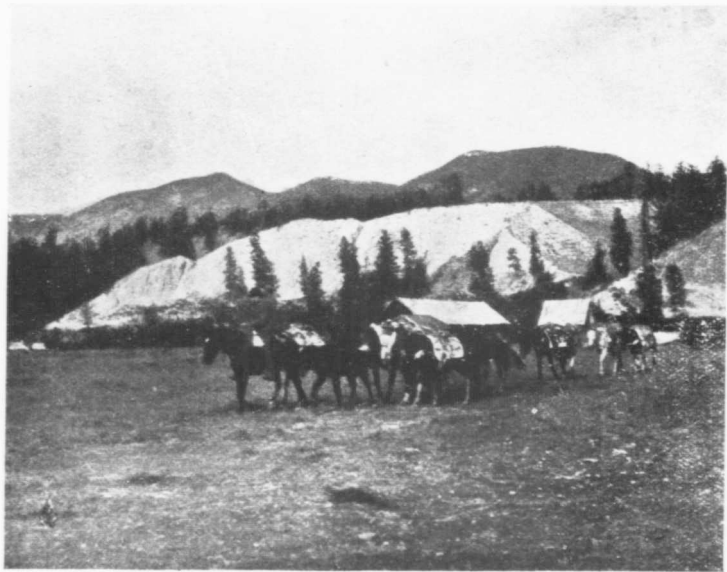
"Is'nt it like the fate I prophesied upon the piano, the first evening I met you. Did you hear what I said then?" he enquired in his abrupt way.

She smiled at him, and he seized her hands, asking if he might hope.

"Let me tell you one thing first. By my late husband's will, I lose everything if I marry again."

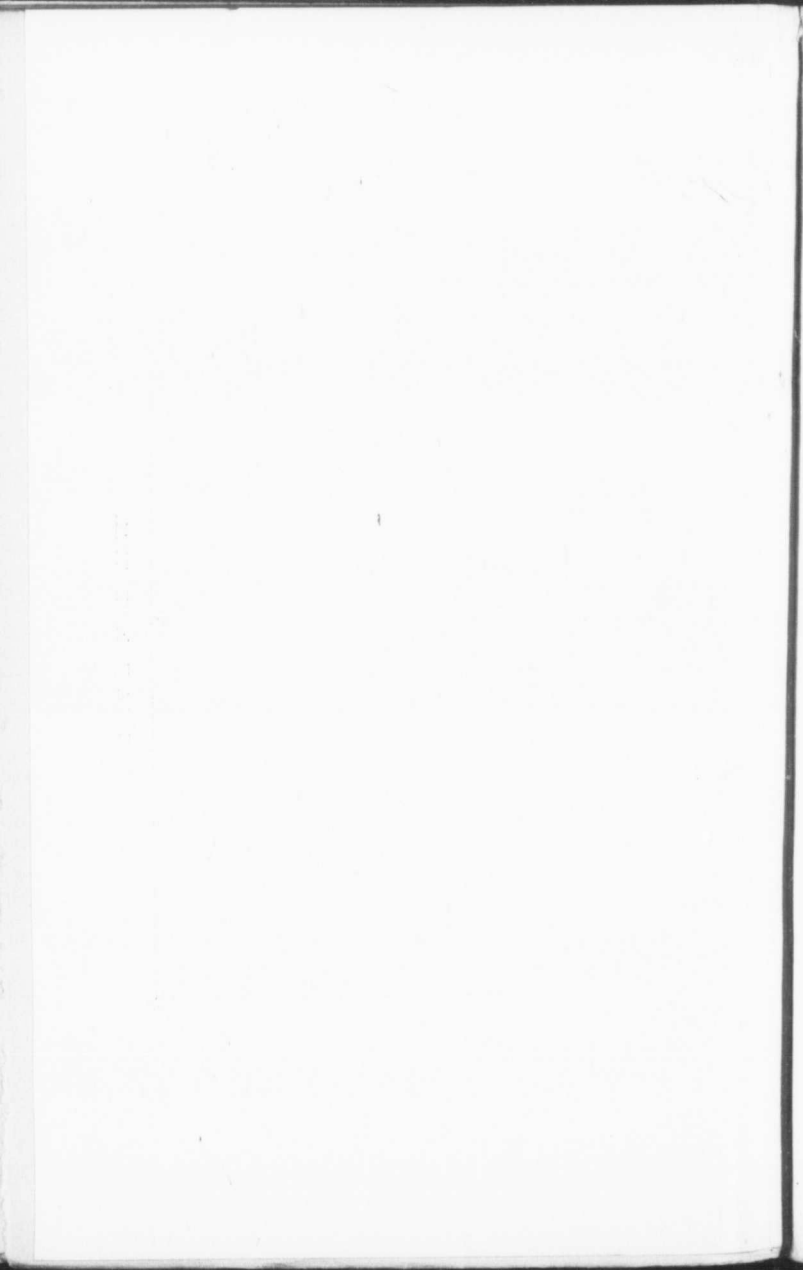
"So much the better. I only want you. I have plenty for both."

"I have something to tell you, too, and after you have



THE LAST PACK TRAIN

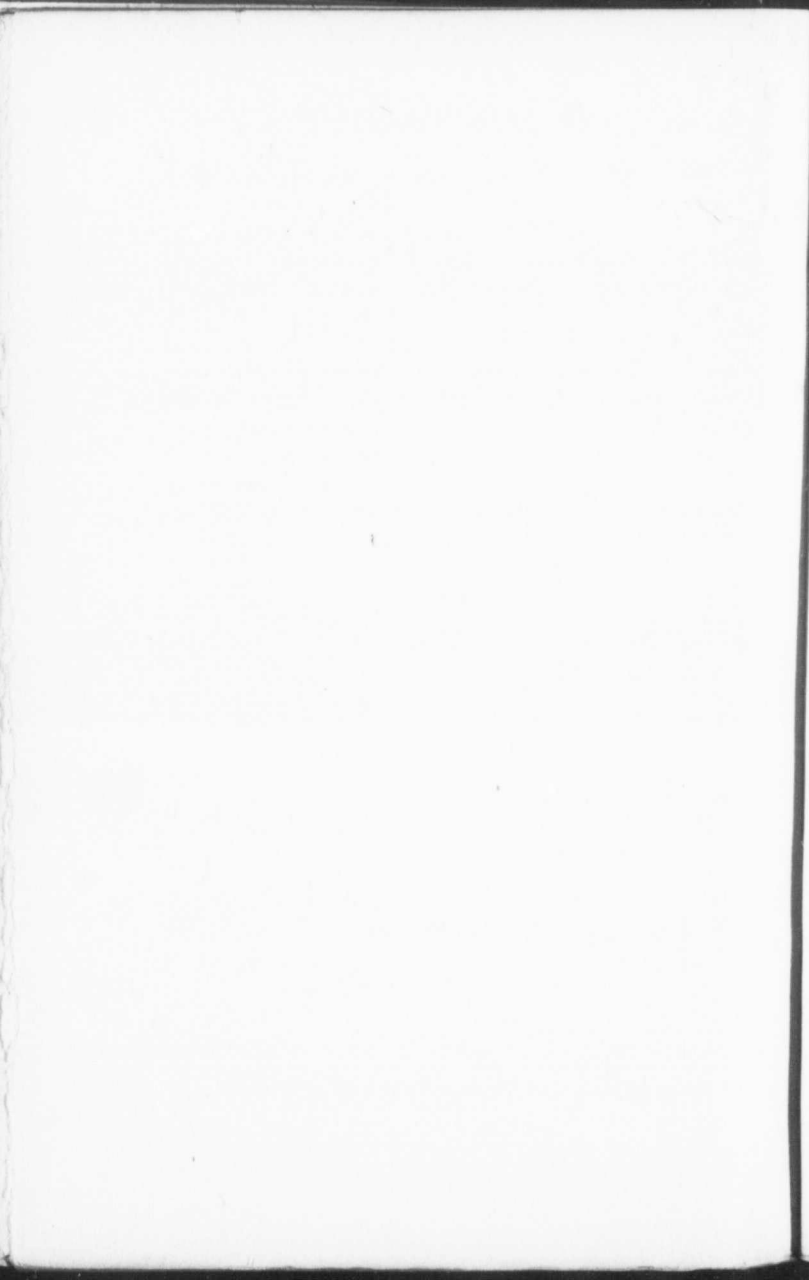
[facing page 170]



heard it, and will let me, I shall put this ring upon your finger."

The tale he told was of an early love; a beautiful girl, but incapable of sincerity, who, heedless of her vows, had gone with another man, who had left her to die in poverty and vice, as soon as he had tired of her charms. For the sake of his own little son (now almost a man) and his lost love, he had seen that she received sufficient for a comfortable maintenance and proper treatment, which alas! was at a private asylum for the insane for many years.

When the Gold Escort, which was the last pack train for the coast, passed down, it was joined by this merry party, bound for civilization and the pleasures of an eastern winter.



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