

The Klondyke Gold Mystery.

By JOHN R. MUSICK,

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CHAPTER II.

The Storm Bursts.

The day was a cloud hanging over the distant mountain peak, and occasionally the low muttering of far-off thunder could be heard, but it did not disturb the young pleasure seekers, who had come out from Fresno, California, to have a good time. One tall, graceful girl whose golden hair and deep blue eyes would have attracted any beholder, was standing in the shadow of a tree, whither she had wandered alone. She took very little interest in the sports of her youthful companions, no more youthful, however, than herself. As she strolled under the shades of the pines her pale blue parasol half concealed a face that was exquisite in its loveliness.

"Oh, Laura, why are you alone?" asked a pretty, dark-eyed girl leaning on the arm of her lover as she passed. "There are plenty of young fellows who would be glad to take Paul's place. Shall I tell them they can?"

"Thank you, Nellie; I do not want them," while a faint smile flitted over her face.

At this moment another couple passed where the three stood, their faces half hidden behind a pink umbrella. Nellie, smiling, said:

"There goes Clarence and Nellie Bush. People say they are to be married in the spring and start for the Klondike."

Laura sighed and her little friend went on. The gaze of Laura Kean was now riveted on Clarence Berry and Ethel Bush. The rumor that they were going to that strange, far-off northern country awakened in her mind a new interest in them. Ethel Bush was one of her dearest friends, and Clarence and Paul had been boys together.

As Clarence and Ethel sat in the shade of a tree, they built anew their air castles amid the glaciers and icebergs of the frozen north.

"I hope I don't intrude," said a sweet, silver-like voice, and, looking up, they beheld their friend Laura Kean standing near, a smile on her pretty face. "My excuse for coming is to discuss your intended journey to the Klondike. I have heard you are going in the early spring."

"We have so decided," Clarence Berry answered.

"And if agreeable I have decided to accompany you."

Ethel Bush was delighted, and declared if they could find a preacher in Alaska the wedding would be celebrated in the frozen north. The three sat on the green and planned and talked with increasing enthusiasm, and Laura, with her pretty face beaming with happiness, arose, left the lovers to themselves, while she strolled down the grove, that her mind might conjure up her lover's joy and surprise at meeting her in those faraway regions.

Unconsciously she strolled deep into the wood and was lost to the sight of her friends, when a footstep near caused her to start in surprise if not alarm. Before her stood a young man of twenty-eight, with a pale cast of countenance and keen blue eye. He was of a figure that might have been called handsome, but to Laura Kean he was repulsive. She gave him a glance and gasped:

"Mr. Lackland!"

Theodore Lackland had followed Laura to this picnic and into this wood with a set purpose in his heart. He was wealthy, a young man of good family and reputed ability, but a man of firm and fixed purposes. To accomplish an end he would go to almost any limit. He had known Paul Miller long before he set off for the Klondike and hated him because he loved Laura Kean. Why should this beautiful girl, the only woman whom he had ever loved, prefer this rude, penniless country boy to himself?

Mr. Lackland failed to realize what so many have in this life—that it is the soul that attracts and not the face and figure. There is no freemasonry so subtle as the freemasonry of the soul.

"I am pleased to see you happy, Miss Kean," he said. "There has always been something wrong with me, and while others are happy I am sad."

"Surely it is a morbid fancy," said Laura. The light was dying out in her eyes. She made one quick downward look at the path, as if wishing to pass him. He observed her glance and said:

"No, no, Laura, wait a moment; I have something of great importance to say to you, which I must say now."

"I have just been told that you have decided to go to Alaska in the spring." He looked earnestly into the girl's glowing face, and added, with deliberation:

"Laura, there are reasons why you should not undertake such a journey."

"What reasons?"

"A million natural obstacles are in the way."

more deeply than before. She was silent, and he was tramping nervously backward and forward. Then he went on rapidly in a tone of irritation: "Laura, I understand you. It is not for a rude man like this Alaskan miner to do so." Then in an eager voice he said: "Dearest, I bring you a love undreamed of among such low creatures."

"Low creatures!" she hissed, almost breathlessly.

His cheeks quivered; his lips trembled; his voice swelled, while his nervous fingers were riveted to his palm. He approached her and took her hand. She seemed numbed by the feeling. She stood as one transfixed, a slow paralysis of surprise taking hold of her faculties. But at his touch her senses regained their mastery. She flung away his hand. Her breast heaved. In a voice charged with indignation she said:

"So this is what you mean! I understand you at last!"

Theodore Lackland fell back a pace. "Laura, hear me—hear me again."

But she had found her voice at last. "Sir, you have outraged my feelings as much as if I was at this moment Paul Miller's wife!"

Theodore Lackland felt his self-control rapidly slipping away, and in the height of his passion said:

"You shall never marry Paul Miller, Laura Kean! I swear it! I hold your fate and his in my hand, and have more ways of crushing you than you imagine. Be sensible; recall your insulting words, and do not throw yourself away on that impetuous ne'er-do-well—a hulking brute, made for a pickaxe and shovel!"

"Enough!" she cried. "I would rather marry a plow-boy than such a gentleman as you!"

Face to face, eye to eye, with panting breath and scornful looks, there they stood for one moment; then Laura, without a word, swung about and walked away to where her friends were preparing to return to town.

The features of Theodore Lackland underwent a frightful change. The gathering thunder cloud was not more black than his face. He raised his clenched fist to heaven and cursed his rival, heedless of the rolling thunder and on-coming storm.

"It is a long way to the Klondike," he finally muttered, while the smile of a devil flitted over his face; "but, great as the distance is, he will feel my power, and so shall she."

A heavy peal of thunder and the falling of rain roused him to the fact that the little excursion had all gone, leaving him alone in the wood and storm. He hurried to where his horse and buggy were, and, leaping in, drove furiously to town. He took the train that night to San Francisco and spent a whole day in consultation with two ill-favored looking men.

In a few weeks Laura had forgotten the unpleasant scene with the wealthy Mr. Lackland. She was busy preparing for the journey in the spring.

It was the last of February, and on the next day Laura was to draw her money from the savings bank and put it in the hands of a friend to secure her a passage and outfit for the Klondike. Late in the afternoon she saw a great crowd of men on the street talking in an excited manner, and a moment later Mr. O'Bourne, the butcher, came running toward her, wringing his hands.

"What is the matter, Mr. O'Bourne?" she asked.

"We are ruined, Miss Kean; we are ruined. The savings bank has failed; can't pay a cent!"

She grew dizzy and clutched at the door for support. Quickly all her bright dreams of surprising her lover vanished.

Mrs. Miller consoled her with the assurance that the loss would be made up by the great fortune Paul was talking from the Klondike. A few days later she learned that the bank had been wrecked by Mr. Tom Harris, the cashier, speculating on San Francisco Board of Trade. Later came the whisper that Harris had fled to avoid arrest, but before going had confessed his crime, and said that he was induced by Mr. Lackland to speculate. He went on the wrong side of the market and was ruined.

The evening post brought Laura a letter. It was addressed in the well-beloved hand of Paul Miller. But there was something in the chirography to alarm her. It was in a scrawling, feeble hand, and with many misgivings she broke the seal and glanced at the contents. Then, with face ashen white, she shrieked:

"Wounded, robbed, ruined!" and fell senseless to the floor.

Ethel Bush, learning of her friend's trouble, hastened to see Laura, who sank so rapidly under the double blow that she was confined to her bed.

Ethel tried to console her.

"Don't worry, dear. We shall soon be with Paul, and if I find him I will nurse him back to health, and Clarence will defend him if he is attacked until he is able to defend himself."

"Will you take a message to him from me, Ethel?"

"Yes, dear, a thousand."

"Warn him, Ethel; warn him!"

Ethel Bush were married they were poor in everything but luck, pluck and faith in their future. Their worldly possessions consisted of just enough to pay their passage to San Francisco, thence to Juneau, and on to Forty-Mile Camp, and provide themselves with the necessary stores for a year.

On the 15th they were married at the pretty little church in Fresno, and their friends in great numbers gathered about them to congratulate them and bid them a tearful adieu.

Next day the bride and groom took their departure for San Francisco. Laura imprinted a kiss on the young bride's lips and whispered:

"Give it to him! Oh, I wish I could go with you!"

They went to San Francisco, where they met the remainder of their party bound for the Klondike. Among the party was a tall young fellow named Dick Ronald, from Seattle, who from his height soon acquired the sobriquet of Long Dick. There were half a dozen other men, some young and some middle-aged, but Ethel was the only lady in the party bound for the frozen north.

The voyage and journey to Juneau was made without any unusual discomfort, but from that on it became perilous and every mile marked with danger.

They engaged some Indians as guides and an Esquimaux with the euphonious name of Umstich, which Long Dick translated for convenience into "Hemstitch."

Umstich was engaged as a sort of general superintendent of the dogs and sleds, of which they had several to convey themselves and packs across the bleak, white deserts, the dog being the only animal capable of making those journeys in all weather.

The accommodations for the young bride were poor, but Clarence did the very best he could for her. They carried a stove and tent, and every night the latter was pitched in some spot where the snow was hard. Beds of boughs were made, and Ethel was wrapped in furs until there was little chance for her to suffer from cold. She rode all the way from Juneau to the mining camp well muffled in bear-skin robes and furs, strapped on a sled or boat as the case might be, and while this method of travel was much better than walking, the uncertainty of her position made it anything but comfortable.

CHAPTER III.

Paul's Discovery.

It is essential at this point in our story to return to the Klondike. It is again night, and the little camp on the densely wooded stream is wild with excitement and confusion. Men were hurrying to and fro and giving utterance to angry exclamations. Among the most excited was our old friend Gid Myers. Gid had a rope in his hand, and was gesticulating wildly toward a cabin that had been erected on the banks of the stream, around which stood four or five men with rifles in their hands.

No wonder the gold-diggers were excited. A terrible crime had been committed in their little community. It was the first that had ever been known on the Klondike, and these hardy frontiersmen felt like wreaking vengeance upon the perpetrators.

"I tell ye, boys, we ought to make a holy example o' that precious rascal in yonder shanty. We have found gold here by the million o' dollars, an' when we thought we had an honest community four thieves pounce upon us, rob one o' us, an' almost kill him. Now let's hang the feller Crack Lash wounded."

"Wait, boys," cautioned Glum Ralston, who had listened to the harrangue of Gid Myers. "This chap what got a little more lead in his skin than he catercornered on ain't goin' t' git away. I tell ye that robbery warn't done by accident. It warn't planned in a minute neither—"

"Now yer shoutin', comrade," put in a grizzled veteran.

(To be continued.)

DAMAGE DONE BY LOCUSTS.

Seventeen-Year Specimens Have Begun Their Work.

The 17-year locusts are beginning to show what real damage they can do. When they first appeared in numbers in parts of Maryland a few weeks ago the farmers charged them with but very little damage; now the residents' tune has changed, and all about you can hear them saying: "The locusts are ruining my shade and fruit trees." According to the farmers, the greatest damage being done by the locusts is to the limbs of trees. After the locust emerges from the ground it at once makes for the body of the tree, and sticks upon it until ready to emerge from its shell, which is exactly the shape of the insect, legs and all. The shell breaks lengthwise of the locust, from the middle of the back to the head. Out of this opening the locust comes forth as white as a sheet. It immediately begins to crawl to the trunk of a tree. It is not long before it begins to get darker in color, until within a few hours it becomes almost black, with the exception of the body and the eyes, which remain a reddish brown. As soon as they turn dark they proceed to the extreme ends of the trees where they do the damage. The female's sting kills the branches. Chickens, dogs and sparrows are making short work of the insects when they come in contact with them. The crops in the fields have not suffered as yet.

Birds Fly and Sing.

Besides the skylark a number of other birds sing as they fly. Among these are the titlark, woodlark, water peppet, sedge warbler, willow warbler and whin chat.

HOME AND FASHIONS.

TOPICS OF CURRENT INTEREST TO THE FAIR SEX.

Attractive Golf Costume, With Piplings of Leather and Kid—How to Make a Pretty Table Fernery—Fashions for Little Folks.

To make a pretty table fernery make a birch bark box six inches wide, nine inches long—or round if you prefer it—and three inches deep. Paste cloth around the edges inside to prevent bits of earth from finding their way out. Plant in the box roots of small ferns, filling the spaces with green moss, or "running pine." Sprinkle every day, and keep in a cool place at night, and your table fernery will keep fresh and green all summer.

Gather, during a walk through the woods, an armful of ferns, selecting perfect ones, lay smoothly between newspapers, and put to press under a trunk. These may so remain until returning to the city.

Fill rose bowls half full of sand, and stick these preserved ferns in them, placing them about your rooms, making a woody spot all winter. If the ferns become dusty wash gently and return to place. The smallest ferns may be used with fresh flowers for table or bouquet for the dress.

Box for Hat Trimmings.

It is an excellent plan to have a box for hat trimmings, in which all the millinery odds and ends left over from season to season may be kept. Fashion rotates with such unerring regularity that good bits passed one season are quite likely to be in demand after two or three have passed. Steel ornaments, for example, are in and out of vogue at intervals. If at all handsome they are expensive and well worth keeping.

They may be cleaned from rust and discoloration by rubbing them with a brush dipped in paraffin oil and then in emery powder, afterward polishing with a piece of flannel or chamolite. Bits of handsome lace—and this does not mean expensive real laces, but the good trimming laces whose services for one season on a hat by no means

SMART NEW GOWNS.



exhaust their usefulness—should be carefully looked after and preserved.

Attractive Golf Costume.

Piplings have so gained in popularity that they are a feature of by far the greater number of garments or whatever sort, even appearing upon what is the fad of the moment to call "tub" frocks and shirtwaists. Quite a novelty in this line are the pipplings of leather and kid which are to be seen upon a few of the most exclusive models of the tailor-made styles. Such

desirable for the moment. The edge was finished with a narrow accordion pleating of white chiffon, sprung with a tiny ruche. The scarf which ornaments the vest and the sleeve puff were of embroidered chiffon and lace.

For the Little Folks.

Silk collars and cuffs (preferably of white taffeta) are innovations on little boys' suits, but are a trifle too out to be generally popular. Besides, one small boy would have their freshness marred in one wearing.

Basket weaves in both wool and cotton stuffs are very fashionable for children's clothes.

In summer top coats for boys, the shapes are loose and rather long. The middy reofer of blue or red and the tan covert box coat are the leading favorites.

Black and white have a monopoly for leather belts for Russian blouse suits for the diminutive man.

White is the color par excellence of the season for girls' wear, and white gowns, white coats, white hats of cloth, pique or silk, unrelieved by any color, are the height of vogue.

Smart little hats for very young girls to wear with a white pique suit or coat are of white pique in a broad sailor shape, with narrow, small crown, and banded with black satin or black velvet ribbon, with long ends at the back.

The little cap, sans face frill, with a turned-back front, is the most approved of fashion for master or baby this spring.

How to Make Sachet Bags.

To make your own sachets buy the powder and sprinkle on thin cotton inside the silk bags, or pour on it half a teaspoonful of oil of the perfume you desire, to which a few drops of glycerin are added. The glycerin keeps the perfume from evaporating.

This gives a vigorous and effusive perfume, pleasant for the rooms, and the sachets to hang in the closets or on backs of chairs should always be treated in this way by perfumed oil fixed with a little glycerin.

Some husbands are devoted to their wives and some are devoted to themselves.

LIKED THE ROMAN PUNCH.

Temperance Worker Unwittingly Takes of the Demon Rum.

She was a prim little lady who wore a gown bearing the unmistakable stamp of a small-town dressmaker. She had come to the city to attend a meeting of very earnest women, who, like herself, while not approving the method of Mrs. Carrie Nation, at least indorse her worthy sentiment. And she wore a little white ribbon, of course.

She sat with the young St. Louis man whose mother's lifelong friend she is. He was most attentive to the little lady visitor.

After glancing over the bill of fare she removed her eyeglasses and handed the card back to the young man.

"You order, John," she said.

"Well, select your meat," said John, "and I'll order the rest."

This the little lady did.

A small cup of ice was served with the meat.

This the little lady enjoyed immensely.

When it came to dessert she said: "No pie or pudding, thank you, John. But I'll take some more of the ice. It is delightful and so refreshing on a warm day."

So the ice was served.

"What is this, John?" asked the little lady when she had finished.

"Roman punch," said John, easily.

"Punch!" exclaimed the little lady in black. "What has it in it, John?"

"Oh, a little rum, I believe," said the careless John.

And as the little lady passed us by we heard her murmur, "Rum!"

But if John was guilty of having played a trick upon his mother's friend his handsome face gave no sign of it as he moved on with the little lady hanging on his arm.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

SPRUNG FROM THE SEED.

What Happened to Hen That Was Fed on Sawdust.

James L. Branson, in his address at the recent commencement exercises of the National Farm School, made a comic allusion to politicians and farmers that threw the audience into laughter. City Treasurer Moore stepped forward to shake hands with the old gentleman after the address, and referred in mock displeasure to the remark about politicians.

"That was all right!" protested Mr. Branson. "You chaps want to learn that farmers are not always 'farmers.' I'm reminded of a fresh drummer who once told a farmer who was feeding cornmeal to the chickens that sawdust mixed with the meal would make the keep of the chicks much cheaper. The next time the drummer visited the neighborhood he asked the farmer if the suggestion had been adopted."

"Yes, indeed," replied the latter, with never a smile. "Why, that hen over there liked it so well that I fed her altogether on sawdust. The only trouble was that, when she hatched her eggs, one of the chicks had a wooden leg and two others were woodpeckers."

He Had Doubts.

"Of course," he said, "it is more than courteous to be obliging in all associations with the fair sex."

"Of course."

"So far as possible you should do what a girl wants you to do."

"Certainly."

"If she seems anxious to do a little spooning you should spoon."

"Naturally."

"If she likes flattery, you should flatter."

"In moderation, yes."

"If she wants sentiment you should give it to her."

"Assuredly."

"That's just common politeness, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Well, no one can tell me again that politeness pays. I know better."

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, perhaps my chivalrous nature led me to overdo the thing, but I've just been sued for breach of promise."

A Lesson in Geography.

According to Representative Kyle, this episode happened in Pickaway county, Ohio:

There is in the county a certain crossroads, where a patient teacher struggles daily with the development of the young idea. One morning she was giving the school a lesson in geography.

"What is a cataract?" she asked.

"There is absolute silence in response, and she explained the meaning of the word.

"What is a cape?"

"This was better. One of the children knew it was a point of land jutting out into the water.

"What is a strait?"

Over in the corner a small hand went up. "I know, teacher," said a small boy.

"Well, what is it?"

"It beats three of a kind," was the triumphant answer.

It Required Care.

In a town in the wildest part of the Transvaal the cashier of a bank is an individual who for a time acted as a judge some years ago. One day recently he refused to cash a check offered by a stranger.

"The check is all right," he said, "but the evidence you offer in identifying yourself as the person to whose order it is drawn is scarcely sufficient."

"I've known you to hang a man on less evidence, judge," was the stranger's response.

"Quite likely," replied the ex-judge, "but when it comes to letting go of cold cash we have to be careful."