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Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

BURNING DAYLIGHT

By JACK LONDON

AUTHOR OF "THE CALL OF THE WILD," "WHITE FANG," "MARTIN EDEN," ETC.

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PART I. CHAPTER I.

It was a quiet night in the Tivoli. At the bar, which ranged along one side of the large chinked-log room, leaned half a dozen men, two of whom were discussing the relative merits of apruce tea and lime juice as remedies for scurvy. They argued with an air of depression and with intervals of morose silence. The other men scarcely heeded them. In a row, against the opposite wall, were the gambling games. The crap table was deserted. One lone man was playing at the faro table. The roulette was not even spinning, and the gamekeeper stood by the roaring, red-hot stove, talking with a young, dark-eyed woman, comely of face and figure, who was known from Juneau to Fort Yukon as the Virgin. Three men sat in at stud poker, but they played with small chips and without enthusiasm, while there were no onlookers. On the floor of the dancing room, which opened out at the rear, three couples were waiting dreadingly to the strains of a violin and a piano.

Circle City was not deserted, nor was money tight. The miners were in from Moosehead creek and the other diggings to the west, the summer washing had been good, and the men's pouches were heavy with dust and nuggets. The Klondike had not yet been discovered, nor had the miners of the Yukon learned the possibilities of deep digging and wood-fring. No work was done in the winter, and they made a practice of hibernating in the large camps like Circle City during the long Arctic night. Time was heavy on their hands, their pouches were well filled and the only social diversion to be found was in the saloons. Yet the Tivoli was practically deserted, and the Virgin, standing by the stove, yawned with uncovered mouth and said to Charley Bates:

"If something don't happen soon, I'm goin' to bed. What's the matter with the camp, anyway? Everybody dead?"

Bates did not even trouble to reply, but went on moodily rolling a cigarette. Dan MacDonald, pioneer saloonman and gambler on the upper Yukon, owner and proprietor of the Tivoli and all its games, wandered tortorily across the great vacant space of floor and joined the two at the stove. "Anybody dead?" the Virgin asked him.

"Looks like it," was the answer. "Then it must be the whole camp," she said with an air of finality and with another yawn.

MacDonald grinned and nodded, and opened his mouth to speak, when the front door swung open and a man appeared in the light. He would have appeared a large man had not a huge French-Canadian stepped up to him from the bar and gripped his hand.

"Hello, Daylight!" was his greeting.

"By Gar, you good for sore eyes!"

"Hello, Louis, when did you-all blow in?" returned the newcomer. "Come up and have a drink and tell us all about Bone creek. Why, dog-gone you-all, shake again. Where's that partner of yours? I'm looking for him."

Another huge man detached himself from the bar to shake hands. Olaf Henderson and French Louis, partners together on Bone creek, were the two largest men in the country, and though they were but half a head taller than the newcomer, between them he was dwarfed completely.

"Hello, Olaf," said the one called Daylight. "Tomorrow's my birthday. And you, too, Louis. Come up and drink, and I'll tell you-all about it."

The arrival of the newcomer seemed to send a flood of warmth through the place. "It's Burning Daylight," the Virgin cried, the first to recognize him as he came into the light. Charley Bates' tight features relaxed at the sight, and MacDonald went over and joined the three at the bar. With the advent of Burning Daylight the whole place suddenly became brighter and cheerier. The barkeepers were active. Voices were raised. Somebody laughed. And when the fiddler, peering into the front room, remarked to the pianist: "It's Burning Daylight," the waltz time perceptibly quickened, and the dancers, catching the contagion, began to whirl about as if they really enjoyed it. It was known to them of old-time that nothing languished when Burning Daylight was around.

He turned from the bar and saw the woman by the stove and the eager look of welcome she extended him.

"Hello, Virgin, old girl," he called. "Hello, Charley. What's the matter with you-all? Why wear faces like that when coffins only cost three ounces? Come up, you-all, and drink. Come up, you unbred dead, an' name your poison. Come up, everybody. This is my night, and I'm going to ride it. To-morrow I'm thirty, and then I'll be an old man. It's the last fling of youth. Are you-all with me? Surge along, then. Surge along."

The waltz in the back room being finished, the three couples, followed by the fiddler and the pianist and heading for the bar, caught Daylight's eye.

"Surge along, you-all!" he cried. "Surge along and name it. This is my night, and it ain't a night that comes frequent. Surge up, you Sivs and Salmon-eaters. It's my night, I tell you-all—"

"A blamed mangy night," Charley Bates interposed.

"You're right, my son," Burning Daylight went on, gayly. "A mangy night, but it's my night, you see. I'm the mangy old he-wolf. Listen to me how!"

And how he did, like a lone gray timber wolf, till the Virgin thrust her pretty fingers in her ears and shivered. A minute later she was whirled away in his arms to the dancing floor, where, along with three other women and their partners, a rollicking Virginia reel was soon in progress.

Few men knew Elam Harnish by any other name than Burning Daylight, the name which had been given him in the early days in the land because of his habit of routing his comrades out of their blankets with the complaint that daylight was burning. Of the pioneers in that far Arctic wilderness, where all men were pioneers, he was reckoned among the oldest. Men like Al Mayo and Jack McQuestion antedated him; but they had entered the land by crossing the Rockies from the Hudson Bay country to the east. He, however,



"Surge Along, You-All!" He Cried. "Surge Along and Name It."

had been the pioneer over the Chilcoot and Chilkat passes. In the spring of 1883, twelve years before, a stripling of eighteen, he had crossed over the Chilcoot with five comrades. In the fall he had crossed back with one. Four had perished by mischance in the bleak, uncharted vastness. And for twelve years Elam Harnish had continued to grope for gold among the shadows of the Circle Heroes are seldom given to hero-worship, but among those of that land, young as he was, he was accounted an elder hero. In point of time he was before them. In point of deed he was beyond them.

He was a striking figure of a man, of all the men in the Tivoli. Soft-tanned moccasins of moose-hide, headed in Indian designs, covered his feet. His trousers were ordinary overalls, his coat was made from a blanket. Long-gauntleted leather mittens, lined with wool, hung by his side. They were connected, in the Yukon fashion by a leather thong passed around the neck and across the shoulders. On his head was a fur cap, the ear-flaps raised and the tying-cords dangling. His face, lean and slightly long, with the suggestion of hollows under the cheek bones, seemed almost Indian. The burnt skin and keen dark eyes contributed to this effect, though the bronze of the skin and the eyes themselves were essen-

tially those of a white man. He looked older than thirty, and yet, smooth-shaven and without wrinkles, he was almost boyish. The impression of age was based on no tangible evidence. It came from the abstract facts of the man, from what he had endured and survived, which was far beyond that of ordinary men. He had lived naked and tensely, and something of all this smoldered in his eyes, vibrated in his voice and seemed forever a whisper on his lips.

It was two in the morning when the dancers, bent on getting something to eat, adjourned the dancing for half an hour. And it was at this moment that Jack Kearns suggested poker. Jack Kearns was a big, bluff-featured man, who, along with Bettles, had made the disastrous attempt to found a post on the head-reaches of the Koyukuk, far inside the Arctic circle. After that Kearns had fallen back on his posts at Forty Mile and Sixty Mile and changed the direction of his ventures by sending out to the states for a small saw-mill and a river steamer. Jack Kearns suggested poker. French Louis, Dan MacDonald and Hal Campbell (who had made a strike on Moosehide), all three of whom were not dancing because there were not girls enough to go around, inclined to the suggestion. They were looking for a fifth man when Burning Daylight emerged from the rear room, the Virgin on his arm, the train of dancers in his wake. In response to the hail of the poker-players, he came over to their table in the corner.

"Want to sit in," said Campbell.

"How's your luck?"

"I sure got it tonight," Burning Daylight answered with enthusiasm, and at the same time felt the Virgin press his arm warningly. She wanted him for the dancing. "I sure got my

He released his arm and thrust her playfully on the shoulder, at the same time turning to the poker players.

"Take off the limit and I'll go you all."

"Limit's the roof," said Jack Kearns. "Once started, it was a quiet game with little or no conversation, though all about the players the place was a roar. Elam Harnish had ignited the



"We'll Dance Some More By and By. The Night's Young Yet."

spark. More and more miners dropped in to the Tivoli and remained. When Burning Daylight went on the tear, no man cared to miss it. The dancing floor was full. The luck at the table varied monotonously, no big hands being out. As a result, high play went on with small hands, though no play lasted long. But at three in the morning the big combination of hands arrived. It was the moment of moments that men wait weeks for in a poker game. The onlookers became quiet. The men farther away ceased talking and moved over to the table. The players deserted the other games, and the dancing-floor was forsaken, so that all stood at last, five-score and more in a compact and silent group, around the poker table. The high betting went on, with the draw not in sight. Kearns had dealt, and French Louis had opened the pot with one marker—in his case one hundred dollars. Campbell had merely "seen" it, but Elam Harnish, coming next, had tossed in five hundred dollars, with the remark to MacDonald that he was letting him in easy. MacDonald glancing again at his hand, put in a thousand in markers. Kearns, debating a long time over his hand, finally "saw." It then cost French Louis nine hundred to remain in the game, which he contributed after a similar debate. It cost Campbell likewise nine hundred to remain and draw cards, but to the surprise of all he saw the nine hundred and raised another thousand.

"You-all are on the grade at last," Harnish remarked, as he saw the five hundred and raised a thousand in turn. "Helen Breakfast's sure on top this divide, and you-all had best look out for bustin' harness."

"Me for that same lady," accompanied MacDonald's markers for two thousand and for an additional thousand-dollar raise.

"I ain't got no more markers," Kearns remarked plaintively. "We'd best begin I. O. U.'s."

"Glad you're going to stay," was MacDonald's cordial response.

"I ain't stayed yet. I've got a thousand in already. How's it stand now?"

"It'll cost you three thousand for a look in, but nobody will stop you from raising."

"Raise—h—l. You must think I got a pat like yourself," Kearns looked at his hand. "But I'll tell you what I'll do, Mac. I've got a bunch, and I'll just see that three thousand."

He wrote the sum on a slip of paper, signed his name, and consigned it to the center of the table.

French Louis became the focus of all eyes. He fingered his cards nervously for a pace. Then, with a "By Gar! Ah got not one leetle best hunch," he regretfully tossed his hand into the discard.

The next moment the hundred and odd pairs of eyes shifted to Campbell.

"I won't hump you, Jack," he said, contenting himself with calling the requisite two thousand.

The eyes shifted to Harnish, who scribbled on a piece of paper and showed it forward.

"I'll just let you-all know this ain't no Sunday school society of philanthropy," he said. "I see you, Jack, and I raise you a thousand. Here's where you-all get action on your pat, Mac."

"Action's what I fatten on, and I lift another thousand," was MacDonald's rejoinder. "Still got that hunch, Jack?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Trouble, like a dog that chases a cat, is liable to pull up suddenly if you turn on him and stand perfectly still!

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stomach and there was no cure. I almost thought the same, for my breath was offensive and I could not eat anything without great misery, and I gradually grew worse.

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Orator—I made a speech at the dinner last night, and you didn't print a line of it.

Editor—Well, what further proof do you want?—London Opinion.

Ready for More Sacrifice. Frank McIntyre, after a recent performance of "Snobs," fell into a storytelling mood and recalled the vaccination of the six-year-old son of one of his friends. The boy was given 50 cents for undergoing the or-his father:

"Daddy, isn't there anything else you can have done to me? I need the money."

Explained. An old lady, the customer of an Irish farmer, was rather dissatisfied with the watery appearance of her morning's cream and finally she complained very bitterly to him.

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