

The Klondyke Gold Mystery.

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CHAPTER I. Strange Information.

From the flowery fields of California to the barren region of the Klondyke, from 1849 to 1897, is a wide reach, but the gulf of time is bridged over and the hopes and fears of thousands of hearts follow the argonauts who go to search for the golden fleece in the confines of the Arctic Circle, as they did forty-eight years ago the California prospectors. The real story of the discovery of gold on the Klondyke is not generally known, and to unravel that mystery is the purpose of this story.

On a certain night, about three years ago last May, five men were seated about a camp fire, built under the south side of a cliff, among some pine trees, near the banks of the Yukon river, fifteen miles above Dawson City.

As some of this party have become well known by the development of the Klondyke gold fields, it will be as well to introduce them to the reader before we proceed with our story. That large man dressed in moose-skin coat and trousers, with a bear skin thrown over his shoulders, was once well known in the great northwest as the most daring hunter, miner and adventurer in all Alaska. He was as honorable as he was brave, and as kind hearted as he was sullen. His name was Jack Ralston, but along the Yukon he was commonly known as "Glum Ralston."

Ralston was once an American. He was getting along in years, for his hair was growing frosty, yet his frame was still strong and his heart had not abandoned its hope.

George W. Cormack, or "Lucky George," as the miners nicknamed him, sat on the log just opposite Glum Ralston. George was an Englishman, a brave, adventurous fellow, who was also an expert miner. Perhaps it was his knowledge of geology and mining that tended to his success. Nevertheless, the miners attributed it to luck.

Gid Myers was a man of thirty, with pale blue eyes and sandy complexion. Gid had had considerable experience as a hunter and prospector, but in the miner's parlance had never struck it rich.

Porter Allen, or "Big Port," was a giant in size, being over six feet in height, with broad shoulders and sinews of steel. He was forty, his hair and long beard quite grizzled with time and exposure.

The fifth was a young man of twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, with the freshness of youth and innocence still on his face. While his older companions were smoking their pipes, the younger man of the party gazed abstractedly into the glowing fire. His mind went back over the mountains, rivers and seas to his quiet little home in Fresno, where he had left his widowed mother, dear to his heart, and one still dearer. Her name was Laura Kean. They were lovers and betrothed.

While he sat gazing into the fire and seeing only the well-beloved face of his betrothed, his companions toasted and ate their suppers and talked of their present situation.

"Glum, how long you been in Alaska?" asked Lucky George.

"It's now twenty-one years."

"An' never been back to the States?"

"No."

"Are you ever goin'?"

"Don't know," he answered, with a sigh. "It'd be like goin' back to a graveyard now. Most everybody I know's dead. If—" but he did not finish the sentence. His weather-beaten eye seemed to gleam with softer light as he gazed into the fire, and Gid Myers thought he saw a shade of moisture gathering there.

"Glum, you often promised us you would tell your own story sometime—how you came here, and why you have spent all these years in Alaska. Why not tell now?" asked Lucky George.

Glum moved uneasily on the log on which he was sitting and, clearing his throat, said: "Boys, 'tain't much of a yarn when it's spun. I came to Alaska in '73 in the seal'n' schooner 'Eleanor.' We had good officers and crew, an' the sun never shone on a better man than our captain. We all loved him and would have died for him.

"Well, we had no luck sealing, and the captain and sailors went with a party of Indians who said they knew where gold could be found. I didn't believe them, and wouldn't go. But he asked me not to leave Alaska till he came back, and I promised.

"At the end of six months an explorer'n' party came back with the cap o' one o' the sailors which they had found on the snow several days' journey away.

"Winter was on us, and we ran into Sitka, where we anchored until spring. It was a hard winter, and I have often wondered why we didn't all die, but all but two pulled through, and when spring came on, an' the captain hadn't hove to in sight, the first mate said he was going back with the ship. They tried to make me go, but I'd promised the captain I'd stay until he came back.

"Our ship sailed away, an' I stayed around the town for a while, an' then went on a cruise with some hunters.

We branched off into the woods. I didn't tell the story of my captain and the Injun chief with the gold beads for a good many years. Then I went into the interior to try to find him. I got in with some moose hunters and traveled one whole summer and part of a winter and nearly starved an' froze a hundred times, but not a word could I hear of him, so I suppose I am doomed to make my last voyage from this port. When I meet my captain on that unknown sea to which we are all steerin', I'll tell him I kept my promise."

When the ex-sailor had finished his story a silence fell on the group. No one spoke for several minutes.

The youth, known only by the sobriquet of "Crack Lash," sat gazing abstractedly into the fire. He had heard no part of the story, for his mind was still on his far-away home, where dwelt mother and the fair being who had promised to be his wife, for whom he had braved the dangers of the wilderness.

At early morn the little camp on the Yukon was astir. Paul was the last to awake. Youth is healthful and innocent, so sleep lingers longer about its eyelids than those whose bodies are freighted with disease or minds burdened with cares.

"Where's George?" asked Gid, as he toasted steaks.

"Been gone these two hours." Big Port answered.

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"That's strange."

Breakfast was disposed of, the dogs fed and harnessed and the party prepared for their journey up the river to Dawson City, then an insignificant village, and yet lucky George had not returned.

As the sun rose higher the mud and snow made travel more uncomfortable, yet Paul trudged on, uncomplainingly. He could bear any burden or hardship without a murmur when he reflected that it was for Laura. Her presence gave strength to his arm and keenness to his eye, spurring him on to efforts more than superhuman.

When they halted at noon they were compelled to get to leeward of the smoke to protect themselves from the mosquitoes. But little had been said of their missing companion, Lucky George. Gid followed his trail through the snow without difficulty, and gave it as his opinion that he was going straight to Dawson City.

Glum Ralston, who had not expressed an opinion on the subject for some time, at last said:

"Boys, he's tryin' to give us the slip, I'm afeard, or run a cold deck on us," said Gid.

"What if he does?" asked Port.

"We don't lose much."

"We might if he struck pay dirt," said Gid.

"Won't we be just as likely to strike pay dirt as George?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because George is allers in luck. Every time he draws from the deck it's a trump. If a feller holds a straight George has a flush. I'll gamble my dogs an' packs that he makes a ten strick right now."

There was a silence, and the men sat and smoked and steamed, to drive away the mosquitoes. At last Paul broke the silence by saying:

"If there is gold on the Klondyke let us go and find it ourselves."

"Now yer shoutin'," cried the prospectors. "Why not go to the Klondyke ourselves?"

"Truth is, boys," said Glum, "I've never had any very exalted opinion of Lucky George's honesty. If he makes a big strike we can, of course, come in for a claim, but he'll strike out the best an' work on the others without us a-knowin' it."

They decided to set out at once for the Klondyke. It was a journey attended from beginning to end with great danger and hardship. Glum Ralston was the only member of their party who had been on the stream, and he acted as guide.

Again night came on, and they went into camp and prepared their suppers. Paul was a little disheartened on this night. Continual disappointment had made him heart-sick. Rising to relieve his cramped limbs, he turned his back toward the fire and gazed across the wood-covered hill into the darkness beyond. To his surprise he discovered a glow on the woods far in the distance. For a moment he gazed upon it in doubt, and then, touching Gid Myers, who sat near, on the arm, he whispered:

"Look off there, Gid, in the direction I am pointing. Don't you see anything suspicious?" Gid Myers did as directed, and said:

"Yes, thar's somethin' onnat'ural, Crack Lash."

"What is it?"

"Well, I'd say it was th' glow from a camp fire like our own."

"Gid, suppose we go and reconnoitre. We may make some discovery."

"Keep your eyes peeled, boys" cautioned Big Port. "It may be a mighty sight more risky'n ye think."

"Oh, let us alone for that; we'll let no red nigger o' the north woods get the drop on us."

Through the dense wood, across ravines, snowdrifts and muddy streams the two pressed on over hill and dale,

until, after three hours' painful toil, they came upon a bend in the stream called the Klondyke, where, on passing around a spur of the cliff, all of a sudden the full glare of torches and fire light fell upon them. It was a strange and unexpected sight that met their view. A great fire was blazing, to which was added the light of pine knot torches stuck in the ground.

Two men were at work with picks, shovels and pans. Late as it was, dark as it was and tired and hungry as they were, they toiled on and on.

"Crack Lash," Gid gasped in a hoarse whisper, "it's Lucky George and the squaw man, Lattimer."

"Yes."

"What are they doin'?"

"Diggin'! Great heaven, look at the shining ore! See! the buckets and pans are full of nuggets and dust. Oh, Gid! Gid! It's a bonanza!"

"Hush, they will hear you."

"I am going to make myself known to them."

"And be shot?"

"Why should they shoot me when we are friends? If they are like savage dogs over a bone, then we can shoot first."

Gid consented to go to them, and, advancing to within a hundred paces, they called to the diggers. At first they were a little confused, but Lucky George, who was a shrewd fellow, saw it was best to admit to the discovery.

"Come down, boys; come down," he cried, cheerfully. "I tell you we have made the greatest strike in the world. Look at the work of a few hours."

"George, are there more good claims?"

"Plenty of them. Let us all set to work, stake out the best and get the very cream before the world finds it out. Lattimer here put me onto this; he got it from the Indians."

This was the discovery of the great gold fields in the Klondyke. Lucky George got the tip from Lattimer, the white man with an Indian wife, and had determined to work it alone if he could do so, but now that his friends had found him, he decided to make the most of it and divide.

The others were sent for, and claims for all staked out.

Next morning with the dawn of day Paul began to work his claim. From the first shovelful of earth, he began to take out gold. His pick seemed attracted to the largest nuggets, and his pan was always rich in ore. He washed out a thousand dollars' worth of dust and nuggets to the pan. He forgot breakfast, lunch or dinner, but toiled on. The small moose-skin bags were quickly filled, and then he poured the renewed accumulation into a water bucket. His eyes gleamed with the fire of the insane, and in his mind he saw only the faces of sweetheart and mother and took no thought of rest, health or the danger which his accumulation brought him.

There was danger hovering over the happy youth. His claim was some distance up the stream from the others, and one day, as he was toiling and heaping up the golden treasure, two pairs of fierce, avaricious eyes glared at him from the dense foliage of pines. They watched him a long time as he toiled, and then exchanged knowing looks, winks and smiles, which said:

"Let the fool toil on. When he has taken his thousands from the earth we will have it."

After the first few days he stopped long enough to eat and sleep a few hours at a time, dreaming of home and of making loved ones there happy.

Little did he dream that a storm cloud was gathering over the loved ones at home and another over his own head, threatening to ruin himself and all most dear to his heart. (To be continued.)

BRIGANDS QUEER IN GREECE.

Treat Prisoner Well, But Insist on Ransom Money

M. Stravalopoulos, a young man, who was captured recently by brigands, has returned to Athens. He states that as he was about to go on board his yacht at Eghlon he was accosted by a fashionably dressed young man, who kept him in conversation while four other men crept up behind him and seized and gagged him. They then carried him off to the mountains to which they were accompanied by the fashionable young man, who turned out to be a notorious brigand chief named Panopoulos. M. Stravalopoulos was taken to a large cavern or grotto, very comfortably furnished, where the brigands compelled him to write to his father, a rich banker, for a ransom of £4,000 in gold. His captors gave him plenty of food and wines, and even insisted on his saying his prayers twice a day. They also made him read various improving books, of which there was a large supply in the grotto. On the arrival of the money it was conveyed to a monastery in the mountains, where one of the monks counted it and handed it over to the robbers. A great feast was held the same evening in the grotto, and the brigands becoming intoxicated, the prisoner made his escape and reached the railway after a journey of five hours on foot. He returned to the grotto as soon as a force of police could be got together, but the brigands had all decamped.—London Globe.

An Unlikely Event.

Despite the conclusion of the Boer war, it is unlikely that King Edward will be known to posterity as Edward the Conqueror.

It sometimes happens that the man who dubs his house a castle has the moat in his eye.

CONGRESS WILL ACT

DISAPPOINTMENT IN STORE FOR THE DEMOCRATS.

Their Claim That President Roosevelt's Monopoly Issue is a Bluff is Absurd—Voice of the People Will Be Heeded by Congress.

The Democrats who content themselves with the stand regarding President Roosevelt's monopoly issue that such legislation as he asks for will not and cannot be enacted in the next (short) session of Congress are striking their all on one throw. They scoff at the President's call to the country, deriding him for making a "bluff" for fall campaign purposes. They accuse him of presenting an issue which cannot, they declare, be acted on by Congress in December, but with which he and his party hope to carry the congressional elections of next November. The elections carried, they assert, the trust issue will be forgotten or neglected.

Let them recall that this issue is going before the voters of the United States next November. It will be passed on then by the popular electorate. And there never yet has been an issue passed on by the American people that an American Congress, following that decision, ignored or dared to ignore. The Democrats pool-pool the President's issue and the Administration's desire. How little Congress cares for the President's plans or the Administration's programmes, they declare, is shown by the way in which Congress treated the President's Cuban "Reciprocity" measure. They pretend to believe that Congress would treat the President's monopoly measure in the same fashion.

But the Reciprocity measure was not passed on by the country at the polls. If it had been there would have been no shadow of doubt as to its enactment; there would have been no pause in the work of speeding it to the estate of law. It was because it had not been passed on, because there were some Representatives and Senators who did not know what their constituents wanted, that no power, the Administration's, the Dowagers' or that of any one else, could force it through Congress.

But it will be known what the voters want done with the question of monopolistic combinations. They will declare themselves in the campaign—the President, wise in his experience, has made provision for that—and confirm their declaration with their official decision at the ballot box. And whatever they decide, that which will Congress do just as sure as there is such a thing as a Congress of the United States. No sane man, Republican or Democrat, and no thoughtful citizen, interested in the trusts or disinterested, who have studied the course of events in the industrial world for the last two years can have the faintest, most lingering doubt what it is that the voters of the United States will decide that they wish done—with the industrial combinations—that their power to suppress competition, control markets and raise prices at their own sweet will shall be so governed by statutes and regulated by the enforcement of those statutes that the public shall be protected in all its rights, along with the legal and rightful protection that shall be extended of every interest and withheld from none. And since that will be the decision of the voters in the November election, Congress will not fail to write their verdict into the laws of the United States!

Never Stronger Than Now.

The divergent views of Republican statesmen, and the tenacity with which such views are severally maintained, indicate the virility of the Republican party. It has been a positive, forceful party throughout its strenuous existence. It is a thoughtful, considerate party, with convictions that are not cast in the weathercock mold, making them amenable to change with every political breeze.

The Democratic leaders are quite welcome to all the hope they can make out of the vision they affect to see at Washington. They may at least enjoy the comforting assurance of Paul, "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." It will be a long wait. The cohesion of the Republican party was never stronger than it is to-day. There never was a time when its leaders were more loyal in its support or more determined to stand shoulder to shoulder in defense of its principles. But there is no bell-wether in the Republican fold. The leaders of the party, and the rank and file as well, do their own thinking and express their own views. When it comes to a political battle, however, all minor considerations are forgotten, with the usual result of a total eclipse of Democratic hope.—Los Angeles Herald.

A Great Octopus Hunt.

The tariff and the trusts are said to be on the list as the leading issues for the congressional campaign on the part of the Democrats. Bryan will be eliminated, anti-imperialism and anti-expansion will be touched upon very gingerly, if at all; the leading issues will be tariff and the trusts, and the campaign managers will be instructed to coach their spellbinders on these topics. This selection of issues indicates talent on the part of the Democratic board of strategy, for the subject chosen will afford the widest possible latitude for misrepresentation and deception, for appeals to passion and demagogic denunciations of those in control. These subjects also will afford opportunity for many and most generous promises. But does anybody imagine that if the legislative

functions of the government in both branches were turned over to the Democracy to-day any great reforms would be brought about or that any more stringent laws would be enacted? It is too improbable even to imagine any such results. In no two sections of the country does the Democracy stand for the same thing. The election of a Democratic Congress would simply fill the seats with a quarrelling crowd of incompetents, and instead of having better laws we would have a government crippled in its most important branch. But we will have a great octopus hunt this year.—Grand Rapids Herald.

MINERAL PRODUCTS.

Their Output Enormously Increased in Five Years of Protection.

To a large degree our mineral production is indicative of what protection has done for our industrial expansion under the operation of the Dingley law. The coal for our furnaces and for engines in mills, on the railroad and as the basis for all motive power; the iron ore which is the basis of our great iron and steel output; the stone for construction purposes; the copper and silver and gold all show a most wonderful increase during the past five years. In value our mineral production has increased from \$622,000,000 in 1896 to over \$1,200,000,000 in 1901, or 100 per cent, and the output for 1902 will no doubt show a most substantial increase over last year.

The following table shows the increase in value of a few of our mineral products from 1896 to 1901:

	1896.	1901.
Coal	\$196,000,000	\$325,000,000
Gold	53,000,000	83,000,000
Iron ore	23,000,000	75,000,000
Silver (common value)	40,000,000	36,000,000
Copper	50,000,000	105,000,000
Lead	10,500,000	26,000,000
Zinc	6,500,000	12,000,000
Nickel	4,500,000	8,000,000
Stone	30,000,000	55,000,000
Clay products	63,000,000	85,000,000
Petroleum	58,500,000	84,000,000
Natural gas	13,000,000	26,000,000

In all the above the increase was enormous, except silver, which shows a slight decrease in both quantity and commercial value.

Some of the less important products increased in even greater proportions, such as graphite, from \$48,000 to \$220,000; feldspar, from \$35,000 to \$200,000; precious stones, from \$97,000 to \$260,000; flint, from \$24,000 to \$196,000; mineral paints, from \$530,000 to \$950,000; pyrite, from \$320,000 to \$890,000, and so on through the list. Perhaps the most noteworthy increase is that in the production of iron ore. This is shown again in the pig iron output, which has increased from 6,657,388 tons in 1894 to 15,878,354 tons in 1901, and an estimated output of nearly 18,000,000 tons for the present year.

Our whole mineral production, like that of agriculture manufacturing and forest products, shows the effect of our increased purchasing power. In shipping, railroading, building, and every field of mechanism there is the same increased demand for the products of our mines, which at the present rate of increase will in a year or two exceed a billion and a half in value annually.



Which Would Fare Best?

Bryanism in Colorado.

The Democratic press and politicians of the state are deeply concerned as to what shall be said in the keynote speech at the coming state convention. As might be expected there is a wide and active divergence of opinion, although the majority of those interested seem to be actuated rather by a desire to find something that will be popular than by the declaration of principles in which they really and truly believe. Even these cannot agree, while those who are genuinely sincere are hopelessly at loggerheads. A bunch of papers, in which we find our dearly beloved Rockville Tribune, savagely demands the support of "the peerless Bryan" and all his woolly vagaries, while a large number are in favor of reorganization, openly repudiating Bryanism and all it stands for. Others, the really wise ones, are saying nothing, waiting for the cat to jump before exploiting their "principles." There is nothing in the situation to trouble or harass the Republicans and the event can be awaited with gladsome interest. It now looks as though the reorganizationists would win, and the Bryanites would do well to begin taking in sail.—Terre Haute Tribune.

Both Bad Ones.

However, the Democratic party is not obliged to follow either Cleveland or Bryan. As leaders they are both has-beens. Both brought disaster—Cleveland, with his administration, and Bryan with his platform. It would do well to look up a new Moses, not recommended by either.—Kansas City Journal.



Fruit Notes.

From the most recent weekly reports issued by the Climate and Crop Service of the Weather Bureau, we gather the following information concerning fruit prospects:

Georgia.—Peaches, apples, pears and plums continue to rot and these fruits are below normal in quality and quantity. The dry weather has given a decided set back to the water melon crop.

Illinois.—The apple crop ranges from very poor to very fine. In some localities the prospects have been improved by the rain. Though in some places the peach prospects are fair, they are generally very poor.

Iowa.—The average condition of apples is 65, plums 50, grapes 65.

Maryland and Delaware.—A further, though slight, decrease in fruit prospects is noted throughout the section, due to continued falling and to a measurable loss of good fruit by wind gusts. Some spraying is being done in the orchards of Washington county. Early apples are now ripe, with poor to medium yields, affording an ample supply for home use in most localities, but not many for market. Peaches continue to drop freely, except in the southeast where they are holding fairly well and still promise moderately good yields. Some apricots are now ripe in Prince George's county. Japan plums are ripening in Cecil, and are falling off freely in Anne Arundel.

Michigan.—Cherries are yielding only moderately and in some cases poorly. Plums indicate a light crop, but apples, pears and peaches continue promising.

Missouri.—The apple crop continues to decline and little more than one-third of a crop for the state is now indicated.

Pennsylvania.—Apples and peaches are dropping in nearly all sections; cherries are good in some districts and in others a failure; and the conditions are not such as to warrant expectations of the usual berry crop. Higher temperatures are needed to promote growth and maturity.

Wisconsin.—Strawberries, cherries, currants and other small fruits have ripened very rapidly and improved somewhat in quality during the past few days. The prospects for apples is generally discouraging although in some localities the crop will be fair. Cranberries are in good condition.

Bitter Rot of the Apples.

A word now should be said upon the common name. Very commonly the infected flesh of an apple is distinctly bitter to the taste, but there is much variation in this. Sometimes the bitterness is very slight, in other cases almost equal to quinine. But such bitterness sometimes results also from other causes. Other fungi produce a similar taste in the affected fruit, though those usually attacking stored apples have no such effect. The musty flavor due to common molds is altogether different. If the word bitter is not always characteristic, the word rot is not especially appropriate. The affected tissues are never slushy-soft. There is indeed no extra accumulation or incorporation of water. The spot is hard and firm and at length becomes sunken somewhat from the shrinkage of the drying pulp of the fruit. There is no odor. The apple seems to be converted into a semi-woody substance which is resistant to decay. It is in this condition that the shriveled fruit remains for a year or more attached by its dead stem to the twig, or endures for a similar length of time upon the ground. If, however, the affected fruit is neither constantly bitter nor really rotten, still the name is as appropriate as any that can probably be found and is certainly better than that of "ripe rot" which has been proposed.—Prof. T. J. Burrill.

Bitter rot of the apple is directly due to a vegetable parasite which, starting from a spore lodged upon the surface of the apple or in a puncture made by other instrumentalities, grows in the pulpy tissues of the fruit and in a few days bears another crop of spores, by means of which the process may be indefinitely repeated.

Big Berries.

We heard recently of a shipment of strawberries where each berry was the size of an egg. This starts a chain of thoughts reaching from the little wild strawberry of our fields to the mammoth affair of a century hence. We do not know the limits of the possibilities as to the development of size. During a few centuries we have seen both plants and animals enormously increased in size through breeding and selecting. Compare the little wild crab apple with the mammoth Wolf River. And what is beyond the Wolf River apple? Perhaps an apple twice its size. The difference between the full grown wild strawberry and the one the size of an egg is not so great as the difference between the wild crab apple and the Wolf River. We may expect from decade to decade to see an increase in the size of strawberries. This fruit is very susceptible to development on account of the universality of its cultivation and its character as an annual. Tens of thousands of growers are to-day developing new varieties of this fruit, and it will be very queer if some of them do not find a prize now and then. The object of all the experimenters is to grow big berries and lots of them.