

The Klondyke Gold Mystery.

By JOHN R. MUSICK,

Author of "Mysterious Mr. Howard," "The Dark Stranger," "Charlie Allendale's Double," Etc.

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CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

"We've got one of 'em wounded, an' let's make most out of 'im we kin afore we let 'im go. Let's not go an' act like a hull passel o' fools as don't know what we're a-doin' nohow. Save 'im an' we'll git Crack Lash's dust back an' we'll hang all four together; you all know that's much better'n hangin' one at a time."

The life of the captive was spared for the time being, and the miners proceeded at once to organize themselves into a vigilance committee, preparatory to stopping crime at the very beginning in their new settlement.

Lying on a low couch in one of the shanties was the hero of this story, known on the Klondike as Crack Lash Paul. His wounds were severe, and he was in a feverish condition. One of the miners who had some knowledge of medicine and surgery had extracted the ball and dressed the wounds. The name of the doctor will perhaps never be known. In the Klondike he was only called "Sawbones."

The patient's face was flushed and his eyes closed. His quick breathing and nervous movements indicated that he suffered mentally as well as physically.

"Be quiet," whispered "Sawbones" in the ear of his patient. "Here, take this." He raised the head of the wounded youth and gave him a spoonful of nerve-quieting medicine. He drank it off, and then lay back on his bed and slept. The doctor arose from the low stool at the side of the couch and went out.

He quickly turned his gaze toward every projecting branch within range of his vision. A look of disappointment came over his face as his eyes searched in vain for some object.

"What have you done with him?" he asked of a miner who was going by.

"Nothin'" was the answer. "What, hain't you hung him yet?" "No."

"Why?" "Glum Ralston said not."

"What's the matter with Glum? Has he got bats in his belfry?" roared the infuriated doctor.

"Hold on, Sawbones; don't get off your trolley until somethin's on the track. I tell ye Glum's all right." He then proceeded to explain matters to the irate doctor, assuring him that he would yet have the satisfaction of seeing the robber lifted high enough to get a bird's-eye view of the new Jerusalem, but explained that in order to get the others they must keep the powers of speech in the one they had.

"Well, with that explanation I cave in," growled Sawbones. "But I don't want any feelin' o' sentimentality roaming around this camp. We don't come of a forgoin' stock, we don't."

The patient slept for several hours, and when he awoke as evening began to draw near he was much improved. But he recovered slowly, and so did the prisoner. The latter's wound, however, was more severe than Paul's, and for a time his case seemed doubtful. The doctor impressed with the hope that some information would be obtained from the wounded man, used his skill to the utmost to bring about a speedy recovery.

When Paul was able to walk about he insisted on going to his shanty to investigate it, though he was so weak he had to sit down on a sluce box to rest before he approached the door.

When he had rested sufficiently he arose and, unlocking the door, entered the shanty. He searched the room carefully for some clue that might have been dropped by one of the attacking party after they entered the room, but for a long time found none.

At last he discovered in a narrow crack between the logs and chinking what seemed to be a bit of paper wadded up and thrust into the hole. He went to it, pulled it out, and it proved to be an envelope stained with blood.

The envelope was stuck in the crack near the corner where the wounded outlaw had fallen and Paul at once surmised he put it there. He took the paper out of the envelope and gazed at the handwriting in amazement. It ran as follows:

"San Francisco, Sept. 1, 1895. "Inclosed find transportation and money sufficient to pay your way to Juneau. Whatever you do, remember that Paul Miller is not to return to Fresno. Do him no harm if you can accomplish your ends without violence, but at all hazards keep him two years longer in the Klondike. "L. T."

He read the mysterious paper again. He turned it over and looked on the back. Who was "L. T." and why should he wish to keep him in Alaska? There seemed to be something slightly familiar about the chirography, but he was not certain. Having a clue to the mystery, he sat down to study the puzzle.

The more he read the note the more he was puzzled and the farther he seemed to get from the solution. "There has been a carefully laid plot to ruin me," he said to himself, as he sat upon the stool trying to study the missive. "Who is 'L. T.' and why should he wish me to remain in the Klondike?"

He left the shanty, carefully locking the door after him, and was mak-

ing his way to the cabin at which he had stayed since the attack, when he met Glum Ralston.

"Hello, Crack Lash, gettin' under way agin'?"

"I am able to be out, Glum," he answered.

"Glad on it, boy—glad on it." The ex-sailor was about to pass on when the young man said:

"I want to talk some with you, Glum. There was a deep-laid plot to rob and murder me. I have an enemy or enemies—I know not how many—who have designs on my happiness."

Ralston was not a man to be moved by emotion or jump at a conclusion. He sat a long time listening to the unquestionable evidence of the youth. When he had finished there was no longer a doubt that there was a conspiracy to injure Crack Lash, and perhaps take his life. A new light was breaking in on him and he became more interested in the youth than he had been.

"M-well, Crack Lash, I think we'd better run 'em down. Wonder how many we kin git to go with us."

"I want no one but you, Glum," said the youth. "You and I are enough, for I can trust you, which is more than I care to do with all. I believe that if I can capture those men they will not only tell me where to find my lost treasure, but also inform me who this enemy 'L. T.' is."

"Then by the trident o' Neptune we'll go an' never stop until we find 'em."

After consulting the matter, they decided to keep their departure a secret from their companions, and decided to start before they were awake next morning. During the night a snowstorm raged. Next morning long before the miners were astir our two friends were attired in furs, with several dogs, provisions, blankets and rifles, and set off on snow-shoes in search of the three men who had robbed and so nearly killed Paul several weeks before.

Glum Ralston had received reliable information that the men he wished to find were in a valley up the Yukon, and they acted on that information. They found the snow still falling, though it was not very cold. For several miles they trudged along on the snowshoes in silence. At last Glum said:

"Stop!"

"Why?" asked Paul.

"We'll rest."

"I am not tired."

"Ye don't think ye are, mate, but you'll have all the wind out o' yer sails afore ye know it. Set down."

There was a log lying near, and both sat upon it.

"I am sufficiently rested, so let's go on," said the youth, after a short rest, starting to his feet.

"Don't be too certain ye know ye kin stand it, lad. I tell ye it's a longer voyage 'n you think, an' there's rough sailin' between this an' the Chilkoot."

They reached Dawson City next day at noon. As Paul was still weak, he secured a room in the hotel and went to bed to rest. Being overcome by weariness and the journey, he was soon buried in profound slumber.

He was awakened by some one shaking him by the shoulder and whispering:

"Tumble up, Crack Lash."

"What is it, Glum?" he asked, starting up and rubbing his eyes.

"They're here."

"Who?"

"The rascals that robbed ye. I saw th' face o' one o' them fellers we'd seen a-hangin' around our diggin's before you were robbed, an' I'd bet my wolf-skin cap th' others ain't fur off."

Paul Miller hastily donned his furs and buckled his revolvers about his waist. He realized how dangerous an encounter would be and he knew he might be a corpse in twenty minutes. He breathed a silent prayer for Laura, mother, and lastly himself, and whispered:

"I'm ready."

They went down to the room below, where they found a wild crowd carousing, but no sign of the man who was suspected of being an accomplice in the robbery.

"Wait at the door, Crack Lash," Glum whispered.

The ex-sailor left him and hurried away. He was gone but a few minutes when he hurried to his side, saying:

"They're gone."

"Where?"

"Up the ukon; we'll find 'em in the valley."

"Let's go at once," said Paul. They set out for the upper valley. An Esquimaux was engaged to take them several miles on his dog sleds, and from there they traveled on foot, sleeping on the snow securely wrapped in their blankets.

On the morning of the third day they came upon the trail of these men and followed it until nightfall. Next morning they were early on their trail again, and after four hours' hard travel Glum Ralston said:

"There they are, Crack Lash!"

He pointed down a narrow valley which diverged from the main valley, and three specks could be seen upon a slight elevation.

Glum Ralston was an experienced scout, and began at once to put in play his woodcraft. They crept forward to some trees and advanced rapidly, keeping themselves screened from the observation of the men they were trying to overhaul.

shouted to them to halt. The fugitives cast quick glances behind, and then, with defiant yells, fled.

Two darted around one side of a huge, projecting cliff that formed the extreme spur of the mountain, and one went the other way. Two rifle shots rang out on the mountain, and two bullets whizzed through the air.

"Ye winged yer man, Crack Lash," cried Glum. "Follow him and I'll give chase to the others."

Paul needed no second command, but darted after the man at whom he had fired. The fugitive threw away his gun and fled for life, and for an hour Paul was in doubt whether he was gaining or him or not. At the end of that time, to his great chagrin, he saw him dash into a thick forest of pines and firs.

When next he saw him he was creeping along a ledge five hundred feet above him. With no other thought than the capture of the fugitive and recovery of his treasure, Paul threw off his snowshoes and clambered up the steep precipice with great labor and no little danger. Up he went, heedless of everything but the solution of the mystery which threatened his life and happiness of himself and Laura. He reached the fork and began to climb the great dead limb of a tree which touched the coveted ledge. At that moment he heard a crackling at the root of the tree and became conscious of a descending motion in the limbs to which he clung.

He knew he was falling, and that with the vast mass he must descend into the valley beneath. He left himself rushing downward through the air; he closed his eyes; there came a horrid crash on his ears, and he knew no more.

When Paul regained consciousness he was lying on a pile of skins and furs in a cavern.

A man clothed wholly in bear and seal skins stood over him, gazing at him with a pair of strange gray eyes. His hair was long, falling to his shoulders, and his beard, which was almost white, came to his waist. He had a half-savage and half-civilized appearance.

Paul gazed into the strange, wild face and asked:

"Who are you?"

The stranger, without taking his eyes off him, asked:

"Who are you?"

"I am a miner from the Klondike who was robbed. I was in pursuit of the robbers when the accident befell me. You found me?"

"Yes."

Paul at first supposed that some of his limbs were broken or dislocated, and dared not move, but after a few moments he discovered that he had suffered no greater injury than a severe shock. He had fallen into a deep snowdrift, which had broken the fall and no doubt saved his life.

"Won't you tell me who you are?" asked Paul after a few minutes' gazing into the face of the mysterious stranger. The man turned away for a moment as if he wished to avoid the answer and then slowly turning back answered:

"I am a hermit; will that suffice?"

"Do you live here?" Paul asked.

"Yes."

"How long have you lived in this mountain?"

Then came a longer silence than usual, when the hermit of the cave answered:

"What difference can that make to you? I found you in a perishing condition and brought you here and saved your life. Is that not enough without telling all the secrets of my life?" He turned slowly about and went to a small fire that smoldered on the stones some distance away, and began to toast some slices of moose steak. Paul closed his eyes and tried to reason that he could be in no immediate danger. If the man had intended to kill him, he would no doubt have done so while he was unconscious. He also reasoned he might have some design in saving his life.

(To be continued.)

HE LOVED HIS HORSES.

Owner Wept When Compelled to Part With Them.

An incident which illustrates the strong attachment that forms between a man and a good team occurred at a public sale four miles south of town Wednesday. It was noticed that the owner immediately withdrew from the crowd upon the bringing forth of a fine span of blacks, but returned later when called upon to describe the team. Among other things, their age, etc., he stated that he had raised them from colthood; that they were true, kind and faithful. Here he could say no more, and crossing his arms on the one nearest him, he sobbed like a child. The intelligent animal, evidently realizing that something was wrong, turned his head and gently pushed his nose against his old master's face. Such scenes are not witnessed every day in this hard old world, and a glance at the crowd of farmers disclosed scores of moist eyes and the auctioneer's voice grew husky as he proceeded with the sale of the old friends. No man need be ashamed of such weakness, if such it may be termed. It is one of the finest qualities attributable to mankind.—Jefferson Bee.

Sowing Wild Oats.

"Sense them city boarders got to comin' here our Johnny has been goin' to the bad," said Mrs. Hayseede to Mrs. Clovertopp.

"You don't say!"

"Yes, indeed! He's got to stay in' out late at night. Why, last Sat'day night he went off down town and never came home until half after 9. I've got a mind to ask the preacher to talk to him on the error o' his way."

REVISION MUST COME

TARIFF REFORM DEMANDED BY WESTERN REPUBLICANS.

Plank of the Iowa Platform Has Found Ready Acceptance—Reciprocity, Such as McKinley Favored, Is Now the Demand.

That the mass of the people of the western states irrespective of party are in favor of tariff revision may be considered as beyond controversy. The republicans of Iowa have expressed themselves with no uncertain sound, and what they have said finds ready acceptance in all the neighboring states.

There is no intention and no desire to do anything radical with the present tariff schedules. The protective feature of the law is not to be interfered with or antagonized, but high duties that have ceased to be protective merely and have become onerous and oppressive on the taxpayers should be removed.

So, too, in regard to the duties that foster trusts and are for their sole benefit, these must be reduced or abolished so that competition may be admitted, no matter from what country it may come.

Senator Cullom, of Illinois, who keeps very closely in touch with the people and has a clear perception of public sentiment, recognizes these facts, and declares that tariff revision must soon be taken up by congress, the sooner the better.

Western republicans would impress their eastern brethren with the earnestness of their opinions on this subject, and urge on behalf of the western people a moderate revision in the Dingley tariff law.

Such a revision in the near future by the friends of protection will keep the tariff question out of politics for years to come, and establish the protective policy as a finality.

Reciprocity such as President McKinley favored must also be made a distinct government policy so that our trade abroad may be widened and extended. If we are to gain access to foreign markets we must make some concession to our home markets. We can not have both entirely to ourselves.

These are the principles and opinions that are finding extensive lodgment in the western mind, and it will be well if the leaders of the republican party both east and west give thoughtful heed to them.

A denial of tariff revision by the next congress will seriously imperil the presidential election of 1904. As has been pointed out before, the people have a rude way of rebuking their unfaithful servants, and a faithless congress may again lead to a repetition of the election of 1892.

CULLOM ON THE TARIFF

Illinois Senator Sees Necessity for Revision

The Senior Senator of Illinois is not a radical tariff reformer, but he is a good observer and student of public sentiment. He has favored the ratification of the reciprocity treaties, and he realizes that tariff revision is a real, not a sham, issue. He is more reasonable and progressive in dealing with this question than reformer-manager Babcock, who forgets as chairman what he has so forcefully and intelligently said as tariff reformer.

Illinois sympathizes with Cuba and supports her request for a material reduction of duty. But it does not stop there. As Senator Cullom says, "the people of Illinois are also thinking a great deal about tariff revision."

The Senator adds:

"There is no demand among our people for anything revolutionary in tariff matters, and I know they are willing to trust the Democrats to do the work which they feel should be done. What we want to do now is to inquire carefully into the whole subject of Dingley schedules and determine just what rates should be cut and to what extent. I don't know how soon we shall have to take up this tremendous task in Congress, but I do know that we shall have to do it before a great while."

Meanwhile the Republican party must recognize the need and the duty of dealing with the question. Shallow talk of "letting well enough alone" will not do. And the conventions should speak more plainly than Iowa did the other day. Those professed tariff reformers who are satisfied with the Iowa planks are not at all hard to please. Any militant high-protectionist Bourbon will admit that schedules are not sacred or eternal, and that, as an abstract proposition, revision is desirable from time to time.

From Iowa we had a right to expect something more specific and definite—a declaration, for example, that the time for revision has come, and that certain schedules are no longer necessary either for protection or for revenue. Iowa has not said as much as so conservative a statesman as Senator Cullom is perfectly willing to say—that there is work to do here and now on the tariff system, and that there is danger in delay and excessive timidity.

The Iowa tariff plank is disappointing, though half a loaf is better than none at all. There is, however, consolation in the remarks of our senior Senator.—Chicago Record-Herald.

CHANGES IN THE TARIFF.

Declaration of Iowa Republican Convention Commended.

The Republicans of Iowa reaffirm in this year's platform certain statements made in the platform of 1901. They say again:

"We favor such changes in the tariff from time to time as become advisable through the progress of our industries and their changing relations to the commerce of the world. We endorse the policy of reciprocity as the natural complement of protection, and urge its development as necessary to the realization of our highest commercial possibilities."

The Republicans who express themselves after this fashion do not look upon the Dingley tariff law as a perfect, unalterable piece of legislation. It has no sanctity for them. They are willing to lower duties when the progress of industry makes high duties unnecessary for protection. They are ready to lower duties through reciprocity treaties whenever commercial advantages can be gained thereby. This is the policy of McKinley. It is a broad, liberal, intelligent policy which should guide the course of the Republican party in congress.

The Iowa Republicans also say this year as they did last year: "We favor any modification of the tariff schedules that may be required to prevent their affording shelter to monopoly." There was opposition to this clause in the committee on resolutions. It was asserted that the clause would be a plea of guilty to the Democratic charge that the tariff is the parent of trusts. Happily, the argument had no effect. The Republican party of Iowa has not been put in the false position it would have occupied if it had declared indirectly that the tariff schedules cannot afford shelter to monopoly.

It is a notorious fact that some of the tariff schedules do afford shelter to monopoly. That is, they permit certain trusts or combines to exact from domestic consumers unreasonably high prices for their products—prices higher than could be exacted if the tariff afforded no more protection than is necessary to enable the American producers to compete on even terms with their foreign rivals.

As some trusts make an illegitimate use of the protection they enjoy, why should the Republicans of Iowa and of the United States hesitate to say so? Why should not they promise to deprive the trusts of a shelter they are abusing? The language used in the Iowa platform is not a confession that the tariff is the parent of trusts. There are trusts in free trade England. The language is a simple statement that the party which made the tariff will change the tariff whenever it appears a wrongful use is being made of any of the duties levied by it.—Chicago Tribune.

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