The Klondyke Gold Mystery.

By JOHN R. MUSICK,

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

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

"You?" cried Captain Fairweather sharply.

"Yes. If she sails for Juneau from Seattle in the 'President,' I will sail from San Francisco in the 'Occident.'"

"Would not your presence awaken her suspicion?"

"Why should it? Everybody is going to the Klondyke now, and why not I as well?"

"That's so," with a craning swallow which ended in a bow. "Seems all right. Plan is a good one, but it will be very uncomfortable to you."

"I am willing to undergo all the discomforts when it is a matter of such importance," said Lackland. "I want two more faithful, trusty men. Men who will go wherever I send them, obey every order I give, and keep still tongues in their heads. Money is no object."

"Well, well!" said the captain, winking and rubbing his hands gleefully; "that's talking to the mark; that is talking just as I like to hear a gentleman——"

"What is your price?" asked Lackland, his pale, white face almost quivering in his intensity.

"Well, they come high."

"I expect to pay high for them. How much do you want for finding two such men for me in the next twelve hours?"

With a wink and another craning neck and swallowing bow, he gasped:

"One thousand dollars."

"I take you up; go bring them at once."

"Meet 'em at my boat at midnight to-night."

"I will do it and the money is yours as soon as they are secured."

CHAPTER IX.

Paul's Departure From Metlakahtla.

Paul Miller's discovery that the white man prospecting on the island was one of the men who had captured the hermit, and beyond doubt one of the four who had robbed him, for a moment deprived him of speech. He had his own reasons for not wishing to be recognized by the man who had robbed him and attempted his life. He also had strong reasons for wishing to have him held a prisoner. He believed the man could unfold the whole story of the robbery and mystery of the hermit, and determined to make him do so before leaving the island.

After a few moments the babel of voices without ceased, and the crowd gathered near the house began to disperse. The thought then occurred to his mind that the prisoner, having been arrested for trespassing, might be released on his solemn promise never to return. With this new danger in his mind he started toward the door, when he was met by Father Duncan.

"What have they done with the prisoner?" he asked anxiously.

"He has been sent to the prison to be detained for a while until certain mysteries with which he is connected are cleared up," said the old man.

"Father Duncan, do you think the fellow is secure? Do you think there is no danger of his escape?"

"None whatever. My Indians are very watchful and careful. They will obey me to the letter."

"Then let us sit here and compare notes for a few moments."

He seated himself by the old missionary and told him of his rescue by the mysterious old man of the mountains whom he had called the hermit. Then he told of the capture of the hermit, and concluded with:

"This man was one of the three who seized the good old man and took him away from the cavern."

The interest of good Father Duncan increased, and he shook his head, saying:

"This is certainly very, very strange."

"There is a mystery in it all which I am unable to solve. I cannot comprehend who this strange hermit can be, unless he is the captain to whom you refer."

"It looks very much as if the unfortunate man was the beloved captain whose mysterious disappearance has occasioned so much distress."

Paul remembered the story which the ex-sailor, Glum Ralston, had told him of his captain, and also recalled to his recollection the mysterious walrus hide.

His anxiety to escape from the island and return to the Klondyke, where his friends were, was more than over-balanced by a desire to learn something of the motives of the trespasser.

"Mr. Duncan, will your friends see that he does not escape?"

"There is little danger of his doing so," Father Duncan answered. "My friends are kind and Christian men, yet they have by no means lost their native watchfulness."

Paul had ample proof, in time, of the danger of over-confidence. The third night after his visit to the jail he was awakened by a loud noise in the direction of the little wharf. There came the report of a gun, something rarely heard at Metlakahtla, and he leaped from his bed hurriedly dressed and ran out upon the street. At last he met Father Duncan, whom he found as calm and firm as usual.

"What has happened, Father Duncan?" he asked.

"Alas! my son, you were all too good a prophet. The prisoner has escaped. The wicked are ever cunning and watchful, and Satan sleeps not."

Paul gave utterance to a groan, sank upon a large stone at the side of the road and bowed his head in his hands. One more hope, and, in fact, about the last hope he had, was gone.

Paul remained two weeks longer with the Metlakahtlas, and then decided to leave his dusky friends and start for the Klondyke.

Father Duncan selected four stout young Indians to accompany him. The Indians were well supplied with provisions suitable for crossing the mountains, and he and his escort were provided with dried meat and compressed bread and hardtack.

The four Indians selected for Paul's party were stout young fellows, inured to hardship and danger. They were strong, brave and faithful. The instructions given them by the old missionary were carefully listened to and they promised to carry them out to the letter.

There is always something enchanting in a great, deep forest, with its tall trees clothed in moss and solemn depths which seem to speak of divinity. At night in the forest adds to the gloom, the solemnity and awfulness of the scene. A camp fire in the great northern woods, with its rocks and cliffs, its moss-covered trees, has something grand in it.

Gathered about a camp fire built at the base of the mountain range were five persons—Paul Miller and his four Christian Indians.

It had been a long, hard day's travel, and the poor fellows were almost exhausted. It was only Paul's indomitable will driving him on to more than super-human energies that kept him on his feet. He had abandoned all hope of finding the men who had robbed him, and now he longed to get back to the Klondyke, take another fortune from the frozen earth, and return to Laura and his mother.

The faces which ever seemed to smile at him from the smoke and darkness gave him courage and hope.

"It has been a long time since I wrote to them," he thought. "They have no doubt given me up for dead. How sad to cause them grief, and all through a mischievous yet truthful message written in a fit of delirium!"

He was suddenly roused from his painful reverie by the falling and rolling of a great stone down upon and across the camp fire, scattering the burning brands in every direction. The great, round bowlder passed within a few inches of where Paul sat and between two of the Indians, but fortunately did not touch any one. The stone was heavy enough to crush out life or break bones had it struck one.

Paul leaped to his feet and the Indians started up with exclamations of fear.

"From whence came that stone?" cried an Indian.

Paul's first suspicion that some convulsion of the earth had shaken the stone loose from the mountain side and sent it thundering down the cliff upon them, but there had been no perceptible quaking.

While he was still trying to discover the cause, there came another object rolling down the steep descent mingled with dirt, fine stones and snow. It semed a great dark ball, from which there issued a human cry. It rolled to Paul's feet and stopped. He seized one of the burning brands and held it so the flame threw the light upon the face of the stunned and half-insensible man, who sat stupidly gazing about him. The sudden and unexpected advent of this stranger was enough to startle the campers and disturb their wits. The Indians, starting to their feet, stared at him in amazement. Paul was first to recover his speech.

He cried:

"Throw the wood on the fire!"

They obeyed, and the light flashed up, throwing out a broad red glare on the scene which illumined the dirt-be-grimmed face of the man who had tumbled down the cliff. Paul, starting back, said:

"It is the escaped prisoner, the abductor—the robber—and perhaps murderer." He seized one of the Indian's muskets and raised it to brain the scoundrel, but two stout Metlakahtlas seized him and said:

"Nay, brother, Thou shalt not kill!"

The man who had so suddenly fallen into their midst was rapidly regaining his faculties and by this time able to speak. He growled an oath and rubbed the side of his head.

"Where did you come from?" asked Paul.

"From aloft on the cliff," he answered.

"What were you doing up there?"

"Tryin' to cross. Was any harm in that?"

"I recognize you as one of the men who robbed me."

"Mate, yer off yer course when ye accuse me o' doin' that."

"You are one of the two men who seized your captain a few years since and have made away with him."

"Yer on the wrong tack again, mate. I hain't done nothin' o' the kind, I tell ye."

"Where is your captain?"

"Don't know."

Paul determined to keep a close watch on the rascal and conduct him across the mountains to the camp on the Klondyke, where punishment would be meted out to him according to frontier ideas of justice.

Paul bound his arms behind his back and told him to sit in front of the fire.

The night passed guarding the prisoner by turns, and when the day dawned he was still among them. Breakfast over and they began to prepare to ascend the mountain.

It had snowed considerable during the night, but toward morning it changed to a rain and later in the day a sleet.

The ascent became every moment more and more difficult. About every one hundred paces they came to mountain torrents, fed by the glaciers, and augmented by recent rainfalls, which they had to wade, the cold water often coming above their knees.

After struggling up a steep ascent of twenty-five or thirty feet they were often forced from sheer exhaustion to rest for a moment, but when they stopped ever so short a time the piercing wind cut them to the marrow, chilled them to the bone and they were compelled to continue their course to keep from chilling to death.

When evening came they were on the other side of the mountain in a valley wet, shivering and benumbed with cold. They had no tent nor shelter, save the lowering heavens from above. Some dry pine and scrub oak wood was collected and a fire kindled. They all gathered about it to dry their bedraggled garments and warm their shivering bodies.

They had just made a supper on dried salmon, moose meat and hardtack, when they were startled to see an old man with long white hair and beard standing on a slight elevation not far away, gazing at them. He wore a seal-skin cap, which shaded his face, but not too much for him to be recognized by all the camp.

"The captain!" cried the Metlakahtlas.

"The hermit!" exclaimed Paul.

The prisoner gave utterance to a curse and was bounding away when a blow from the hermit's staff sent him staggering to the earth.

Paul Miller started quickly toward the hermit, saying:

"Where are you from?"

The old man gave him a piercing look and answered:

"I am from everywhere, which means nowhere. This is precious fine company you keep!" He clutched his stout staff as Paul approached and warned him not to come too close. "I will strike you as I did your companion if you come too near me," he added, in a voice made ferocious by long years of suffering and disappointment.

Paul halted and gazed at him in amazement.

The old man at last said: "I have been cheated, deceived, betrayed and lied to until I have about lost faith in all men. Can I trust you now?"

"Do you know those men?" asked Paul, pointing to the Melakahtlas. "If you know them, you must know they can be trusted."

"Yes, they are brothers, but they have been deceived as often as I."

One of the Indians approached the hermit and addressed him in his native tongue. The old man answered in the same language and grasped his hand. Though Paul could not understand a word of what was said, he knew from their manner and gestures that it had some relation to the man on the ground.

After a long conversation with the Metlakahtla the hermit approached the fire. His face was very grave, and his brow lowered when he gazed upon the prisoner. The men of the prisoner had been defiant until he met the glance of the hermit, then his countenance fell, and his eyes were upon the ground.

"Ned Padgett," said the hermit, "you will some day receive the reward you so much merit; you will die a dog's death yet."

The ruffian gave a sneering chuckle, but made no answer.

"Have you lived long in Alaska?" asked Paul, trying to draw the old man into conversation.

"Yes."

"How many years?"

"A great many."

(To be continued.)

FREAK DINNERS A FAD.

Entertainments Where Guests Cook for Themselves.

Freak dinners are a fad. An ordinary dinner has lost its charm for some people who go out much during the season, and now that Paris has set its seal of approval on the Corinthian dinner at which everyone is obliged to cook something, New Yorkers and Chicagoans will select this form of entertainment as a diversion.

In a studio a few weeks ago the wife of an artist gave one of these cooking parties to a dozen guests who knew nothing of the fun in store for them when they arrived at the house. The studio was arranged with a long table holding a chafing dish for each person, with some particular viand before it ready to be cooked. Each guest received a chef's cap and apron, and in a short time the dishes were bubbling and simmering in a promising fashion.

When the meal was cooked it was served by the men, who acted as the waiters. Strangely enough, the dinner in every particular was a success.

But cooking has become such a fad of late that it is considered quite smart to know how to cook some particular dish in a chafer. The bachelor apartment feasts, at which the host acts as cook, have increased the desire for culinary knowledge, as these occasions prove very enjoyable to those used to more formal entertaining.

Millet's House to Come Down.

The Paris mansion of Millet, the creator of "The Angelus," is being torn down to make room for modern flats. It was one of the landmarks of the French capital.

Fontella.

BY ADRIENNE ROUCOLLE.

She had often noticed him in the ring, as with smiling lips he waited for the furious attacks of the maddened bull. At first his courage in the face of danger, his proud defiance, his dark, handsome face and graceful carriage won her admiration, and later this admiration, aided by a romantic disposition, ripened into love. As to him, though he admired her magical beauty and her daintiness of form, he was not blinded to the distance which separated him, Jose Narvezzo, the matador, and she Fontella Adroverso, the governor's daugater. Still, when he knew that her dark eyes rested upon him, his form straightened, his lips curled in that disdainful smile of bravery which made him the favorite of the ring, and his sword would bury itself with unerring aim into the bull's flesh.

When a woman of Fontella's type loves it is with a passion which nothing can quench and no obstacle can stop. How she managed to meet him for the first time, how she drew him on to her until his admiration of the first days became the conquering passion of his life, will never be known; sufficient to say that before many weeks Jose had forgotten the distance which separated their two destinies and he has asked Fontella to become his wife.

She remained silent for some time after he had spoken that avowal of love for which she had waited, and with her dark eyes fixed upon him in a searching gaze she seemed to try to penetrate the very depths of his soul. After awhile she said:

"Are you sure it is me you love, not my wealth, not my social position, not the fact that I am Fontella, the governor's daughter?"

A flash of anger glittered for an instant in the matador's eyes, but this was soon softened by an expression of pain as he sadly replied:

"You have the right to express that doubt, Fontella, for what am I when compared with you? What have I besides my courage to offer you? I was mad, pardon my folly, for a passion stronger than my reason forced me to speak. Nothing I could say could prove the sincerity of my sentiments, and rather than to have them doubted I prefer to leave you."

He moved a step away as though to leave her, but she extended her hand and with a softening in her haughty voice, said:

"Jose, I believe you."

He returned to her, his eyes burning with passion; he seized her hands and in a pressure which was almost cruel he cried:

"You believe my sentiments, but do you return them? Do you love me as I do you?"

"I do."

"Then you shall be mine, Fontella; the social barriers which separate us can surely be surmounted. Love will find the way."

"Love is powerful, but the governor of this province is more so," she remarked, "and my father will never consent to our union. Still I have a

"Are you sure it is me that you love, and not my wealth and social position?"

plan; I can force my father's consent. When will you have the next fight?"

"Next Wednesday. I am to fight Devileto, the terrible black bull from Mexico. He has killed seven matadors during the season."

She shivered; that record frightened her, but, overcoming this momentary emotion, she said:

"You shall conquer. Love will give you strength and as reward I promise you that you shall have me as your bride. Farewell!"

"But your plan—what is it? How can you win your father's consent? Tell me what you intend to do?"

"You shall know Wednesday. Until then live in hopes, and above all, conquer your foe." And she was gone.

The Plaza de Toros was crowded, for to-day the attraction was doubled; besides their favorite matador, Jose Narvezzo, they were to have the famous bull Devileto, who had already killed seven men and many horses. The sport promised to be bloody, yet women and young girls were there in holiday attire, casting from behind their fans coquettish glances to the men, laughing, smiling, happy as though they were here at an ordinary entertainment, not a spectacle in which blood would flow and perhaps where human life would be destroyed. They would in an instant be as ready to cheer the victorious bull as the matador, who would remain their

The animal gave one howl of rage then fell rolling to the ground.

favorite as long as he remained unconquered.

The blaring of trumpets announced that the spectacle would soon begin, the picadors and banderilleros in their resplendent costumes on those proud horses which, before long, would lie dead on the sand of the arena, and the matador, more handsome, more calm than ever, made their appearance and paraded around the arena. The show had begun.

Jose looked eagerly toward the governor's seat. He was there, but alone. Fontella was not with him. A feeling of disappointment came to him. This was followed by a doubt which paled his cheek. Had she duped him, had she played a comedy for the sake of having him, the unconquered, at her feet? But this thought, instead of weakening his courage, caused him to straighten his tall form; he would show her that he was a man who could be victorious in spite of all. Those who watched his face at that moment murmured:

"Narvezzo will conquer; such a look of resolution never courts failure."

When the bull entered it was easy to see that the stories told of his vicious temper had not been overestimated. He was a beautiful animal, jet black in color, with long, sharp horns and eyes that burned like coals, his heaving flanks, switching tail and the manner in which he scattered the sand with his paw showed that he was used to this display and that he was only too ready to do his part.

It did not last long; in a few instants four horses lay bleeding on the sand, torn open by those terrible horns. One picador was dead; blood was everywhere. Still the fans in women's hands went backward and forward in lazy indolence, while eyes which seemed to have been made only for tenderness gazed with evident satisfaction upon the gory scene.

At last the matador entered. Jose Narvezzo never apeared so calm, so proudly indifferent as to-day. In his right hand he held the sword, with which he was to slay the now maddened bull. For an instant they stood face to face, the man and the beast. Then, with a bellow of rage, the animal charged his new enemy. Jose did not move, his sword was ready; just as the bull came up to him he raised the weapon, but it fell on one of the horns and broke itself in two.

"He has lost, the bull has won!" rose on every side.

But no, he had not lost! In one leap he had jumped to one side, the bull charged on, burying his horns in the sand a little distance away. This gave Jose time to take a sword which one of the men handed him, and when once more the baffled bull turned upon him with renewed fury he was ready, sword in hand, a smile of defiance on his lips, a strange expression in the eyes. This time the sword did its work, for as the bull rushed upon him the second time he plunged it to the hilt into the quivering flesh. The animal gave one howl of rage and pain, then fell rolling to the ground. The man had conquered the beast; the spectacle of blood was at an end.

The crowd, mad with enthusiasm, cheered the conqueror; women cried as they cast their rings or jewels into the ring; men threw money. The matador was reaping his golden harvest. Suddenly a deep hush followed the clamor. All eyes turned in one direction toward the door which admitted the performers into the ring. Jose, surprised by the silence, turned also, and could scarcely retain an exclamation as he saw Fontella coming toward him, picking her way amid the dead horses.

When she got up to him she paused and in tones which rang clear and loud in the silence said:

"Jose Narvezzo, you have conquered to-day the fiercest bull in Spain. Others have cast their tributes of gold at your feet; I bring you mine. Here is my hand; take it if you want it. I am yours for life."

The scandal was great. The governor was furious, but Fontella had won. After that scene at the bull fight it was impossible for him to refuse his consent, so some two months later Narvezzo, having left the ring, became Fontella's husband, once more proving the saying that when there is a will there is a way.

SEA POWER OF THE NATIONS

Great Changes Made, But England Still Leads.

In a review of the sea power of the great nations the Naval Annual shows that in the ten years from 1892 to 1902 these changes have occurred:

1. Russia, Germany and the United States have all become the owners of as many battleships as France, which ten years ago was in that respect second only to Great Britain.

2. Japan's navy has been created and, for Asiatic purposes, is united with Great Britain's.

3. The British and Japanese navies together number forty-seven armorclads of the first-class—three more than the combined total of Russian, French and German warships of that class.

4. France has made armored cruisers the prime feature of her new construction and will shortly count thirteen of them.

5. Great Britain has well maint[illegible] her lead over her two most [illegible] adversaries and now coun[illegible] nine first-class battleships [illegible] action, against seventeen [illegible] and Russia combined.

Assuming that the United [illegible]ates does not join it the Naval Annu[illegible] concludes that no combination of naval powers could be made strong enough to destroy British sea power.

Down on the Prairies.

How still the prairies lie at early dawn!
These rolling landscapes of unbroken sod,
Ere yet the shadows of the night are gone—
These billows stiffened by the voice of God—
Seem now to hold dim ages as in pawn;
To witness his prophetic ruling rod;
That earth's wide turmoil here at last shall cease
And man's rebellious heart be awed to peace.

The wind moves slow, as if it would not wake
The million blades of grass that radiant wear
Unmounted jewels of the dew, nor shake
The clustering blooms within the orchards fair,
Nor fret the surface of the shallow lake,
Nor vex the vast sweet silence of the air.
That he who seeks the sinless morning's calm
May feel the soothing of the prairie's balm.

How soft the light falls on the gracious scene!
Field after field, in green and gold array,
Rises distinct; the anchored clouds are seen
To glide, a stately fleet, upon their way;
While fluting low within their coverts green
The songbirds seem to dream of coming day;
And all the sweep of clearing sky and land
To love and faith man's spirit doth command.

Best Use of Talents.

Personality has done wonders with both heredity and environment, as the Independent says. It has made moderate gifts, accomplished marvelous things. Men by patient and persistent application, have put to shame the splendidly equipped who have indolently frittered away their patrimony. Out of the most untoward surroundings men have found their way to the grandest achievements. The boy from the log cabin has outstripped the boy from the palace. The barefooted boy has outstripped the boy of pampered indulgence. The plodder has outstripped the genius. The tortoise has passed the hare. Whether a man be richly endowed or moderately endowed, his success will depend on the use he makes of what God has given him.

Women in Self-Defense.

In his volume, "The Kiss and Its History," Dr. Christopher Nyrop of the University of Copenhagen relates that in England in 1837 Thomas Saveland brought an action against Miss Caroline Newton, who had bitten a piece out of his nose for his having tried to kiss her by way of a joke. The defendant was acquitted, and the judge laid it down that "when a man kisses a woman against her will she is fully entitled to bite his nose if she so pleases."