

The Klondyke Gold Mystery.

By JOHN R. MUSICK,

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CHAPTER II. The Storm Bursts.

There 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 Klondyke."

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 blurted out 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 Klondyke. 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 eyes. 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 Klondyke 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."

"If Ethel Bush can go, why not I?"

He did not answer immediately, but stood at the side of the path carelessly kicking the leaves with the toe of his boot. At last he answered:

"Laura, if your love had been a great love, you must have read my secret, just as I have read yours." In a low tone he continued: "Long ago I knew that you loved, or thought you loved Paul Miller. I saw it before he did—even before you realized it."

The red glow covered her cheeks

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 benumbed 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 impecunious ne'er-do-well—a hulking brute, made for a pick-ax 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, 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 Klondyke," 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 Klondyke. 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 taking from the Klondyke. 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!"

"Of whom or what shall I warn him, dear?"

"Of Theodore Lackland. He is our evil genius."

"I fear you wrong Mr. Lackland."

"No, no; he threatened me last autumn when we were up the valley to the picnic. I forgot it at the time, but it is all very fresh and vivid to my mind now."

Ethel remained with her for over two hours and spoke encouragingly, then left, urging her to recover her strength and spirits in time for the wedding.

For downright luck and pluck the bridal trip of Clarence Berry was without parallel. On the day he and sweet

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 Klondyke. 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 "Hemstich."

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 bearskin 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 Klondyke. 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 Klondyke, 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 calkerated 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 snade and fruit trees." According to the farmers, the greatest damage being done by the locusts is to the limos 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 peep, sedge warbler, willow warbler and whin chat.

REAL TARIFF ISSUE

HOW THE COMING CAMPAIGN MUST BE FOUGHT.

Leading Republican Journal Declares Tariff Revision Is Unavoidable—Meaning of Ex-Secretary Vilas' Letter to Chairman Warden.

Ex-Secretary Vilas' letter to Chairman Warden may or may not be a perfectly spontaneous utterance. Possibly Judge Griggs, manager of the Democratic congressional campaign, may have had something to do with this dramatic reappearance on the political scene of a leading Democrat of the old school, and we may perhaps expect to hear these voices from the past at regular intervals—as part of the fight for recognition. This, however, is of minor importance. Despite the wriggling of the Bryan faction, the issues of this year's campaign for control of the house will certainly be the trusts and the tariff. This letter from Mr. Vilas is symptomatic, and Mr. Babcock will not miss its significance.

There is no great difference between the position taken by the ex-secretary and the famous Cleveland message on tariff reform. Mr. Cleveland denounced the tariff as "the communism of pelf;" Mr. Vilas demands "the overthrow of the grand, central governing conspiracy of protection." There were few trusts in the eighties, but even then Mr. Cleveland, in almost the same language as Mr. Vilas employs to-day, warned the people against the "confederacies of protection" and the conspiracies against popular liberty and popular opportunity.

Recognizing the ability and political effectiveness of Mr. Vilas' "keynote" epistle, the question arises as to how the Republican congressional committee ought to meet it. There is an issue between the two great parties here, beyond all question, but what form and shape shall it be given? The Republican party cannot and must not enter a general denial, and either expressly or by implication assert the sacredness of high protection as exemplified by the Dingley act. It must admit the need of revision all along the line. It must place itself squarely on "the Buffalo platform."

The Democrats, to be consistent, must advocate a revenue tariff pure and simple, free trade being out of the question. They will have to descend to particulars and tell the people exactly what they propose to do and how they propose to demolish "the grand central conspiracy." Will they, if returned to power, reduce the duties horizontally 50 per cent? Will they withdraw protection from trust-controlled industries and leave the present rates of duty where combination is still weak? Glittering generalities will not answer; the voters will demand definite suggestions and businesslike statements.

And the Republicans must meet this demand for definiteness and certainty. They will naturally deny that protection is robbery, "a false and deceitful name," a conspiracy, etc., but they must admit that the system has been misapplied and abused. Certain schedules, as Mr. McKinley said, are no longer needed either for revenue or for legitimate protection; they must be lowered, repealed or so "employed," by means of reciprocity, as to increase our foreign trade.

In short, tariff revision is unavoidable. Shall it be undertaken by the friends or opponents of protection? This is the real, the immediate tariff issue. The fanatical and militant high-protectionists in the Republican party must be sent to the rear.—Chicago Record-Herald.

SETTLING CANADIAN LANDS.

Chicago Tribune Calls Attention to New Situation.

Director of the Mint Roberts, who has returned to Washington from a visit to Iowa, says that in that state and other western states there is a rage for land speculation. There is hardly a crossroads community in Iowa, says Mr. Roberts, which has not organized a syndicate to operate in lands in the Dakotas or Canada. To this speculative fever Mr. Roberts ascribes the movement of money from the east to the west in advance of the time when money is usually sent for the purpose of moving the crops.

Back of this speculative activity in lands—an activity which has often been disastrous—lies the price of wheat. There is a good demand for that cereal, which promises to continue. The Dakota lands which are being sought after produce good wheat. So does the land in the Canadian northwest. The price of land in the Dakotas is low compared with the price of lands in Iowa. The price of the fine Canadian government lands is extremely low. Hence the surprising rush of farmers to the Canadian northwest. Iowa farmers sell their farms at a high figure and go north, many of them crossing the international boundary line. It is estimated that 25,000 acres of Canadian lands are sold to Americans every day. If sales are kept up at this rate and the lands purchased are brought under cultivation it will not be so long before Canada will be raising 250,000,000 bushels of wheat a year instead of the 80,000,000 bushels raised now.

As the volume of Canadian wheat increases the reciprocity sentiment in the northwest will increase. Mr. Roberts was struck by the present strength of that sentiment and the desire of the milling interests of Minneapolis and St. Paul to secure reciprocity with Canada, so the Canadian wheat lands may supply grist for their mills. At present none of the Canadian wheat is made into flour in the

United States. It all goes to England, to English millers. As it is thrown upon the market there as fast as it can be shipped the price of competing American wheat is much more seriously affected than it would be if the duty on Canadian wheat were removed and considerable of it entered this country to be held here till the foreign demand warranted its shipment.

Reciprocity with Cuba is the burning question of the moment. Reciprocity with Canada is a question which will come to the front soon and stay there until it is disposed of. There will be bitter opposition, largely petty and selfish in its nature, to freer trade relations with Canada, but such relations will be of great value to the United States. Next to Great Britain and Germany the dominion is the largest purchaser of American products. It will be a still larger purchaser in the event of reciprocity—Chicago Tribune.

McKINLEY AND RECIPROCITY.

No Nearer Free-Trade Than When He Framed the Tariff Act.

President McKinley was, as he said himself, in favor of reciprocity that would "afford new markets for our surplus agricultural and manufactured products, without loss to the American laborer of a single day's work that he might otherwise procure." In his last speech he declared in favor of "sensible trade arrangements which will not interrupt our home production." That does not sound much like free trade. President McKinley has been grossly misrepresented on this reciprocity question. The efforts of the Democrats to try and make use of President McKinley's utterances to make it appear that he favored any step toward free trade will only react on the Democrats.

Mr. McKinley did not even assert anywhere that the duty in any case is now too high. What he did say was that if "perchance" there should be any surplus duty then he was in favor of using it for reciprocity purposes, a statement with which every sensible man should agree. But he did not say anywhere or to any person that there were surplus duties.

In some cases, however, there may be surplus duties, as, for instance, in the case of hides. In that event the duty on hides should be used for reciprocity purposes, as President McKinley suggested, and it would be foolish to abandon that duty in favor of South American countries, which impose duties on every dollar's worth of goods we send to them, without securing something in return. A great mistake was made in taking off the duty on coffee instead of using it for reciprocity purposes. As a result, Brazil to-day discriminates against certain products of the United States and in favor of such products coming from other countries, because those countries have reduced their tariff on coffee, whereas we buy pretty much all of Brazil's crop without imposing any duty whatever. Brazil gives the Argentine Republic a lower duty on flour than is given the United States in return for a reduction of the Argentine tariff on Brazilian coffee. And yet the United States imposes no duty on coffee, and buys about twenty times as much from Brazil as does the Argentine Republic. That shows the folly of the United States in not making use of the duty on coffee for reciprocal purposes.

No such mistake should be made in the case of the duty on hides. The United States imported in the last fiscal year over \$10,000,000 worth of hides from South American countries which admit nothing whatever from the United States free of duty. Under President McKinley's policy, if the duty on hides is a surplus one, it should be used for purposes of reciprocity. If it is not a surplus duty it should be retained. President McKinley was no nearer the free trade theory in his policy at the time of his death than he was when he framed and helped put through congress the McKinley tariff act.—Philadelphia Press.

Barking Up the Wrong Tree.

Certain political quidnuncs in Washington have jumped to the conclusion that the four Republican congressmen from Michigan who have failed of renomination have been repudiated by their constituents, because they opposed reciprocity with Cuba in the interest of the beet sugar industry. The eastern newspapers have taken up the cry vociferously and point to the "straws in Michigan" as showing the way the political blizzard is setting throughout the West against the opponents of reciprocity.

Ordinarily we would be pleased to join in the cry and point the moral to all those reactionaries who have refused to recognize our duty to Cuba. But the truth, told in our dispatch from Lansing, Mich., knocks any special significance out of the failure of Congressmen Aplin, Weeks, Sheldon and H. C. Smith to secure renominations. They were beaten on personal grounds, and beet sugar or reciprocity had nothing to do with their discomfiture.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Wise Words of Caution.

The tariff has too many ramifications and is too far-reaching in its effect to be the football of purely local judgment. It is true, there are not lacking "reformers" who feel that they are inspired with wisdom from above to lead the party through the wilderness, but it is noticeable that the reformers are seldom able to agree among themselves, and that their followers are of uncertain number and allegiance. The few of them who get into a national convention are quickly lost to view in the vast expanse of national interests which tower above mere local environment.—Burlington Hawkeye.

LIKED THE ROMAN PUNCH.

Temperance Worker Unwittingly Partakes 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 commeal 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 widest 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."