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#### SYNOPSIS.

Jack Keith, a Virginian, now a border plainsman, is looking for roaming war parties of savages. He sees a wagon team at full gallop pursued by men on ponies. When Keith reaches the wagon the raiders have massacred two men and departed. He searches the victims finding papers and a locket with a woman's portrait. Keith is arrested at Carson City, charged with the murder, his accuser being a ruffian named Black Bart. A negro companion in his cell named Neb tells him that he knew the Keiths in Virginia. Neb says one of the murdered men was John Shiley, the other Gen. Willis Waite, formerly a Confederate officer. The plainsman and Neb escape, and later the fugitives come upon a cabin and find its occupant to be a young girl, whom Keith thinks he saw at Carson City. The girl explains that she is in search of a brother, who had deserted from the army, and that a Mr. Hawley induced her to come to the cabin while he sought her brother. Hawley appears, and Keith in hiding recognizes him as Black Bart. There is a terrific battle in the darkened room in which Keith is victor. Hawley is appropriated, and the girl who says that her name is Hope, joins in the escape. Keith explains his situation and the fugitives make for Fort Larned, where the girl is left with the hotel landlady. Miss Hope tells that she is the daughter of General Waite. Keith and Neb drift into Sheridan, where Keith meets an old friend, Dr. Fairbairn. Keith meets the brother of Hope Waite, under the assumed name of Fred Willoughby, and becomes convinced that Black Bart has some plot involving the two. Hope learns that Gen. Waite, who was thought murdered, is at Sheridan, and goes there, where she is mistaken for Christie MacLaure, the Carson City singer. Keith meets the real Christie MacLaure.

#### CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

"Don't you ever do it," he insisted. "The marshal brought her in here, and fired a fellow out of the room so as to give it to her. He'd clean out this house if we ran in a cold deck on a friend of his."

"What do I care for what your marshal does?"

"But he's Bill Hickock, Miss 'Wild Bill.'"

Miss MacLaure leaned back against the stair-rail, her eyes turning from Tommy to her speechless supporters. Slowly the truth seemed to penetrate her brain.

"Oh," she gasped at last. "Then—then what else can you give me?"

The officers had long since departed, promising, however, to remain over in town and hear her again that night at the Trocadero, with hints as to a late supper; she had received a call from the manager of that most popular resort, and had rendered his life miserable by numerous demands; had passed half an hour practicing with the leader of the orchestra; but now was at last alone, tired, decidedly irritable, and still tempted to invade "15," and give that other woman a piece of her mind. Then some one rapped on the door. There was a decided accent of vexation in the voice which bade the one outside enter, but the lady's mood changed swiftly as her brown eyes perceived standing in the doorway the erect form of Keith, the light from the window revealing clearly his strong face. The man stood hat in hand, bowing slightly, unable to comprehend why he should have been sent for, yet marvelling again at the remarkable resemblance between this woman and that other whom he had left at Fort Larned. As Miss MacLaure stood with back toward the window, she presented the same youthful appearance, the same slenderness of figure, the same contour of face.

"Miss Christie MacLaure?" he asked, as though in doubt.

"Yes," graciously, won instantly by the man's appearance and manner, "you wished to see me? Will you be seated?"

He crossed the narrow room to the stiff-backed chair indicated, and the lady sank negligently down into her own, resting her head against a pillow, and regarding him expectantly. He could view her now much more distinctly, observing the slight difference in age, the fuller lips, the darker shade of the hair, and the varied expression of the eyes. It was as if a different soul had looked forth from the same face. He had never before realized how little, apparently trifling, details marked the human countenance, and, embarrassed by her own scrutiny, his glance swept about the room. Misunderstanding this shifting of eyes, Miss Christie sought to place the man more at ease.

"The room is a perfect fright," she observed briskly, "but what can one expect in these mushroom towns. Really I had never been here before, or I shouldn't have come. They pay good money though for talent, and we all have to live, you know. Are—are you in professional work?"

He shook his head, smiling, somewhat perplexed at her reception.

"Really I didn't suppose you were," she went on, "you don't look it. But there are so many who come to me to help them that I have grown suspicious of every stranger. May I ask why you desired to see me?"

Another suspicion had taken possession of her mind, for the men of that section were never backward in exhibiting admiration, yet somehow this man did not seem exactly of that kind.

"I came merely because I was sent for, Miss MacLaure," he replied, his gray eyes once again upon her face. "Doctor Fairbairn gave me your message; I am Jack Keith."

She looked the complete astonishment she felt, sitting up in the chair, her eyes filled with questioning doubt. "Doctor Fairbairn! My message! Surely you are mistaken? I know no one of that name, and have sent no message."

"You did not express a desire to see me?"

She laughed, exhibiting a row of white teeth.

"Certainly not; not until this moment was I even aware of the existence of Mr. Jack Keith."

His own eyes smiled in response to challenge of hers.

"I can assure you the surprise was mine also," he hastened to inform her, now more at ease, as he grasped the situation. "I could not understand now I had become known to you, yet I pledge you my word the message was actually brought. Of course you may suspicion otherwise, for I have seen you on the stage, and being a normal man, have wished that I could devise some excuse for meeting you."

"Indeed!" her eye-brows slightly uplifted.

"Yes, I make that confession frankly, yet this call comes from no such desire. I had no question when I came, but what I had been sent for—you will believe this?"

"I suppose I must, yet it seems very peculiar," she replied, feeling convinced that he was a gentleman, and troubled as to what she had best do.

could possibly have with you, Miss MacLaure."

The woman's eyes flashed, hardening in their brown depths.

"What right have you to ask?" she began indignantly. "I am capable of deciding my own affairs. As I have told you I have never met Mr. Hawley, but I am not to be influenced against him merely by the denunciation of an avowed enemy. He has written me of something he has discovered which is of deep personal interest to me, and has promised to tell me the details, as well as place within my hands certain necessary papers."

"I appreciate your feelings," he said gently, as she paused, "but would you mind telling me the nature of those papers?"

There was something in Keith's face which told of honesty, and inspired confidence. Miss MacLaure's worldly experience had given her deep insight into the character of men, and somehow, as she looked into the clear gray eyes, she felt impelled to answer, a vague doubt of the unknown Hawley in her mind.

"They were papers to establish identity. He had discovered them by accident; they have to do with an inheritance. Really that is all I know, for he wrote very briefly, stating it would be safer to confer with me personally—only I imagine there is a large sum involved."

"From whose estate?"

"From whose estate?"

ing to see the man, and consider what he has to say. I don't care half so much about the money as I do to find out who I am. If he can throw any light on my early life, on my parentage, I shall be the happiest woman in the world. I am sorry I told you anything—but I am going to see him just the same. Perhaps he might tell me something about you."

They were both standing, the woman's eyes flashing angrily, defiantly, her hands clinched. Keith, realizing the false position into which he had drifted, hesitated to answer. He meant to tell her the whole story, and urge her to co-operate with him in learning the gambler's purpose. The woman impressed him as honest at heart, in spite of her life and environment; she was not one whom a swindler could easily dupe into becoming a tool.

"Miss MacLaure," he began, determined on his course, "listen to me for just a moment. I am—"

There was a rap at the door. The eyes of both turned that way, and then Keith backed slowly into the darkened corner beyond the window, his right hand thrust into the pocket of his coat. Miss MacLaure observed the movement, her lips smiling, a red flush on either cheek. Then she stepped across the room, and opened the door. Framed against the black background of the hall, his dark, rather handsome face clearly revealed as he fronted the window, his black, audacious eyes fixed appreciatingly upon the lady, stood "Black Bart" Hawley.

He saw no one but her, realized no other presence, had no thought except to make a good impression. He was facing a beautiful woman, whom he sought to use, and he bowed low, hat in hand.

#### (TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### New Auto Motive Power.

Automobilists in England—they call them motorists over there—are much interested in the success of an invention known as "solid petrol," or gasoline in little bricks. Its exact composition is, of course, a secret. It contains 80 per cent. of ordinary gasoline, a percentage of soapy matter, and one per cent. of a foreign substance which gives it solidity. A small block of it is said to be equal to a gallon of liquid motive power, and its inventors say that enough to propel a car 1,200 miles can be carried in a little box on the running board of the machine.

#### With Tact.

"How did they break the news of her sudden bereavement to his wife?"

"It was done with considerable tact and with every precaution to lighten the blow. Her lady friend selected for the task, said to her, 'I have some bad news for you, Hilda, about James, but it might have been a great deal worse. It certainly is a blessing you put off getting your summer outfit, for you will look simply stunning in widow's weeds.'"

#### A Puzzler.

Mrs. Gaddy—There are some distinctions in life which are very puzzling to me.

Professor Pundit—Like what, for instance?

Mrs. Gaddy—When you write everything bad and mean in a man's life in a book for everybody to read, it is biography, but when you just tell the same things to a few people on a front porch, it's gossip.

#### Shrewd.

An economical young man who was much bored by the requests of fickle young ladies to return their photos, decided upon desperate measures to put a stop to the unnecessary expenditure of time and postage.

He announced his intention of starting a Venus collection to contain the pictures of the 100 most beautiful women in the world, and now the girls never ask for their pictures.

#### The Wise Bride.

"Yes, the girls gave the bride a commiseration shower."

"What in the world is that?"

"Why, they all told her how sorry they were she was going to marry such a man as the coming bridegroom."

"That must have hurt her feelings."

"No, it didn't. She knew there wasn't a girl there who wouldn't have given her eyes to get him!"

#### Cannot Cast the Future.

A man may presume to know much of what is passing, but he dare not predict what part of the passing show shall disappear, as a fashion does, in time. It must follow, as no man can pretend to place his finger unerringly on just that particular part, then no man can begin to tell just what man or woman living today will be revered in time to come.

#### Knew His Man.

Gibbs—I called yesterday to borrow ten dollars, but you were not in.

Dibbs—Yes I was. I was in ten dollars.

#### IN LESS STRENUOUS TIMES

Explanation of the Difference Between Domestic Standards Now Those of Long Ago.

In the Woman's Home Companion there is an interesting presentation of the difference that exists between the domestic standard of young married women of today and those of the past generation. How did the women of the middle class of a generation or two ago manage when they could not keep help? Following is the answer quoted from a Companion editorial:

"They lived according to their means; they did not set up impossible standards, and they knew much less about the science of bringing up children. They had no special style to keep up; gave the children a weekly bath; kept the table set between meals; did not serve their meals in courses, but put all the food on the table at once; confined their social affairs to evening calls and parties, and church suppers, at which they wore the same black silk dress for at least two seasons; in short, every woman did only what she could, and her friends made it easier for her by doing likewise."

#### A Golf Story.

There's another story of a man who rang the bell at the gates of Paradise and asked Peter if he might go through.

"What were you on earth?" asked the saint.

"Well," was the response, "during the latter part of my life I didn't do much but play golf."

"Got a golf ball on you?"

"Yes; here's a 'Chancellor.'"

St. Peter took it and threw it over his shoulder, where it rolled away.

For minute or more he looked critically at the applicant, then shut the gate in his face and locked it.

"What's the game?" said the man.

"You are no real golfer," said St. Peter. "You don't even know the first rule of golf—to keep your eye on the ball and follow through."

#### Self-Evident.

Louis N. Parker, the playwright, has a ready wit, as was demonstrated at a supper party the other night. Parker's neighbor, a famous actress, nodded toward a pretty girl at the next table and said: "Don't you think she's awfully young to wear such a décolleté gown?" "Well," said Mr. Parker, "she certainly is a stripling."

#### CREAM OF RYE

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#### Too Much Reclining.

"How as it that Gamps failed in his bed-manufacturing business?" "He got too much in sympathy with the business." "How could he do that?" "He lay down on the job."

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