

white woman on the frontier is an attraction not to be resisted by the average son of the border, but "Old Jackson's gal," would have made friends and attracted a brilliant throng of gallants to her side in the best drawing rooms of the east.

Time passed and old Jackson's possessions grew and multiplied and his "gal" came to be known as an heiress. The boys, however, were as other boys of their age and surroundings, fat, ragged and apparently without aim or ambition. (They assisted their father in his work and at night piled off to bed and soon lost consciousness in a snore which carried with it the only romance of their hum drum existence.) But Moyne had a taste for the beautiful which she cultivated. She adorned the rough walls with pictures cut from the papers and magazines which travelers had left in her keeping; she read books and was cultured far beyond her surroundings. She was something of a musician as well, and the old melodeon which sat in one corner and her father's "fiddle" spoke a different language when touched by the magic of her fingers.

She had the mind of the family. There must have been some rare old blood among the girl's ancestry. Nobody knew or asked how she had acquired her taste for reading nor how she had collected her well thumbed little library of books, newspapers and magazines. No one wondered why her clothes always fitted her rounded figure with such neatness, nor how she had learned to coil her golden hair so gracefully upon her shapely head, nor why she, so different from all others, had such a beautiful complexion. They would have been both surprised and shocked to see her looking any other way. The whole community and the soldiers at the fort as well, came to acknowledge her as the beautiful queen of the prairies. It is not to be supposed that a girl with such a reputation, and an heiress at that, would want for suitors. There was not a single man for one hundred miles around but what would have gone down on his knees before her if she

would let him. But she wouldn't and they knew it, and kept a respectful distance. She gave encouragement to no one.

Harry Dale, a tall, sun-browned ranchman, lived some twenty miles below her father's place, and Frank Fisher, a slick looking young fellow with store clothes, who was in some way connected with the sutler's store at the fort, were the most persistent of her admirers.

Along with Jackson's prosperity had come a sort of good fellowship, which often degenerates into a condition of good for nothingness. He had boon companions, and with them he drowned his sorrows and the memory of his lost love in the flowing bowl, and they celebrated their respective good fortunes in the same manner. Of late he had seldom gone to the fort alone, without coming home intoxicated. One bright October morning he had announced his intention of visiting the fort. Moyne demurred. Her word had previously been law to him, but this time he rebelled. He went to the stable, saddled his pony, and soon was on his way. It took but a moment for her to determine her course. she mounted her favorite, a big black stallion, and was soon at his side, leaving the boys at play about the place. He did not like this interference with his plans and for some time they rode in silence. But what man could scold such an imperious beauty or carry a frown or a scowl long in her presence? Gradually his eyes met hers and soon they were chattering merrily as they jogged along the dusty road. They had gone about half the distance when he turned suddenly, and looking steadily at her, said with much more animation than usual:

"Moyne."

"What is it father?" was her good natured reply.

"Well, gal, I'm not blind nor deaf if I am getting old, and I've seen them two young fellers hanging 'round you right smart of late. Now I'd like to know, its a father's due, what yer goin' to do with 'em. Seems to me if I was a gal and had the choosin', it