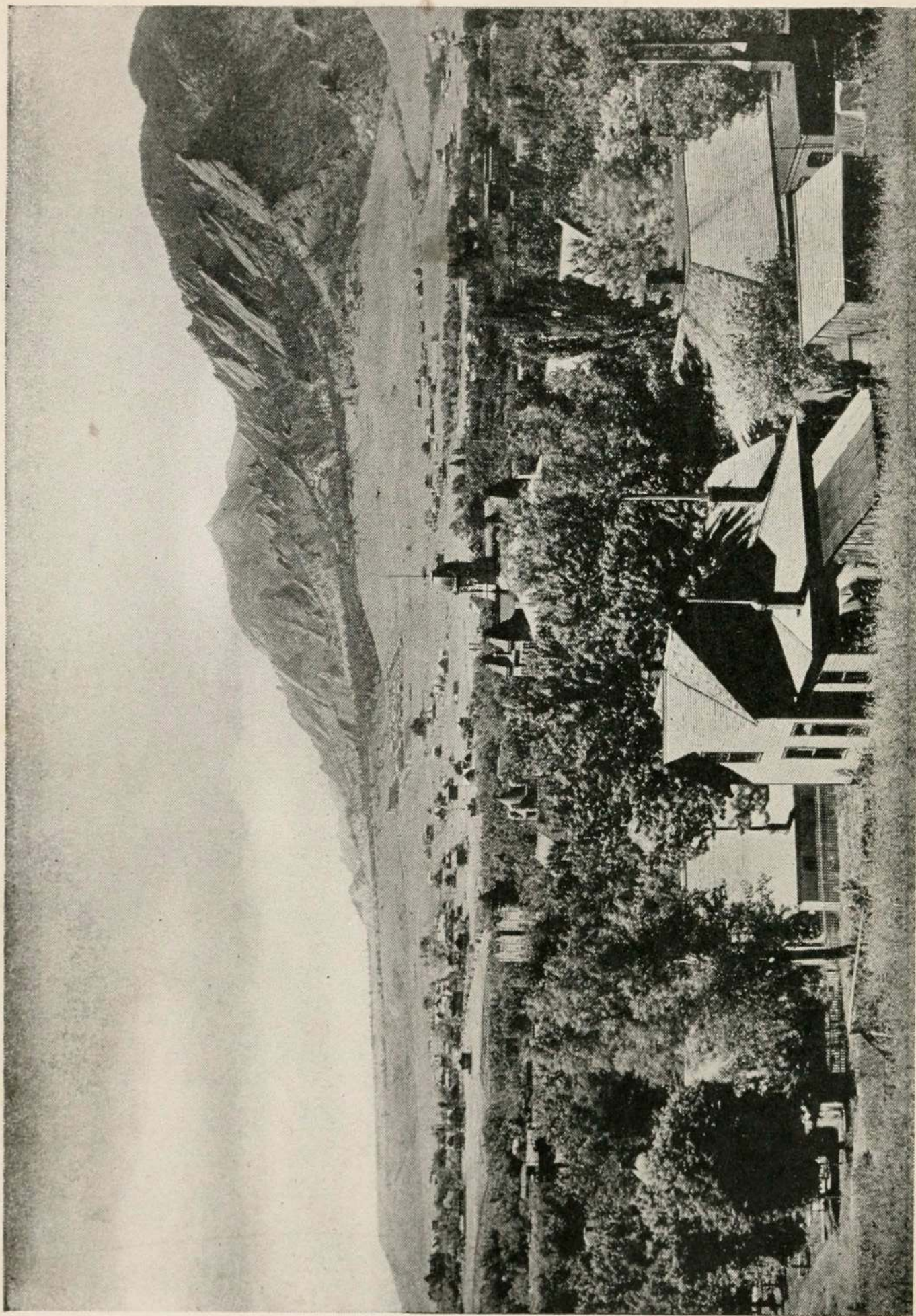




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BOULDER, COLORADO

The vast plains, once the bottom of an inland sea, end at the foot of the rugged hills. "Turnip Top" appears at the center, and the "Flatirons" at the right of the picture.

ANITA

A STORY OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

By

BERTHA B. AND ERNEST COBB

*Authors of Arlo, Clematis, Busy Builder's Book, Hand in Hand
with Father Time, Garden Steps, The Hen at Work.*

COLOR PLATES BY L. J. BRIDGMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY L. C. McCLURE

LINE DRAWINGS BY ANITA PETTIBONE



BOSTON

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MANY kind friends helped to make ANITA a useful and interesting book. To these we are grateful. Special thanks are due to Miss Gladys Shackelford of Denver, Colorado, for her careful review of the manuscript, and to Professor Alfred C. Lane, of Tufts College, who brought to these pages the knowledge of a lifetime spent in the study of geology and natural geography.

When we first began to work out the ARLO PLAN of teaching English without formal grammar and without formal rhetoric, there was one who joined heartily in the endeavor, who sat up with us long hours to discuss and decide the problems involved, who protected the growing plant from the winds and storms of criticism till it had taken deep root, and proved by its fruits that it was destined to live and be welcome among those who teach or learn.

So we inscribe this book to

FREDERICK W. PLUMMER

Who has shown himself so truly our friend.

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ANITA

CHAPTER I

COLORADO

WHEN I was born I had everything anybody could wish except a name. My parents had chosen a very good name for me. It was second-hand, to be sure, as it had been worn by members of the family before me, but it was a good name for all that. A little cousin, born just before I appeared, had taken the very name picked out for me, and I was left a nameless child.

My grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins, and the neighbors, were so sorry about this that they wanted, each and all, to help my parents pick out a name

so good that I should like it better than the first one.

Then the fun began. One decided on this, another made up her mind on that. Names from every source were offered for our choice. I was such a remarkable child that only the finest would do.

Before long Father and Mother began to wonder where the discussion would end. It was clear that no matter what name they chose they would hurt the feelings of some beloved relative.

"If Solomon were here," said Mother, "he might help us. Surely I don't know what to do about it. I don't want to wound any one, or see trouble in the family."

Father thought for some time. Then he slapped his knee.

"I have it," he said. "Let us postpone the whole thing till she can choose for herself. No one can find fault with that."

So it was agreed. The others did find fault, after all, for each expected us to

choose the name he had picked out. But they admitted that I had some rights that should be respected.

Under these conditions all had an opportunity to call me what they chose. Lady Love was the name my family liked the best, but I was accustomed to a variety of names.

As I grew old enough to understand, they explained the situation to me, and I took quite an interest in the names other little girls carried around with them. Meanwhile we had moved many miles from Kansas, where I was born, to Denver, Colorado, and were far away from most of the interested relatives.

I was six, and was playing one day with a little friend when her mother came to the door.

"Come in to dinner, Louise Anita," she called.

"What did she call you?" I asked.

"Louise Anita."

"Is that your name?"

"Yes."

Louise Anita went in to dinner, and I ran home just as fast as I could go, taking the new name with me. On the spot I declared that I had found my own name at last, and I should be called Louise Anita.

My mother kept her word, and from then onward I became Louise Anita in the family Bible. I had been called Lady Love and other pet names so long that they stuck to me for a long time, of course, but Louise Anita was my real name, and when my parents moved once more, soon after, to Boulder, Colorado, I was careful to take my new name along also.

Father was interested in silver mines and wanted to get hold of a mine that would pay well, so he bought a snug little house in Boulder where we could all live in comfort while he kept a lookout over the mining district, which lay in the mountains just west of Boulder.

If you will look at your map I will show you where I lived and tell you something about this wonderful country.

Colorado is about half-way from the Mississippi to the western coast and half-way from the Canadian border to Mexico. It stands right in the path of the Rocky Mountain range, and the western part of the State is filled with the great peaks that rise so high they are nearly always covered with snow. To get through this region into Utah the train has to curve around through valleys, and wind about on the mountain slopes, often taking many hours to gain a short distance, till it finally escapes into the more level land of Utah and flies on to Nevada and California.

But as you enter the State from the east, as I did, after a vacation trip to Nebraska, you would never dream that there were any hills or mountains there. All is flat and dry, with sagebrush and thin dry grass.

Here all people depend on irrigation with water from the mountains for their ranches and gardens, because it almost never rains.

On the upper reaches of the Rocky Mountains the snow gathers in immense drifts in the winter. Even in summer it snows often. All year round the snow is melting and running down the sides of the hills.

To use this supply the people have made great ditches, which lead the mountain water off over the plains to their towns and ranches. As it comes into the town they make smaller ditches of lumber, which have gates here and there, to shut off or let in the water. These canals run along the streets just outside the footpaths.

If you have a garden to water, you are permitted to open the gate at your place for so many hours a day, at a certain time.

I remember once how vexed we were when our turn came to have water at four in the morning. No one in our family cared to get up in the dark to let in the water, but it was get up, or go dry, so up we got.

This water is delicious, cool and sweet, even after it has run miles in the hot sun. Without such irrigation, eastern Colorado would be only a dry, dusty desert, covered by coarse prairie grass and sage brush.

As you go on toward Denver, you especially notice great fields of beets, covering miles of the level prairie, with the little ditches running all through them. These are sugar beets.

It may be that after passing these fields for a long time you will notice a rank smell in the air. This odor is probably from a factory, where they make sugar from the beets. After the beets are ground, the pulp is piled in mounds as big as haystacks, to ferment, and this gives off the odor.

Another crop that meets our eye, and stretches out on both sides of the track for miles and miles, is alfalfa. This plant looks like clover, and belongs to the same family. It has a tall strong stalk, with many branches, much like red clover, but

taller and with smaller leaves, and graceful blue blossoms.

Alfalfa makes a root growth so great that the plant is nourished and kept alive even in the dry sandy soil of Colorado. These roots make their way deep down into the soil, searching for every drop of moisture and every bit of nourishment they can find. Four good crops are usually cut when conditions are fair, and two can almost always be gathered.

Alfalfa is dried, just like hay, and makes nourishing food for horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, and poultry. For the latter it is usually ground into a coarse meal, and mixed with their feed. This plant has brought great prosperity to many barren farms which, without it, would hardly pay to work.

Westward we see at last, across the rolling prairie, a blue hazy bank, that seems like clouds at first, and then like mountains. Here and there a peak is outlined above the rest. Gradually they stand out bolder and sharper. A new

air seems to be stirring. Cool whiffs come to us. We are going up to meet the hills.

As the hills lift their heads high in heaven, so do they lift our souls into a higher and happier place. After the long hours on flat, dull, monotonous plains, we greet the stately mountains, where the forest winds come down, and the streams flow out, with joyful welcome.

Just at the edge of the Rocky Mountains, where it can look upon the plains on one side and up to the hills on the other, lies Denver, the capital, and principal city. Her towers and high buildings soon come into view, and before long we are rolling into Denver itself.

But we can not stop long here, for I am going straight through to Boulder, which lies thirty miles up into the hills above the capital city. Boulder is fifty years old tomorrow, and I must be there to join in the great celebration.

The train beyond the city no longer flies along the level ground, but winds in and out along the rough, broken ground

of the wide inland delta of a prehistoric river, which once in bygone ages rushed down to a prehistoric sea, that covered all the land where Denver now stands.

On the left rise the mountains, barren, rugged, sharp, while on the right the plains stretch out.

This is the coal and oil region. Here and there, rising from the sand dunes, are derricks. Every derrick indicates either an oil well or a disappointment. Many a prospect turns out nothing but a pocket, which holds just enough oil to tempt an expensive investigation, and no more.

Not far away a well once flowed, so the story goes, that aroused the attention of a wealthy tourist from the eastern coast. He had asked every idle question he could think up, and finally said, "I wonder how deep this well is. Could you tell me?"

"I can find out the exact figures in my office," replied the courteous official, anxious to get back to his work.

“Thanks,” replied the Easterner, “I should like to make a report on it.”

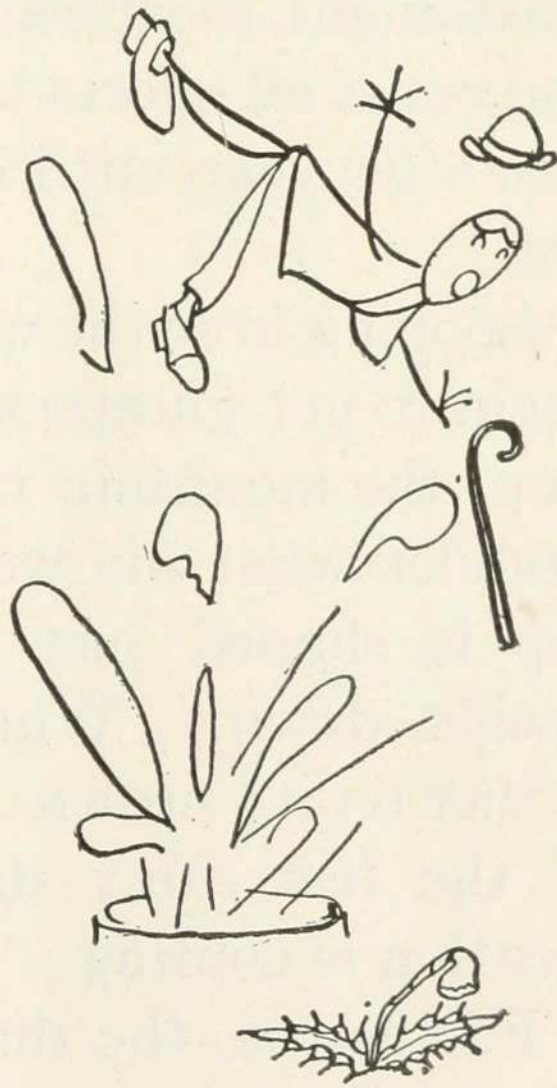
The oil man, safe inside the office once more, quietly went to work.

After waiting some time, the tourist decided to investigate for himself. Bending over the hole, about a foot in diameter, he looked down.

It was dark and he could see nothing. He picked up a stone and dropped it in, but could hear no sound. In vexation he lit a match and dropped it down the hole.

They say that he made the finest report ever known in the oil fields. They heard it even down at Denver, but the tourist was never seen again.

Still looking off to the right we



can see, a little farther on, a haze of smoke, rising like fog from the earth. This is a burning coal mine. For several years it has been on fire, and no efforts to quench the smouldering coals have been successful.

Great piles of coal, and seams of coal in mines, often catch fire from the gas and great heat developed underneath the masses. If the seams are open, and there is a draught, the fire may get beyond reach and resist all efforts to quench it, burning year after year, until it finally burns itself out.

Looking from the windows to the left we begin to get glimpses now of old Turnip Top, the mountain that tells everyone in Boulder what his weather is to be. The top is shaped just like a turnip, held upside down. When mist and clouds gather on its crown they know that one of the few rainy days which visit this location is coming.

Farther on, the three Flatirons appear.

They are three hills shaped like flatirons and stand just outside of Boulder.

The scenes are so interesting that all too soon we dip down a little, run around the side of a hill, and the even rows of green trees that line the streets of Boulder come into view.

There is Father waiting for us with Prince in his best harness hitched to the high trap. Up go the bags and off we start for our cozy brick house, and are at home once more.

CHAPTER II

BOULDER HAS A BIRTHDAY

THE next morning, before I was up, the bell rang, and I heard a voice downstairs. The next minute my door burst open and Ruth Tomblin burst in.

“Louise Anita Pettibone,” she gasped, “what do you guess you have been chosen to do?”

I stared at her a minute.

“How should I know,” I answered, “unless you tell me?”

“Oh, it is a wonderful, wonderful thing. You know they are planning” to have a real Wild West show today.

“No, I didn’t know it. How should I?”

“Well, they are. They have a lot of Arapahoe Indians down from the Reservation, and this afternoon Rocky Moun-



THE WORK OF A SMALL RIVER

This deep cut was made by the stream of water. Little by little, year after year, the canyon grows deeper. The Colorado River has cut a canyon which, in some spots, is more than a mile deep.

tain Joe is going to drive the coach from Bear Canyon. The Indians will hide around Bear Mountain, and as it passes they are going to attack it."

"Oh, that will be great, but I don't see where I come in."

"You just hold on till I get through. The cavalry are going to wait on the University field, and when we hear the shots, and see the coach coming, they are going to ride out and rescue the whole party."

"But what am I chosen to do, ride out with the cavalry and shoot Indians?"

"No, better than that. They wanted to make it very exciting, so they decided to have some girl sit up beside Rocky Mountain Joe on the seat of the coach, and—"

"And that is me, I just know it is!"
I broke in.

I jumped up and seized her by the shoulder. "Answer. It is me, isn't it?"

"Well, you don't need to kill me, Nita Pettibone. Yes, it is you. They told

Rocky Mountain Joe about the plan, and he said no, he wouldn't have any tenderfoot lady up there on that high seat.

“‘You all seem to think this is a picnic,’ he said, ‘but it may turn out very different, if I know anything about Arapahoe Indians; and I think I do.’

“But they coaxed him a little, and said he could think of some girl he would have up there.

“At last he said, ‘Well, I guess Pettibone's little pal might come through all right; but just remember I didn't start this grand idea.’”

I was pulling on my clothes like lightning.

“Oh, Ruth, you are just the best girl, to come and tell me right off!” I yanked on my shoes, and we ran downstairs.

I was rather vexed to find that Father was not much pleased with the plan. I had supposed that Mother might object, but never dreamed that Father would hold me back. Hadn't I ridden all over

the wild trails with him on horseback, all my life?

“That’s all very well, Nita,” he said slowly, “but Rocky Mountain Joe knows what he is talking about. These boards of trade and committees may know about shows and festivals, but they don’t know Indians.

“These Arapahoes look tame as mice loafing round on the streets, but you get a pony under them, and a bow in their hands, with just a touch of rum, and they’ll act out this Wild West show too well altogether.”

But I would not take such an answer, and at last Father agreed to let me ride if Rocky Mountain Joe thought it would be safe.

I could hardly eat my breakfast. As soon as it was over, I hurried up street to find Rocky Mountain Joe.

Rocky Mountain Joe was a famous hunter and trapper, who had lived all his life in the mountains. He had been a scout with Custer, and was a close

friend to Buffalo Bill. After the Indians had been put in their reservations to stay, he had taken to driving a stage, and was one of the best drivers in the mountains. There the roads are so dangerous that only a master hand can drive at all, and few of the best claimed to be equal to him in handling a six-horse team.

Other scouts and frontiersmen had gradually changed their habits and their clothes, but Rocky Mountain Joe never changed much. He wore long untrimmed hair and beard, which were now turning white. His big felt hat, which served for sunshade and umbrella, as the weather changed, was in just the same style as it had been when he fought with Custer. His clothes of soft deer-skin, trimmed with fringe, and a bit of bright gay color here and there, were his especial pride.

I found him outside White-Davis's store on Pearl Street, talking to a group of men.

“Hello, little gal,” he said to me as I went near, “are you going to be my pardner today?”

“I don’t know yet. My father won’t let me go till he finds out if you think it will be safe.”

“Well, I was worried some, but they have promised not to let the red-skins get a drop of rum today. An Injun yell is nothing new to you, so if you agree to hold on tight, and do just what I say, I guess we’ll pull through all right, and get back with our scalps.”

So it was arranged, and I danced home to tell Mother, and get everything ready for my part in the grand performance.

During the morning there was to be a flower parade with Auntie Brookfield, the first white woman who ever came to Boulder, as the guest of honor.

The people round about Boulder are very proud of their gardens, and they have a right to be proud, for they have made many blades grow where none at all grew before. Lovely flowers of many

varieties, fruits on bush and tree, and melons, yes especially those delicious Colorado melons, grow in profusion, where the water from the melting mountain snow and the warm bright sun combine to bring them forth in perfection.

The flower parade gives them all a chance to show not only their flowers, which they love, but their horses, which they love still more. Early in the morning the best carriage is washed and polished. Then great bunches of flowers are gathered, and twined in and out and all about, until the wagons look like those of fairy queens off for a moonlight ball.

Columbine, the State flower, is always in great abundance. Wild tiger lilies, and candytuft are sturdy flowers to tie about the upright parts, and roses by the thousands may always be tucked into corners.

When it is time for the parade to start, the horses are brought out, curried, and polished as bright as the silver buckles on their best harness. The harness.

is decked out till it is hidden with flowers, and garlands are hung in gay festoons about the horses, who proudly take their place in the parade.

Many who have automobiles cover them with flowers also, and take part in the procession; but it is not easy to drive a car in a parade. Horses look more in keeping with the spirit of such an occasion, and those who have good horses usually prefer to drive them, leaving their cars for days when they can go faster.

A committee has a stand at some prominent place, where the most beautiful and picturesque turnouts are awarded the prizes of the day, after all have passed up and down the main streets, so that everyone may see them.

The flower parade on this occasion was even more striking and artistic than usual. Every town in Boulder county had been invited to send a girl to act as maid of honor to Auntie Brookfield. When a girl was chosen, the townspeople all

joined in buying her a costume they thought would do honor to their community.

It was a grand day for these girls, who had all expenses paid, and were put up in style at the Boulderado Hotel.

Ruth and I were chosen to represent Boulder, and had to sleep at home, instead of staying over night at the hotel as we wanted to do. Our folks said there was no room to spare at the hotel for folks who had beds of their own.

We all rode in state behind Auntie Brookfield. Her carriage had splendid roan horses and no flowers. Ours had white horses, and were just loaded with flowers of every kind. It was a great honor for a girl, but my mind was little on it. In my imagination I was up beside Rocky Mountain Joe, on the seat of the old stage coach.

After the flower parade, there was a picnic dinner on the Chautauqua grounds, in the cool shade of the trees. In the Colorado hills it is hot in the sun, but

always cool and refreshing in the shade.

As I was a haughty maid of honor I did not eat the picnic dinner, but went in state to the Boulderado Hotel, where all the maids of honor were feasted on the best the hotel could provide. Ruth and I represented Boulder, so we were to act as hostesses, and order for the party.

It was a proud moment for us all, for it was the first time we had ever been allowed to order everything we wished. The other girls would tell us what they wanted, and we ordered from the waiter for all.

I remember one girl and her sister from a tiny mining town. They were dressed regardless of cost, and were much excited. Seeing "bouillon in cup" on the menu, they both ordered bouillon.

One sister ate hers with a spoon, but the other decided to drink from the cup.

Her companion watched her with troubled eyes a minute. Then she nudged her. She paid no attention, so

she nudged again. Still the sister sipped the bouillon.

“Say, sis,” she finally whispered, “That’s not tea. It’s soup.”

In spite of all the wonderful things to eat, I had my mind more on the stage-coach, and was glad to get outside. The Indians, who had been riding around town or loafing about the courthouse, had eaten a big feast, provided by the town, and had disappeared in Bear Canyon.

Down Walnut street I could see Rocky Mountain Joe leading out the horses to water, and going over the harness. No one was paying much attention to me, so I just stole away and stood close by, while they were putting in the horses and getting everything in shape.

“Ah, here’s my little pardner,” said Rocky Mountain Joe, when he caught sight of me. “She has no sign of a white feather about her.”

The men laughed. I heard one say that a passenger who was going to ride inside had changed her mind, and resigned her seat.

“I don’t blame her much at that,” said one of the regular stage drivers, who was helping Rocky Mountain Joe. “The ark don’t look any too strong.”

He gave the off hind wheel a kick. “That Bear Canyon is not quite so smooth as a billiard table, either. Somebody may be seasick on this old boat when Joe gets those horses on the jump.”

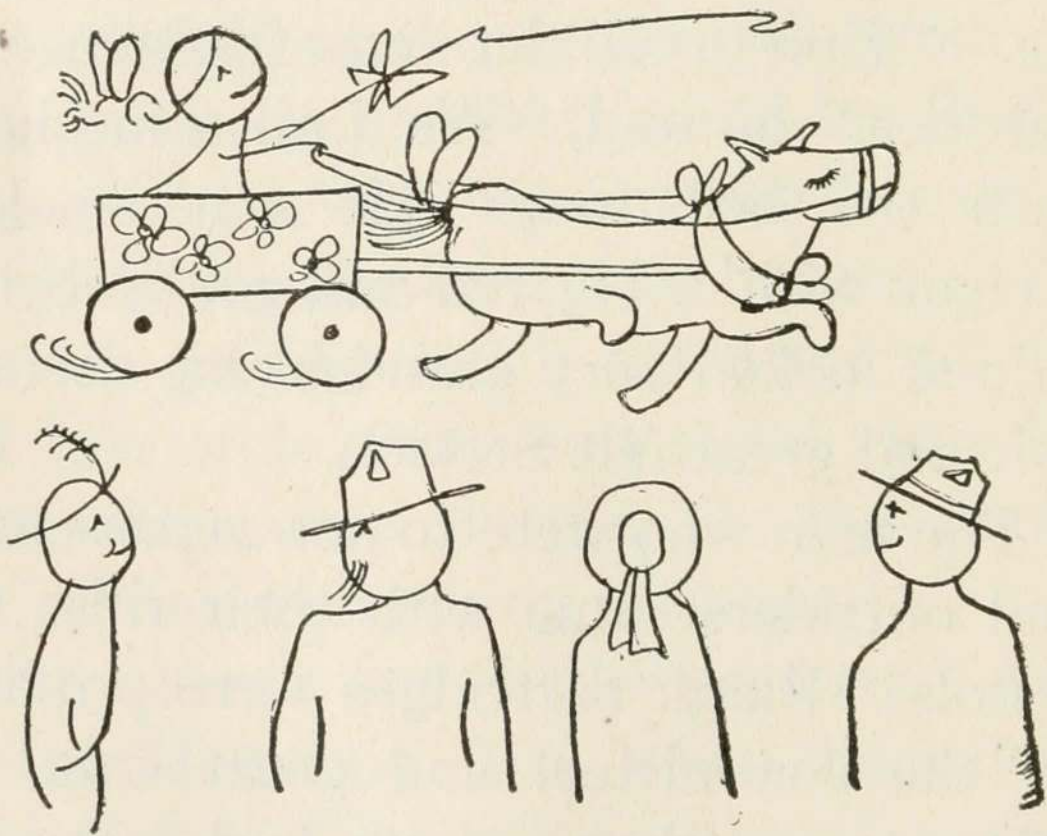
Rocky Mountain Joe smiled down at me. “Don’t you let ’em frighten you, pardner,” he said, “We’ll all come home with the bells on.” He was smoking a cigar with a big red-and-gold label on it, and looked very grand in his deerskin suit and great felt Stetson.

The men who were to act as passengers and outriders came with their rifles and pistols. Blank cartridges were provided by the committee, and great care was taken to see that no gun had cartridges loaded with bullets, for if an Indian should be hurt, no one could tell what they might do.

Then the cavalry began to gather, up

by the athletic field, and the crowd came down to cheer us as we started off.

“Up we go,” said Rocky Mountain Joe, as he took hold of my elbows, and lifted me so I could clamber into the high seat. He swung up after me and gathered the reins into his lean, powerful fingers.



CHAPTER III

THE STAGE-COACH ATTACK

WE were off at last, down Pearl Street, over by the athletic field, and around into Bear Canyon.

Not an Indian was in sight. Above was the blue sky, on each side were the boulders and broken ground, with a shrub or bit of sage-bush here or there, and beneath was the dusty trail, but never a sign to show that a band of Arapahoe braves had passed up the trail and were now hidden along the sides of the canyon.

At last we had arrived at the place in the canyon where we had agreed to stop and turn back along the trail to Boulder. Rocky Mountain Joe uncurled his long blacksnake whip and drew his leaders round. The coach rocked a little as it

swung about, and the horses straightened out again on the home trail.

The outriders, with their rifles and ammunition ready, rode on ahead. Two others came behind. Rocky Mountain Joe spread his feet, slid his left hand down farther on the reins, and leaned forward a little in his seat.

“It’s just like old times, gal,” he said. “It was only yesterday it seems, that I was scooting through here with a parcel of redskins after my scalp.”

He took a deep breath, and his blue eyes flashed, as he looked down at me.

“I’ll bet some of the braves up there now were in that bunch, too,” he added. “Chief Charlie was always out looking for trouble.”

Just then he straightened up with a jerk, and motioned towards a coulee that opened on the right. It was rough and full of boulders.

I saw nothing but the rocks and sage-bush.

“Redskins,” he muttered, as I looked

up at him. "They'll be on our trail in seven winks."

I looked hard again, but could see nothing.

"Can't see a thing, pardner, can you? Well, they don't mean you shall. They can hide a horse and rider behind a two-foot sage-bush. But I know their tricks. I can smell 'em."

A shot rang out behind. Then another, and another.

"Hold on inside there," called Rocky Mountain Joe. "We'll travel."

A war-whoop rose, as I turned to look back over the coach. Several Indians were dashing out of the coulee we had just passed. They were in war paint, with bows in their hands and quivers of arrows on their shoulders.

"Crack, crack, crack." More shots came from the men in front.

A new band was riding round a mass of rocks on our left. Chief Charlie was with them, with his war bonnet of eagle feathers, and splendid painted pony,

covered with splashes of brown and white. Indian chiefs value these ponies with large spots of color, and pay high for them.

Their yells were added to the whoops and shots from behind.

In the midst of all this, Rocky Mountain Joe leaned out over his horses, and brought the blacksnake whip into play.

The blacksnake whip, used by the stage drivers of the mountains, is wonderful. It is of woven leather, flexible and soft, nearly an inch through at the handle, and tapers gradually until it ends in a single thong, with a bead at the tip. The drivers spend much time and care in weaving their whips, and will seldom part with them at any price.

If a greenhorn tries to raise this flexible whip, about ten feet long, the coils fall loosely on the ground. He can hold it in the air no more than he could a piece of rope.

But in the hands of a stage driver the blacksnake becomes a thing alive. It

rises, curling from the ground, and darts out, now here, now there, and strikes as sure as a serpent, on the spot where it is aimed. It is the proud boast of the expert that he can pick a fly on the ear of his leader without hurting the horse.

Among them all no one could handle the blacksnake with greater skill than Rocky Mountain Joe. As his team began to strain in the harness, and show fear, the writhing coil would shoot out towards a leader. Crack! The leader fell into line and pulled straight ahead. Again it would dart across to a horse that was not pulling evenly. Crack! The horse moved up with an extra jump.

Now the Indians had gathered in from all sides, yelling and whooping with voices sounding in such deadly earnest that it made the shivers run down your back.

The men in front were firing at the Indians, who dodged in and out among the rocks on their nimble ponies, and sent arrows in answer to their shots.

The Indians who were passing quite near now, had no clothing except their breech-cloths and girdles, and the moccasins on their feet. They were smeared with paint to make them look more fierce, and sat straight on the backs of their ponies.

These Arapahoes rode without saddles, guiding their horses by the pressure of their knees. For a bridle, they had only a piece of twisted rawhide, tied to the pony's under jaw.

The Indian horses are trained to perfection. They are in the midst of noise and confusion so much that yells and shots do not disturb them. With the guiding pressure of the knee they turn to the right or left, and stop instantly at a pull on the bridle. They will also lie down at command, and stay quiet until ordered to rise. These ponies about us were all turning and dodging around rocks and brush, as if they knew exactly what their riders wished them to do without any orders at all.

Now the coach was going faster and faster, as the whole team settled down to work. The reins hung loose over the horses' backs, but the blacksnake whip was always in the air. Crack! Crack! Now here, now there, it snapped, to keep every horse pulling straight ahead.

The trail was rough, full of stones and little hollows, and the old stage creaked and groaned as it bounced and rattled along. I had all I could do to hold on as we lurched first to one side and then to the other.

From within we could hear shouts and shots, as the guards fired through the windows at every redskin that came near. They would yell in reply, and shoot their arrows, which they had promised should strike nobody.

The jingling of the bells on the harness, the clang of the iron shoes on the rocky trail as the horses flew along, their bellies almost to the ground, the crack of the blacksnake whip, the rattle and creak of the coach, the bang of the

guns, and the whoops of the Indians, all combined to make a situation I shall never forget. I knew then why my father shook his head. This was no place for those unused to danger.

After circling round once or twice, with a score of his braves about him, Chief Charlie dashed by, and they all fired arrows in answer to shots from the coach.

Whizz! An arrow flew within a foot or two of our faces.

Snap! Something struck the coach just behind us.

Rocky Mountain Joe pulled down his hat and drew in the team a little. The road was fairly level here.

"You get under that seat, as quick as scat," he cried to me. With one hand he held my arm while I slid down, and squeezed beneath the seat, behind his legs.

Then crack! crack! crack! The black-snake stung the horses into a dead run again down the canyon road.

An outrider fell back a little and yelled something to Rocky Mountain Joe.

"I know it — nearly winged us, — war arrows, too," he called.

The man rode over nearer to Chief Charlie and yelled, and made motions, but Chief Charlie only laughed and let out an awful whoop.

Again the rider drew near to the coach and motioned to those behind, who came up close, while Chief Charlie circled round once more, with all his braves yelling like mad.

Again the arrows flew, and this time it was clear that the braves cared very little where they struck. The coach was hit, and one of the horses jumped, as if he were wounded.

"They know we have only blanks, and are trying to make us show the white feather," called Rocky Mountain Joe. "I wish I had my gun. I'd show 'em," he added, as he worked the black snake in and out among the team.

The road was smoother and more open

now, and we made better speed. Ahead we could see the athletic field and the crowd, with the cavalry already starting out to rescue us.

The Indians could find room to ride about on all sides of us now. The arrows flew, the guns answered, both sides yelling and screeching.

Then we could hear the pounding of the troop as it bore down upon us, and the new shots from their carbines.

With yells of insult and exultation the braves withdrew a little, then scattered and disappeared, with the cavalry after them, while we smoked down into Boulder, through the crowds of cheering people.

They said it was the finest show ever, and very realistic. But if they ever ask Rocky Mountain Joe to drive another coach in a Wild West show, I know that some cartridges with real bullets in them will be hidden down under his seat.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEAR DANCE

THE grand finish of the long day's celebration was a Bear Dance by Chief Charlie and a band of the Arapahoe Indians.

This was a great event in Boulder, for it had never been given before white people, and everyone was eager to be present, to see for the first, and probably the last time, this unusual ceremony.

It had not been easy to secure their consent. The Arapahoe Indians are very shy and reserved. They pride themselves greatly on their dignity, and they were afraid that perhaps some might make fun of the Dance, which to them was an important and solemn rite.

But the privilege of leaving their reservation for a visit to town, and some

presents from the committee, had overcome their objections, and they had given their word.

Early in the evening the Opera House was crowded. Before the great event there were speeches of welcome to the crowd of visitors, and a brief review of Boulder's history for fifty years.

During speeches the Indians were given seats in the boxes on each side of the stage, the squaws on one side, and the braves on the other, for the braves and squaws never sit together at any time.

At last the speeches were over, and word came that all was ready for the Arapahoes to take the stage. At this Chief Charlie rose in his place and began to take off his blankets.

An usher hastened into his box and tried to lead him out of sight.

"Why is this?" he asked, so all might hear.

"We have a dressing-room for you behind the wings," explained the nervous usher.

“Shall I not dance without all these blankets, on the stage?” he asked with great dignity.

“Yes, of course, but, but—”

“Then I shall leave them here,” said the Chief, and he dropped his robes to the floor, stepping out in the light costume of the native chief, his splendid form towering straight and powerful.

His skin, oiled and polished, gleamed copper red beneath the opera lights, and his muscles rippled and grew tense as he took his bow, and tomahawk. In his belt was a hunting-knife. On his head was his hunting bonnet trimmed with eagle feathers.

The braves followed their chief's example, and filed out upon the stage. They were all over six feet high, straight, slight, but powerful and athletic, stepping as if they rested on springs.

Then the squaws, each with a papoose on her back, took their places in a line at the rear of the stage. With them were young maidens, their hair in two

long, black, oily ropes, twisted round and round with gay colored rags.

All the women wore loose dresses of deerskin, dyed in bright colors, and trimmed with a fringe of beads. In great contrast to the silent dignity of the braves was the noisy chatter of the squaws, and the giggle, giggle, giggle of the maidens. They whispered and giggled till it was hard to keep from laughing right out, which we had all promised not to do.

On each side of the stage was a group of braves who had small drums. At a signal they began to strike. The sound was dull and hollow. Tum de dum dum. Tum de dum dum. It went on with measured beat. To accent the beats, every now and then they would give a short, sharp yell.

The braves stood grouped together, their faces uplifted in solemn quiet. They were appealing to the Great Spirit to give them success in their hunt.

As the drum-beats rolled on, the braves

began to move, to sway in their places as the rhythm worked its spell upon them. Their breath came faster. Their eyes became fixed. All things about them were forgotten. They looked out beyond the theatre lights to the silent mountains, where even then the great grizzlies were wandering at will. The spirit of the hunt was upon them.

Suddenly the chief stepped forward, as if he were on the trail. Bending low, with his face toward the ground, shading his eyes with his hands, he started off. His braves followed, keeping time to the drums, going up and down the stage.

The women, at the same time, began to shuffle with their soft moccasins.

Now and then the braves would stop suddenly and listen, every form tense, every nerve alert. Then they would go on again.

At last the chief stood, fixed like a rock. Then he bent down almost to the ground. He brushed aside an imaginary

leaf, and looked again. A gleam of triumph flashed over his face.

Chief Charlie straightened up and lifted his right hand, raising a cry that almost split the roof. The audience, which had been bending forward, following him, suddenly straightened up, bit their lips, and tried to look as if they were used to it.

On the stage the braves gathered quickly round their leader, yelling and whooping with a frightful noise. The trail had been found.

Now the drums beat faster, the soft moccasins shuffled more rapidly, and the braves started off after their chief, round and round, up and down, every foot following that before it in perfect time, each one falling noiseless as a shadow.

Their eyes were fixed upon the ground, their nostrils quivered, their faces gleamed with ferocious desire for their prey. With their tomahawks swinging loose, their bodies bent forward as they went on.

Again Chief Charlie stopped, held up

his hand, and raised his terrible whoop. Every brave joined in the outcry. Bows were made ready, tomahawks waved in the air, and all yelled as only a six-foot brave can yell. The bear was found.

I turned toward the girl who came with me. She was pale, and bit her lips as she sat there tense and rigid. All about I could see pale faces and staring eyes fixed on the dance. No one there thought of laughing. With the bear right upon the stage, it could hardly have been more terribly real.

Forming in two lines they opened ranks and faced each other. Then one line approached and passed through the other, striking in the air with the tomahawks, and aiming with the bows and arrows.

Sometimes the keen edges of the tomahawks would swing within an inch of a head or shoulder, but no eye moved, not a muscle flinched. They feared no danger. The bear, become so real through their marvelous acting, must be killed, and no brave must flinch.

The battle grew more furious. The sharp cries of those who beat the drums stabbed through the clamor. The braves raised yells of exultation and triumph. The step became faster, the weapons flew about in wild confusion, when, with a terrific yell, Chief Charlie leaped into the air, and finished poor Bruin with one last blow. The bear was dead.

For a moment they stood still, breathing hard. Then the drum went on at a slower beat, and the braves followed their chief round and round the imaginary body of the imaginary bear. They hopped several steps on one foot, then upon the other. The pace was no longer lithe, but stiff and jiggy.

Meanwhile the women came forward to join in the dance, for they must dress and cut up the bear, and prepare the feast. The girls were giggling and tit-tering again now worse than before. Two or three babies, wakened from sleep by the noise, were squalling, but no one paid the slightest attention to them.

Indian babies are strapped to the backs of their mamas and carried everywhere they go. A long pocket of soft skin is made with the fur side in. This pocket is just large enough so the tiny papoose may slide into it and rest his feet at the bottom. Then it is drawn tight about his body by thongs. He is fastened so snugly that he can move neither hand nor foot, and is in no danger of falling out.

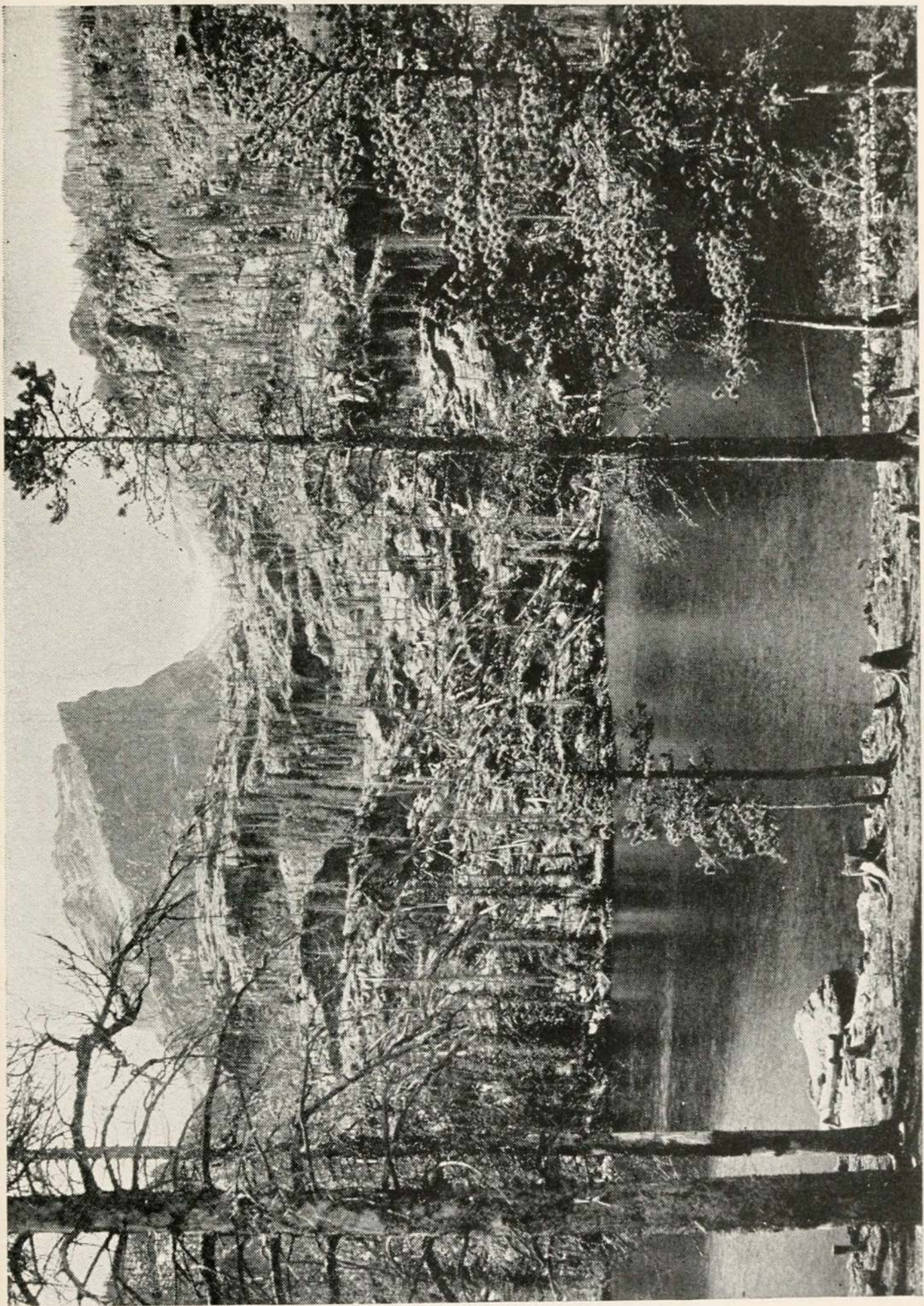
It seemed cruel to see those poor little Indian babies slung up there on their mother's backs, laced up as tight as a football.

Their little round faces drooped, fast asleep, over the edge of their nests, like daisies in a hot sun. Now and then one would straighten up, open his eyes, and squall with all his might. But he could hardly be heard amidst the din his parents were making, so, as no one paid the slightest attention to him, after a few howls he would nod off to sleep again and forget the terrors of the bear hunt.

The braves group once more near the center, while the squaws jig, jig, jig, around them, beads rattling, and babies bobbing behind. All join in a chant of triumph, that rises and falls to the throb of the drums. Circling slowly round and round, they tell in hoarse chanting shouts the story of the fight, and exult over the fallen foe.

Soon the pace grows slower, for the women must prepare the feast. Their knives gleam as they make ready to flay the bear and cut him into juicy steaks. While the braves keep on with their chant, the squaws swiftly carry out their work in pantomime, and soon it is all done.

Louder grow the drums, higher rise the voices, faster grow the steps, sharper grow the yells of those who beat the drums and mark the dance. Weapons wave with wild and reckless abandon. The great feast has begun. The victorious hunters gorge on the rewards of the chase.



FIRE

A slope once rich and verdant is destroyed by a forest fire. The giant cliff, harder than the rock about it, has withstood the elements, while surrounding rocks have crumbled away.

But human endurance has its limits, even the endurance of an Arapahoe brave. At last the voices grew less shrill, and the bodies relaxed. Chief Charlie gave a signal, and the curtain slowly went down. Gradually it closed the stage front and hid sleepy papooses, stolid squaws, giggling maidens, ferocious braves, and their gigantic chief.

The lights went on, and the people all about me sat back in their seats and stretched their tense muscles.

"How did you like it?" I asked my companion as we got up.

"Well," she said, still rather pale, "I am very, very glad I saw it, but I don't think I would care to see another bear dance very soon."

CHAPTER V

THE GOLD KING

I was stirring the potatoes in the fry-pan one day when I looked through the kitchen window and saw Father coming up the path with James Brewster, an old prospector. He was talking earnestly and I could tell that Father was deeply interested in what he had to say.

Could it be that James had found the silver mine that Father wanted? He had known James Brewster a long time and I knew he had great confidence in his judgment.

They came in, and Father shut the door to his little office, while we were getting dinner and they were talking.

I knew of Father's desire to find a vein of silver, so I was very sure that silver

tical miners, and practical miners seldom became prospectors.

I looked up at Mother as we were putting dinner on the table, with an extra plate for James Brewster.

“Do you suppose he has found a mine for Father?” I suggested, hoping she might tell me.

“I suppose it would be just as well to tend our dinner, and let Father tend to his mines,” replied Mother, with a little smile. “Go call them, now,” she added.

Lucky for me Mr. Brewster was not much like my parents. They talked little and he talked much, so he began almost as soon as he was seated.

“I tell you, Miss Pettibone,” he always called Mother Miss Pettibone, “I never did run onto quite such luck in my life.”

“I am glad,” said Mother. “Have you found some good indications?”

“Better than that. I’ve found a real mine.”

I opened my eyes wide, for I was eager

to go up into the hills with Father and start a mine.

“Yes, sir, and I was led right to it by fate.” James Brewster struck the table with his great, hairy fist.

Mother turned to me. “I guess you would like to hear about that, wouldn’t you, Lady Love?”

“And so she shall. It’s just like a fairy tale, soon told, and not believed by all, except those who know the hills.

“You’ll remember,” James went on, as we sat listening, “the last time I was up through the hills back of Nederland with William Pettibone here,” jerking his thumb toward Father, “that we got caught out in a thunder storm.”

We nodded.

“Well, sir, that was an awful spell. The sky turned pale green, then grew hazy, and changed to brass color. Everything was as quiet as an Indian grave; not a bird chirping in the bushes, not even a rustle.

“‘William,’ says I, ‘this is going to

rip and tear some, I guess. That looks like a good safe rock up there, let's perch. We might as well get soaked there as anywhere.'

"He agreed to that, so we climbed up on a big boulder about two miles above Nederland, and waited for it to break.

"I s'pose your pa has warned you," he added, turning to me, "but there is no harm repeating it. Don't ever hide under any trees or rocks up in those hills to duck a storm. If you get under a tree the lightning may strike you. If you hide in gullies or under slanting rocks, the rain will be pretty sure to wash you out and drown you. Just you pick out a big boulder that is well wedged in so it stands firm, climb up there and take your soaking. You'll dry off soon, when the sun comes out."

I nodded. Father had told us how many people perish in the thunder storms and cloudbursts up there in the hills, because they try to get shelter from the rain.

The hills are bare and rocky, and the rain falls in a deluge hardly imagined in most parts of the country. Only a little soaks into the earth. Most of it runs off into rocky gulches and seams, which turn from dry gullies into roaring rivers in a few minutes.

Here and there bridges have been built over these narrow gullies, so people may get safely across, but tourists, ignorant of the real danger, often hide beneath them for shelter during a rain-storm. Then the water rushes down, often in a solid wave many feet deep, and sweeps them away to instant death.

“Well,” James Brewster went on, “we got into a safe nest on the boulder and watched it break. First there came a little stir of air; then some big warm drops. In a few minutes the wind rushed out at us and the rain right after it. Oh what a storm! I guess you remember it, William.”

“I guess I do,” replied Father, smiling.

“The lightning played round those rocks like the battle of Gettysburg.”

“That was a warm spell, if ever I saw one. Well, she got blacker and blacker, and the lightning snapped and sizzled all about us. Up on the hills she would crash and bellow till it seemed as if the tops must come off. I didn't mind that so much, but when it began to snap and r-r-r-ip right about us I thought over my worst sins a little, I'll confess.”

James Brewster leaned back to light his pipe while Mother was bringing the apple-pie.

“Yes sir, when I saw the little sparks snapping on William's hob-nailed boots, I wished he knew enough to wear soft shoes in the hills. I was afraid they would draw the lightning for sure, because metal will draw lightning every time.

“Well, as it gathered round closer and closer, I noticed that over across a little gulch it was striking in the same spot time after time. I could see it flash

down, run along the ground a piece, and go out in a big glare, with a bang that would deafen an Arapahoe brave.

“Down it would come again. Flash, bang! Flash, bang!”

“Right round us it was sizzling and cracking, but over there it went off all at once, with that terrible bang.

“‘Jim Brewster,’ says I to myself, ‘there’s a big streak of metal over there, pulling down that lightning, and it may be silver.’ So I made a note of the place.”

“So did I,” said Father, “but I never got a chance to go back there.”

“Well sir, the storm passed before long, and we dried out in no time, but I kept my mind on that spot, and last month I put in some good licks prospecting.

“You see, little Lady,” he explained, “most metals draw lightning right to them. When we put metal rods on the house, with the points sticking up on top, the electric current, that makes the lightning, jumps to the rod, and runs off to the ground. It is the same up

there in the hills. The metal streaks run through the rocks, and in a thunder-storm the lightning strikes on places where the metal comes to the surface.

“Now,” he went on, “if that is a big streak of metal it will attract all the electricity near by, and if that metal happens to be silver—”

“Oh,” I cried, “then you hunted round where that lightning struck, and found a silver mine.”

“That is exactly what I did,” said James Brewster, passing his plate for another piece of apple-pie.

“And you say the veins lie well?” asked Father.

“They show splendid indications. You’ll agree when you see them. I didn’t uncover much, because I don’t need to. You can tell at a glance that it is a real mine, with ore as good as any in these hills.”

“It looks mighty promising,” said Father. “It is only two or three miles above Nederland. We could go up in

a day. I could work it and still be near home here in Boulder."

"And I can go up with you, can't I? Oh, that will be just the greatest fun!" I ran and jumped into Father's lap to make him promise.

After dinner the men went back to get out their maps, and talk in the study, while I helped Mother clear up. Father had promised to take me up to see the mine the next day, so I was as happy as a pup with a chicken wing.

Early next morning the horses were saddled, the saddle-bags were supplied with chuck, in case we should be hungry, and we were off toward the hill country, and the silver mine.

It was just after noon when we started up the steep rocky trail from Nederland, the last little town on the mountain trail. Beyond that were only hills and forests, with mines and prospect-holes here and there, but no houses, and few human beings.

"There," said Father, after an hour or

so, as we stopped near a clearing, "I reckon we are pretty near that prospect now."

"Right you are, William," returned James Brewster. "She lies over beyond that gulch a little piece."

So we turned our horses toward the spot he pointed out, and soon came to a place where the earth had been turned up, and a hole dug in the ground.

"How's that?" exclaimed James Brewster, pride sticking out all over him, "if you don't say that is worth working, I'll take a job as a nurse-girl."

Father got down and looked about at the rocks. Then he examined the spot where the hollow had been made. Some rough, black fragments lay beside it. These he lifted and examined with care.

"Pretty good, eh?" said James Brewster, rubbing his hands.

Father nodded.

All I could see was a black dull patch of what I knew was silver ore, surrounded

mines were being discussed behind closed doors.

James Brewster was, as I said, an experienced prospector. A prospector is a man who wanders about through the mountains where valuable metals are known to be, hunting for indications. Some prospectors grow very expert in locating good veins of metal.

When a prospector finds a good outcropping, he usually stakes a claim to the spot and, having thus protected his rights to the vein, tries to sell out to some practical miner. When he has sold his claims the prospector starts off again, hunting for other mines, and the miner begins to dig out and work the vein.

Father never spent time prospecting, for he was too busy with other interests. The prospectors were usually men who loved to wander, and didn't care much for hard work. Running a mine was the hardest kind of work, with all sorts of obstacles to overcome. Thus it turned out that prospectors seldom become prac-

by quartz, where the earth had been cleared away.

“She slants about like this,” said the prospector, tracing an oblique line with his finger, “and if this vein runs out, which I half suspect it may after a time, though after a mighty good profit, mind you, there is another one below it which is bigger and better.”

“Yes, James, those down below are always bigger and better,” Father replied with a smile.

“Well, have your joke, but look here.” The prospector led Father to a spot a little down the slope.

“You can see just how the cracks and seams run in here. That’s a silver vein right there, and a big one. Why, I’d sink a shaft there, even if the silver didn’t outcrop yonder at all, but that outcropping ore is right in your hand to pay you a good profit while you are working down.”

“Well, James,” replied Father, “I won’t deny that you have found some good indications, anyway. I’ll get Mr. Linder-

man to come up here and have a look at it, if you'll promise to hold it open for me at the offer you made yesterday."

So we left the strange black rocks, and the wild gulch, and turned back down the trail.

"Oh, Mother," I cried, when we were safe home again at last, "it is the most beautiful spot, away up where you can see for miles and miles down the valley, and almost out to the plains. There are great pine-trees and birds and flowers. Make Father buy that mine; it will be wonderful."

"I guess we will leave that to Father," she said with a smile.

So we watched and waited, while Father went back up the mountains again with Mr. Linderman, to examine the mine and the ledges all about it.

Mr. Linderman was a Dutch prospector and mining engineer, who had been very successful in locating good mines. He knew every nook and corner of the Colorado hills, and could tell very surely

whether a vein was going to pay, and how it would run, if you gave him the location of a prospect and told him how the ledges lay.

“Yes,” he had agreed, when Father asked him about this new vein, “there are goot mines down below there, and goot mines round the other side of der slope, so eef the veins run as you say, vell den already you haf a preddy goot mine.”

Old Mr Linderman had a great passion for rubies, and a great love for collie dogs. The rubies he picked up here and there, having them cut and polished in various ways, till he had gathered a famous collection. The dogs he bred, and trained to obey his voice almost like obedient children.

At last Father came back, and I knew from the way he walked that it was all decided. He had agreed to take over the mine and begin working it at once.

“Now what do you think, Mother?” I cried. “We are going to own a silver mine, and be little millionaires.”

Mother smiled.

“Perhaps we may be broke if the vein runs to nothing,” laughed Father, “but we’ll take a chance, anyway, and see what we get.”

“Now we must name it,” I returned. “I must think of a good name.”

“You’re too late, Princess. James Brewster named it when he staked his claims.”

“Oh, did he, what did he call it?”

“The Gold King.”

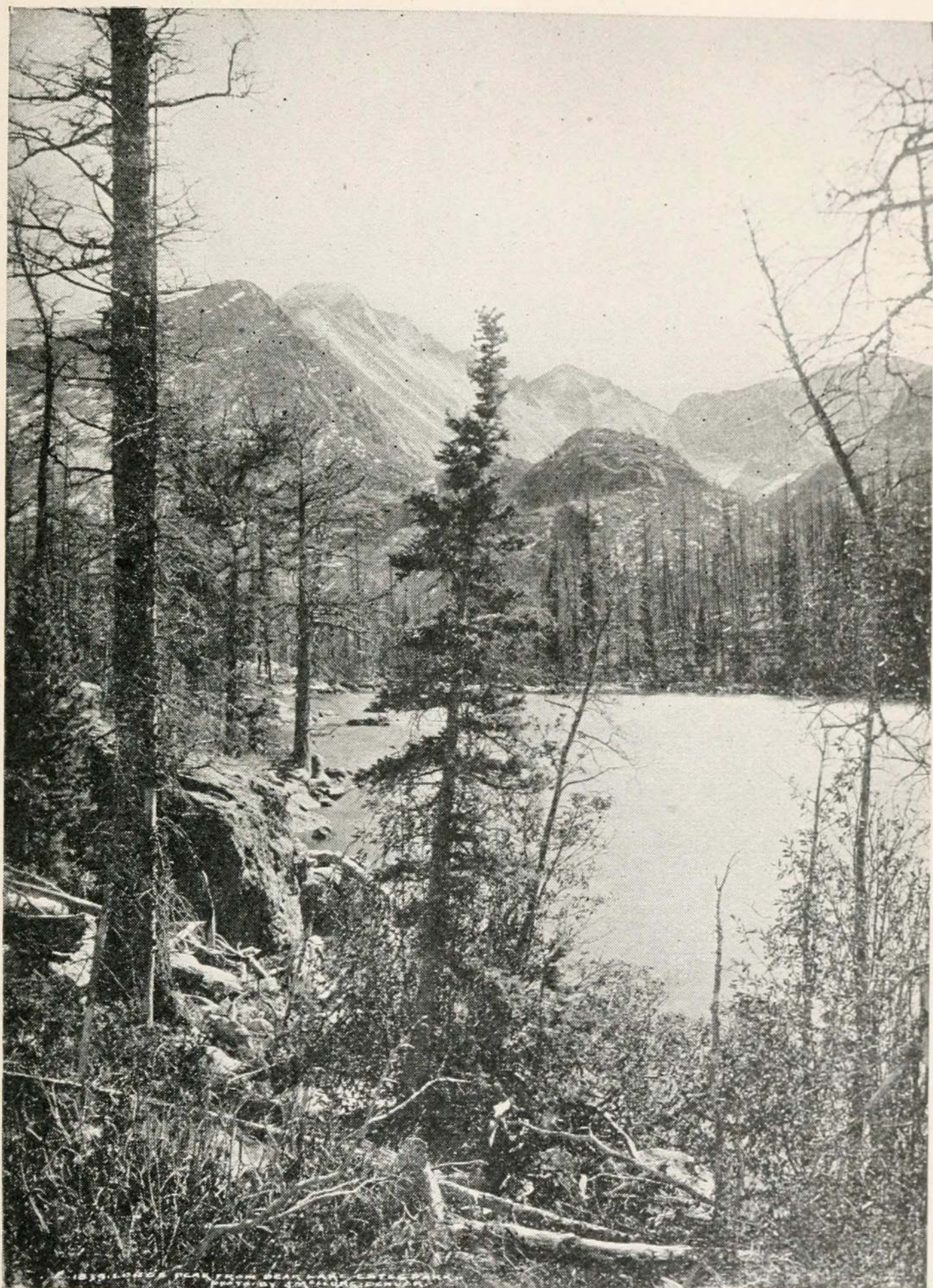
Mother looked up quickly.

“That’s a queer name for a silver mine,” she said, “why did he name it The Gold King?”

“You can search me,” replied Father. “I haven’t the secret, but I suppose he had to give it a name right away, and ‘The Gold King’ sounded grand to him.”

“I like it, too,” I put in. “It sounds just like a millionaire.”

“I’m glad of it,” he replied, as he went in to look over his papers, “for that is the way the claim is made and, though there is no gold up there, we will all call it **THE GOLD KING.**”



HILLS THAT ARE NOT ETERNAL

The sharp, even slope of these mountains shows that sun, rain, snow, and frost are rapidly breaking them down. This will go on till the forest can grow over them and hold the soil in place.

CHAPTER VI

JACKANAPES CASTLE

WHEN it was decided to begin work on the mine I was hardly able to sleep until Father had finally agreed that I should go up and stay through the summer and early fall.

That was so exciting that I could hardly sleep then, I was so eager to start. How soon could he begin? When could we move up? I pestered poor Father with a thousand questions.

“Well, Lady Love, we can’t start tomorrow,” he said. “First I must find a few trustworthy men. Then we must build a camp. You wouldn’t care to sleep under a tree, you know.”

I was not so sure about that, but agreed to wait as patiently as I could, while Father was getting the camp ready.

Father was not one to let grass grow under his feet when he made up his mind. In a few days he had two or three men, and was already starting on the camps.

As soon as I knew that the bunk camp for the men, and the cooking shanty were nearly done, I begged to go up and sleep in the cooking shanty, while they were building our cabin. I would help cook. I would bring wood for the fire. I could pound nails. Oh, yes, I would be a wonderful help.

Father laughed a bit and said he was afraid I would not enjoy it so much as I thought I should, but he loved to have me near him, so at last he consented, and I packed up my things.

I was even happier up there on the mountain than I had expected. The men were great boyish fellows who were glad to have a child around, for they were lonely now and then, just as Father was, and they were good to me.

There was no cook yet, so I helped fry bacon and potatoes, and washed the tin

dishes. Then, during the long afternoons, I could wander up the mountains and play about on the dry turf under the great pine trees.

The magpies would come all about when I sat beneath the pines, making great bunches of the fairest columbines, and peer down at me, chattering and whistling. These birds are much like the blue jays we see so much in the east, but in color they are black and white. They have very long tails. By nature they are noisy, thievish, and curious.

I have been in a canyon in Colorado where these feathered rascals were so many and screamed so loud that we had to yell to make ourselves heard. One would hardly believe that little birds could keep up such an awful racket. They whistled and chattered and screeched. Each one tried to make a little more noise than his neighbor. I should certainly go crazy if I lived in that canyon long.

But here in the mountains they were good companions, and I was always glad

to see them flying over my head and telling each other about this strange child they had never seen before.



“Well, Lady Love,” said Father one morning, after I had been up there a short time, “we will start to build the palace for the fairy queen today, and it must be a queenly mansion, with a real window, and a door on hinges, to say nothing of plastering up all the chinks.”

So after breakfast I hurried to get all cleared away, and ran out to watch the men.

First they cleared a level spot, where

the cabin should start. This was right on the hillside, so we could look all down the valley and far off, over hills and gulches, and ridges and little plateaus, till the high land ran down to meet the level plains.

Next Father picked out two big pines. These were quickly felled and trimmed. Then the men took adzes and a broad axe and made them smooth and even. The large logs were next cut with a saw, two lengths about thirty feet, and two about twenty feet.

At the ends of these logs deep notches were made. Then the long logs were rolled into place on the level spot already prepared, about twenty feet apart, with the notches uppermost. The shorter logs which were notched on both sides, near the end, then fitted into the notches in the long logs, when laid across them, so they all four rested evenly on the ground with their upper sides level.

Now four more logs were prepared, a little smaller, but just as long. These

were notched and laid upon the first four.

The next day they cut tall, straight young spruce trees, where they grew close together, and trimmed them for the ridgepole and rafters. These were quickly put in place and made secure, so all was ready for the roof.

“When will you get the shingles?” I asked, as they put away the tools, for I had not seen any shingles come up from Boulder.

“We’ll make them. This will be a real home-made house, Lady Love,” replied Father.

So the next morning the men sawed out some pieces of straight pine, free from knots. This they split down in pieces just about right for shingles.

While two were doing this, others were laying the floor inside with clean smooth boards, brought up on the heavy mountain teams from Nederland.

How fast the cabin grew! It seemed really like a fairy palace. It almost flew

together. That night the roof was on, and the next day they worked on the doors and window-casings.

“If you really want to help to get this palace done,” said Father, as the sun grew hot, “you might go down to the gulch and get us a pail of fresh water.”

“All right, I’ll get two pails,” I replied, full of ambition. I ran to get them.

“Whoa there, little dynamite. Just one pail at a time, and not too full, either,” called Father. “Remember now, go slow coming up, and stop if you get faint.”

“Oh, yes,” I cried, as I ran off, “I will.”

But I was excited, and not used to the hills then, so I filled my pail nearly full, down there where the mountain stream dashed through the narrow, rocky gulch.

It was not far below the cabin, but the climb was very steep and rocky. Up I started with my water, whistling back at a magpie that was piping overhead. The sky was so blue, the breeze so fresh in the cool shade, who wouldn’t step up briskly?

Suddenly I began to feel queer. There was a buzzing in my head, a ringing in my ears. My knees grew weak. I set down the pail. Then I sat down myself. I was gasping for breath.

“O dear! Our water department has broken down.” I could hear Father’s voice dimly. I heard his boots crunch on the loose rocks. He was coming to help me. How angry I was. I struggled to breathe more deeply, and get on my feet.

Just as Father arrived I stood up, still rather dizzy, and grabbed the pail.

“Don’t need my help, eh?” Father raised one eyebrow and looked at me with a sober face.

“No, of course not, I was just resting. Didn’t you tell me to?”

“Yes, of course, of course.” So Father went on ahead, very slowly. As I could not pass him, I had to go very slowly too. Gradually my head grew clear, and my strength came back. When I set down the pail in the shade of the cabin I was feeling all right again.

"Thanks," said Father, as the men came to get a drink. "That pail was too full, Lady Love. Don't bring so much again, it might break the handle."

That is all he said then, but one day, later on, he explained why people have to go slowly in the mountains.

"You see, Princess," he said, "the air up here is so rare that it doesn't give us enough oxygen to fill our lungs.

"The higher up you go in these hills the less oxygen you get to breathe, and the harder it is for your lungs to keep you going. We live two miles above the sea."

"So that is why the mountaineers move so slowly, and just walk along?"

"Yes, that is the reason; but you will find out, some day, Lady Love, that those men walk along, and walk along, and walk along. At the end of the longest day they are still walking right along, with many miles behind them. Learn from these men. Don't try to do too much at once, and you can get just

as much done at the end of the day, even if the air does lack oxygen.”

After we had all tried the water, Father held up a cup and looked at it with care. He tasted it again. Then he passed it to Ed Sampson, one of the men he had known a long time.

“What do you think of it, Ed?” he asked.

Ed tasted it.

“It’s rather sweet, not very good for little ladies to be drinking.”

“Why not?” I asked. “It tastes delicious.” The water in the stream was sparkling clear, as it dashed down the mountain.

“Arsenic,” replied Ed, tasting the water again.

“Arsenic? What is arsenic?” I looked up at Father.

“Poison,” said Father. “Arsenic is in the rocks all about in these hills. Almost all the water becomes tainted.”

“Will it kill me?” I had taken a big drink down at the gulch.

“No, no, don’t be afraid. I wouldn’t let you take any thing so bad as that. It didn’t show quite so much arsenic before, but this has a good deal today.”

The other men nodded, and tasted it again. They all agreed that it was more tainted today.

“I suppose we had better be taking a chance on a well, boys,” said Father. “This is hardly safe to use right along.”

“That’s the right idea,” replied Ed Sampson. “It will probably get stronger as the dry weather comes along. My stomach won’t stand any too much of that stuff.”

“Why, what will it do?” I asked, still shivering a little to think that arsenic was poison.

“It gradually disturbs your stomach, Lady Love,” said Father. “In some springs there is enough to kill you before long, and it is not wise to drink water like this you brought up, for many days. Your food would not digest well, and you

would have a complexion so clear that we could see right through your skin."

"Let her go!" said Ed, as he went back to his work, "we'll get started on the well right away. It won't take very long to sink that. Perhaps we'll find some better water."

"Is all this lovely, clear water poisoned?" I asked. "Are all the springs and brooks poisoned with this arsenic?"

"Not all, dearie," said Father, "but most of the water up here in the silver region carries arsenic. Now and then a spring of clear water is found. The Indians knew where they were, but they said nothing and did their best to hide them."

"Why? Did they need all the water?"

"No, but they love to keep secrets, and they hated to see white miners working into their hunting grounds, so they made it just as hard for them as they could. Good water back here in the hills is wanted more than all beside. If they could hide the pure springs they

knew they were helping to keep the white people away."

While Father was talking I heard the sound of voices, men yelling at horses, and then the clash of hoofs and rattle of wheels. I ran to the edge of the gulch and saw the mountain team coming up. On the wagon was a stove. Behind that I could see the parts of a store bed.

"O goody!" I cried. "Now we can sleep here tonight."

"Yes, this will be Jackanapes Castle tonight," laughed Father, "all done, and brown on both sides."

The men brought in the stove and stove-pipe, and in ten minutes they had set it up near the door, put the bed together in the corner away from the window, and were out again, off to the cook-house for the coffee Father always had ready.

No queen in her palace ever had such delight in her golden couches, as I had in making up my new bed. In the bundle the men laid beside it were soft

gray blankets, and a spread with little pink roses nestled in green leaves. We never bothered with sheets up there on the mountains, not even in Jackanapes palaces.

For the soft feather pillow, I had a checkered blue and white pillow slip. When I had smoothed out the spread and laid the blue checkered pillow up against the shiny white bars of the bedstead, it was so cozy that I looked out at the sun to see how long it would be before bedtime. For once in his life Father wouldn't have to say, "Come, Nita, don't make me speak again."

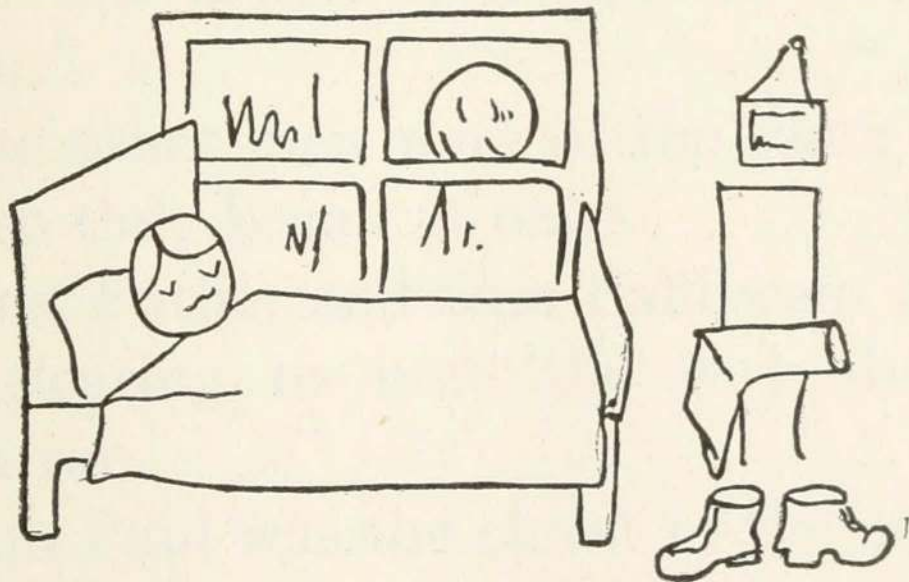
If it wasn't time for bed, it was nearly time for chuck, and while Father was down with the men I put some shavings and chips in the stove and got the fuel all ready to light. I longed to light it myself, but Father had forbidden me to light a match. If I did he would send me home, the most terrible punishment I could imagine.

"Later on, when we get things cleared

up, Lady Love," he explained, "I shall be glad to have you light the fire, but with all this dry litter around, a little spark might burn us out and half the country besides."

All afternoon, as I helped the men put up the shelves and get in the window frames I kept looking at my wonderful bed; and when supper was over and things were cleared away, I began to lay back the coverlet and smooth the pillow.

"Why little Princess, it can't be that you won't have to be driven to bed



tonight." Father smiled in a sly way as I looked up.

"Well, you see I am quite sleepy, and

I'll have lots to do in the morning." I answered.

So I crept into my wonderful bed a half-hour early that night, and felt like a really truly princess, as I nestled down under the soft warm blankets.

CHAPTER VII

THE WELL

"I guess we have the castle far enough along to shelter our Princess," said Father, as the men reported for work next morning. "What do you say to making a start on the well today?"

"That suits me," replied Ed Sampson. "The less arsenic I drink, the better I like it."

The other men were of the same opinion, so they began at once.

First Father and Sam Paul went about the clearing to note the way the big clefts ran.

Sam Paul was the oldest of the miners. His hair had begun to turn gray, and he was a little stiff from rheumatism, but he knew the rocks and ore bodies like a professor, and any miner would be glad

to have him in camp for his knowledge and experience.

“I guess we’ve got to go down some to get decent water,” said Sam Paul, after they had looked about a little.

“What do you think of those veins over there?” asked Father, pointing to a spot where a ledge showed deep cracks.

“I don’t like it. I don’t like it a cent’s worth.” Sam Paul shook his head. “You can get water, but that rock looks to be full of arsenic.”

“Perhaps you are right. We want pure water if we can get it.”

They climbed about a little, and finally Father stopped on a spot quite near the camp.

“Well, Sam,” he said, “if we have got to go down a good bit, then we might as well have our water right at hand. If we dig here we shall fall shy of that bad water, anyway.”

Sam Paul squinted round at the rocks. “That’s good judgment, good judgment. Well, boys, let’s get at her.”

Old Sam took a pick and began digging. The others brought shovels and drills, and the earth and stones soon began to pile up all about the selected spot.

As I watch the men in towns and cities I wonder how they can ever complete any labor at all. They move so slowly, they lean on their tools, they light their pipes, they stop to discuss some important subject.

Then my mind goes back to that group about the well-hole. How their picks and shovels flew! Their great muscles rose and fell. Each took pride in his strength, and what he could accomplish.

I do not mean that these men never loafed. Indeed they did, but when they did loaf it was clear, downright loafing, and nothing else. All people need watching, even you and I, to keep up to high endeavors, and so did our miners need watching. But when they worked they put their strength to it and got big results.

What is more worth while than honest

labor? The pride in a good day's work, well done, makes a man bigger and better than he was before. His soul expands; he becomes generous, upright, courageous.

What dwarfs a man so quickly as the habit of leaning on his labor? How quickly work performed in a mean and grudging spirit grows flat and stale to the one who labors thus. Without a will to do our best there is no joy or satisfaction in work. If there is no joy in work, there is no joy in life, for work is the great purpose of life itself.

No, our miners never pattered round, if they struck a blow it was with all their might; if they started digging, the dirt flew. No leaner could stay long in such a group. Just as a stage-driver will soon cast off a horse that sags back in harness, so these men quickly detected the leaner, and he started on his way again with Dutch blessings in his pack.

While the men were digging that well I couldn't leave the spot. With pick and shovel they went down about five

feet. Then Sam Paul's pick struck a large rock.

"Huh," he grunted. "Get out your drills, Smithy, that's a big one."

So the earth was cleared away and the drills were brought over from the forge. Then Smithy squatted on his heels while Ed Sampson took his big doublejack.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The great hammer struck square on the head of the drill. After each blow from the doublejack Smithy would turn the drill a little, so it would cut in a new spot.

At first I trembled as the blow came down. Suppose Ed Sampson should miss the drill. Smithy's hands were holding the drill right in the path of the hammer. Smoking his little black pipe, as calm as a May morning, he never even winked.

"Get us a bucket of water, will you Princess?" asked Ed, after the drill had eaten in an inch or so. I hurried down to the gulch and scooped up a pail nearly full. It was hard to hold back and go slow, but a tingling in my ears soon

warned me. I rested a moment and then went up over the rocks at a steady pace.

With the water they washed out the dust from the hole, and then started again. Before long the hole had sunk more than a foot into the rock.

“Get us a half-stick of dynamite, Sam, and a yard or so of fuse,” said Ed, as they laid by the drill and hammer.

Sam Paul brought the dynamite and a little brass cap like a cartridge. He pushed the fuse into the cap, bit it to keep it on, then pushed the cap into the soft dynamite, which seemed about like putty. The dynamite, with the fuse and cap in it, was now pushed down into the hole with a wooden stick, and a little dirt was placed on top.

“Hooray for the Fourth of July!” cried Ed Sampson. “Stand back there, Princess. Roll a couple of logs over her boys. That’s the stuff.”

He lit a match and held it to the end of the fuse. Then he climbed out of the hole, and pushed the logs into place, walk-

ing quietly over to the tree where we stood. I did wish he would hurry, for the smoke was rising from the fuse.

But there was plenty of time. It seemed a very long wait before the blast went off.

Boom! There was a dull explosion. The logs lifted a foot or two, and a brown smoke rose above the hole. We went back, pushed aside the logs, and there was a mass of fragments where the great rock had been.

So it went on all day. They would come to a ledge or a big rock, clear away the earth, drill down, put in a charge of dynamite and, boom! the rock would burst into fragments. By night the hole was so deep the men had to use a ladder, made from saplings, to climb out.

The next day they went at it again, and by night they had gone down so far that I was afraid to go near the edge for fear of falling in.

“We’ll strike water tomorrow, sure,” said Sam Paul, as they washed up for

supper the third day. "She's getting pretty damp now."

Early in the morning they sharpened their drills and rigged the big bucket to pull up the dirt. For this they had taken three strong trees, about five inches through, tied them together at one end, with wire rope, and stood them up over the hole. This tripod was very strong and steady.

A pulley with a hook was hung to the wire rope, and the rope that lifted the bucket ran through the pulley.

I had great fun all day, bringing water, helping to haul up the bucket and getting dynamite and fuse from the tool-box.

"Do you want some more water?" I called down in the afternoon, when they were drilling for a blast.

"No, not a bit," came up from Ed Sampson. "You just let down the bucket."

Sam Paul was putting a new point to a drill, so I pulled on the bucket-rope with all my strength. It rose partly from

the ground and scraped along the mouth of the hole. As it swung out it knocked off a few small stones from the edge.

“Wow! Injuns! help!” The men yelled, as the stones rattled down on them.

I tried to explain, but it took all my strength to hold on to the heavy bucket, and keep that from falling on them also.

“Whoa, far enough,” they called. I fastened the rope and looked down. The water was already gathering and they were bailing it out with the tin dipper.

“Give a yell for Sam Paul, now Princess,” called Ed. Don’t you try to lift it. You’ll kill us all.”

So together we hauled it up. While Sam lifted, I guided the bucket so it swung clear from the loose stones. It was the first water, muddy and brown, but I had to run full tilt after Father to make him come to see it.

“We are right in the seam now.” said Ed, as they climbed out for supper. “A few more blasts will bring it right along.” Every one was happy. It is one thing

to dig a well, and another thing to get water enough to pay for the trouble.

The next morning there was a foot or so of water in the hole, and several times the bucket was filled in bailing it out.

Great fragments of black wet rock came up all morning, with a bucket of water now and then in between.

“Just about one more will finish it, I guess,” said Ed Sampson to Father, as he started down, after chuck.

“I’ll drill her good and deep. Then we’ll put in a good big charge and make her spout like a whale.”

And so he did. After the dull sound of the explosion we all looked down, and could see the water gathering round the rock fragments far below.

“That’s water enough for anyone. It’s good water, too, I’ll bet a Mexican quarter,” said Sam Paul with a grin of satisfaction.

“Well, it is water, anyway,” replied Father, “and it came just when you said it would. If it turns out pure water I’ll give you a dozen Mexican quarters.”

The next job was to stone up all round inside the well. Father went right down and looked after this himself. He saw that every stone was placed just so.

“These men are miners, not stone-masons,” he explained to me. “If a big stone washes out, the whole well may fall in after it.”

Rapidly the circle of stones rose, and by the end of the week the top boards were on, the bucket rope was slung in place, with a new bucket at the end, and all was finished.

“By tomorrow we can clean her out and test her,” declared Sam Paul.

Even Father, who was always so cool and unconcerned, seemed eager to discover the quality of our new well.

“It certainly gives enough water,” he said, as we looked down the next morning. “It must be two or three feet deep.”

“How does all that water get into the well, through the solid rock?” I asked, for I had been wondering about that ever since I saw them blasting. The rocks

round about were as dry as potato chips.

“If the rocks were solid there would be no water down below, Lady Love. You will remember that we looked about carefully at the clefts and seams in the mountain. Sam Paul could tell almost to a yard where he would strike the water.”

“You see, Princess,” Sam Paul broke in, proud of his success, “the mountain is all full of cracks. Some of them run up and down a long, long way. When it rains or snows the water runs down into these cracks, and works its way slowly down the hill. To get a well all you have to do is to find out about where these cracks lie, and dig down to them.”

“Oh, I see. Then you must have found a big one,” I replied.

“Yes, a very good one,” said Father. “Sometimes, you know, these cracks come to the surface, and then you have a little brook or a spring.”

“Don’t they always come to the surface?”

“No, some mountains are bone-dry all over. The cracks lie so that the rain and

snow-water run down to the foot beneath the surface all the way."

"Now boys," Father went on, "let's bail her out and see how she tastes."

So they went to work. Up and down went the bucket, and soon a little river of water, just tinged with the gray rock and soil, was running into the gulch. At last it was down so low that only a little came up each time.

"Now let her stand for a while, and she ought to run clear enough to test," said Sam Paul.

Before dinner all gathered round to taste the water from the new well. It was a moment of great importance. If the water in the well should prove pure we should be supplied with that vital part of life right at our door.

This was important, not only to us, but to all those who worked in that district or who travelled through. There would be water enough for all. In a land where the summer sun was burning hot, and water free from poison greatly

needed, this would be a widespread blessing.

But if this water proved to be like that in the gulch, poisoned with arsenic, then we should have to bring our drinking-water up the steep trail, a constant care and bother.

“Let her go,” cried Sam Paul, as Father loosened the handle and lowered the bucket. In a moment it came up again, filled with water, almost clear, with just a trace of milky color from the dust that had not quite run off.

Father filled his big dipper, and Sam Paul a tin cup. I had a glass of my own, while Ed Sampson prepared to drink from the bucket.

“Here’s how, boys,” said Father, very solemn, and they all took a little drink.

Father looked over at Sam Paul, who spit out some of the water. Then he tasted again.

“Well,” he said, “she hasn’t cleared yet.” But it was plain that he was disappointed.

I tasted my sample. It had a sweetish flavor, though not so strong as in the water from the gulch.

"After all," said Father, "we need it here in camp, even if it doesn't run quite pure. We can use it without great harm if it shows no more arsenic than this."

"Oh, she'll run pure. That seam runs in good clear rock. I'll bet a Mexican quarter she'll run pure in a day or so." Sam Paul would not give up his hope.

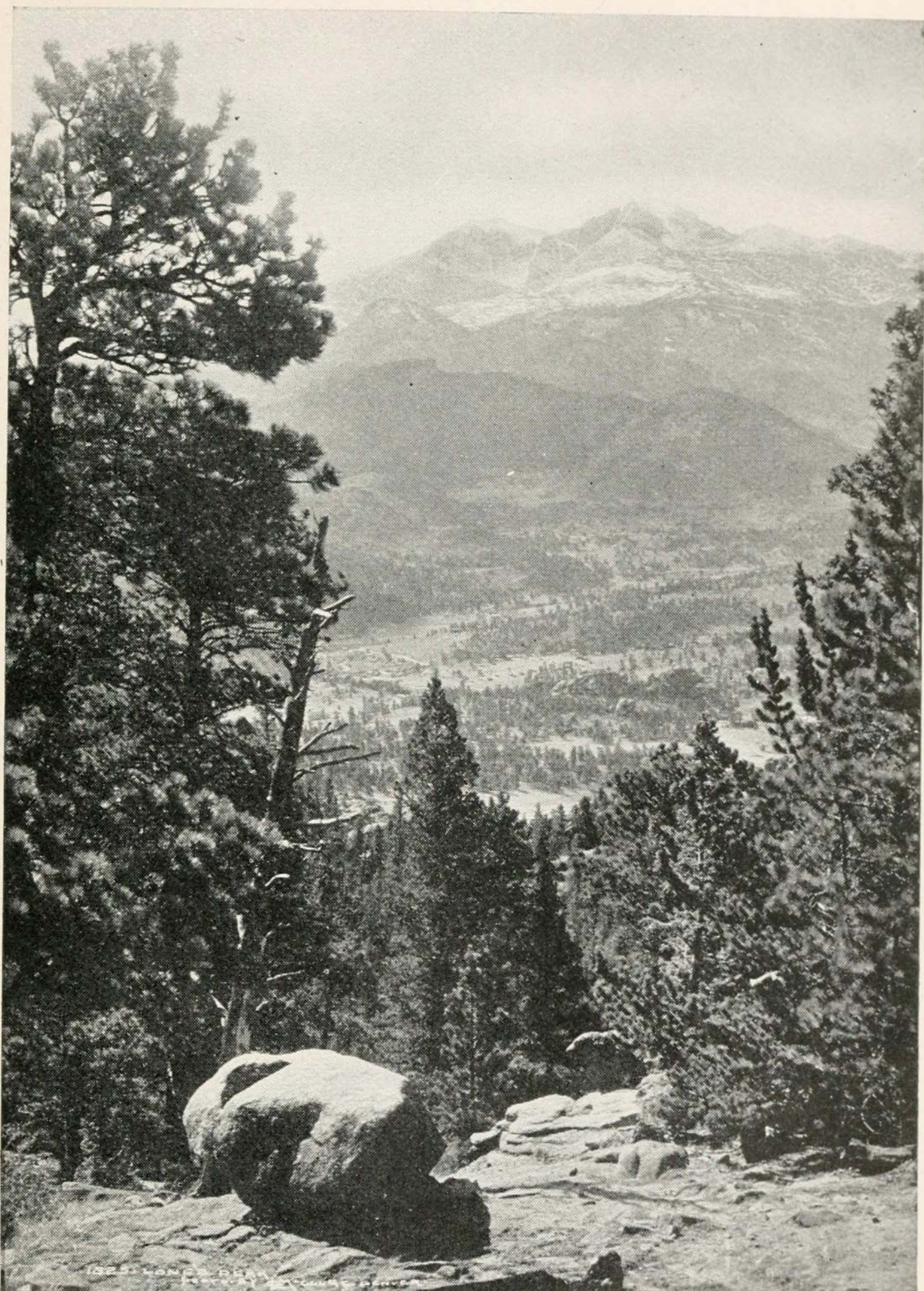
Father shook his head, but for several days Sam came often to the well. He would lower the bucket, fill it with care, pull it up, take a dipperful, squint at it with one eye closed, and drink it slowly.

Then he would shuffle off muttering, "She ain't run pure yet, not yet; but she will, I'll bet she will."

In spite of all his promises she never did run pure. The water, after a week or two, was so sparkling clear and cold that it seemed like purity itself, but there was always that little flavor which warned

us not to depend too long on this source of supply.

Fortunately the village was near enough for a change to pure water every now and then, before we had suffered great harm, but we always sighed when we noticed the sweet taste, and wished that Sam Paul had won his bet.



GLACIAL BOULDER

Once this valley was filled with an immense glacier. As it moved slowly along it gathered up loose objects on the surface. When it melted it left great boulders perched in many surprising places.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRYSANTHEMUM

“TELL me, Lady Love,” said Father, one day when the well was done, the cabin finished, and they were hard at work on the shaft of the mine, “do you think you will like it up here as well as you expected?”

“Oh, better than I thought. It is the loveliest place in the whole world.”

“That’s the way to talk. It is surely good to have a little pal around. Is there anything you want that you haven’t got here?”

I thought a minute. “Well, if you could find a kitten that would play with me, and drive away those horrid rats, I should like it. A great big rat came right into the room yesterday, where I was washing dishes.”

“That’s a good idea. I know where I can get a cat, I’m sure, down in Nederland. I’ll bargain for it the next trip down. She won’t starve to death about here, with all these rats to hunt. You ought to have some pets to fool round with, to keep your mind off your troubles.”

Father went off beyond the ledge to prospect a little, and I went back into the cabin to wash out the dish-towels and tidy up. The towels were hung in the bright sunshine on a line at the end of the cabin, where they would dry almost as soon as they were hung out.

The Colorado air is marvelous for drying clothes. A woman with a large wash may begin to take in small towels and napkins as soon as the last piece is on the line.

I remember one day, down in Boulder, I was playing near a creek, a half-mile from home. Stepping on a loose stone at the edge, I knocked it in, and went in after it kersplash!

How cold and wet and frightened I was!

By good luck I managed to pull myself out; and started for home, shivering and dripping. Before I got there my clothes were dry; and the only water left was a little in my shoes.

Except for the wrinkles in my dress, no one would have suspected that I had just climbed like a half-drowned rat out of the creek.

If anyone told me this tale I am not sure I should believe that dry air and sunshine could evaporate water so fast, but as it happened to me I know you will believe it.

I was pouring a pail of water over the floor, to wash off the dry, fine dust that gathers on everything up there in the hills, when I heard a shout of laughter from the men down by the mine shanty.

I went to the door.

“Oh, Princess, look who’s came to call,” cried Ed Sampson slapping his knee, and laughing fit to burst.

I put my head out, to look where he pointed, and there was a little gray

burro, with a head as big as its body, quietly chewing up one of my clean towels.

I was mad as a sitting-hen, for I hated to be laughed at, and had no towels to feed pesky burros on. Grabbing a piece of stove wood, I rushed full tilt at the poor little beast, and struck him what seemed to me a terrible blow on the shoulder.

At this he turned and kicked up his heels, while the men roared with laughter.

“Don’t kill the poor feller, he’s starving,” cried Ed in the midst of his roars.

“I don’t care if he is starving, he can’t eat my towels,” I retorted, sorry that I had struck him so hard.

“Oh, he didn’t mean any harm,” put in Sam Paul, “just give him a little lunch, and he’ll adopt you for a mother.”

“I haven’t anything for him. What does he like anyway?” I asked.

“Eat? Oh, he’ll eat dish-towels, dish-pans, newspapers, old rags, suspenders, clothespins, rope, sofa cushions, and is

very fond of old boots. Look out there!"

I turned, to see the burro, in spite of my terrible stick, just reaching for another dish-towel.

I felt like pounding the little runt to jelly, but he looked so comical, with his great head wagging on his tiny body, and his ears, as big as cabbage-leaves, that I struck him a little blow, and then began to laugh with the rest.

"Give him a couple of newspapers; he'll be tickled to death," called Ed Sampson, when I had rescued the towels. "If you don't, he'll eat the clothesline, and have the cabin roof for dessert."

I didn't believe him, of course, but just for fun I got two old copies of the "Boulder County Miner," and held one out to the voracious beast.

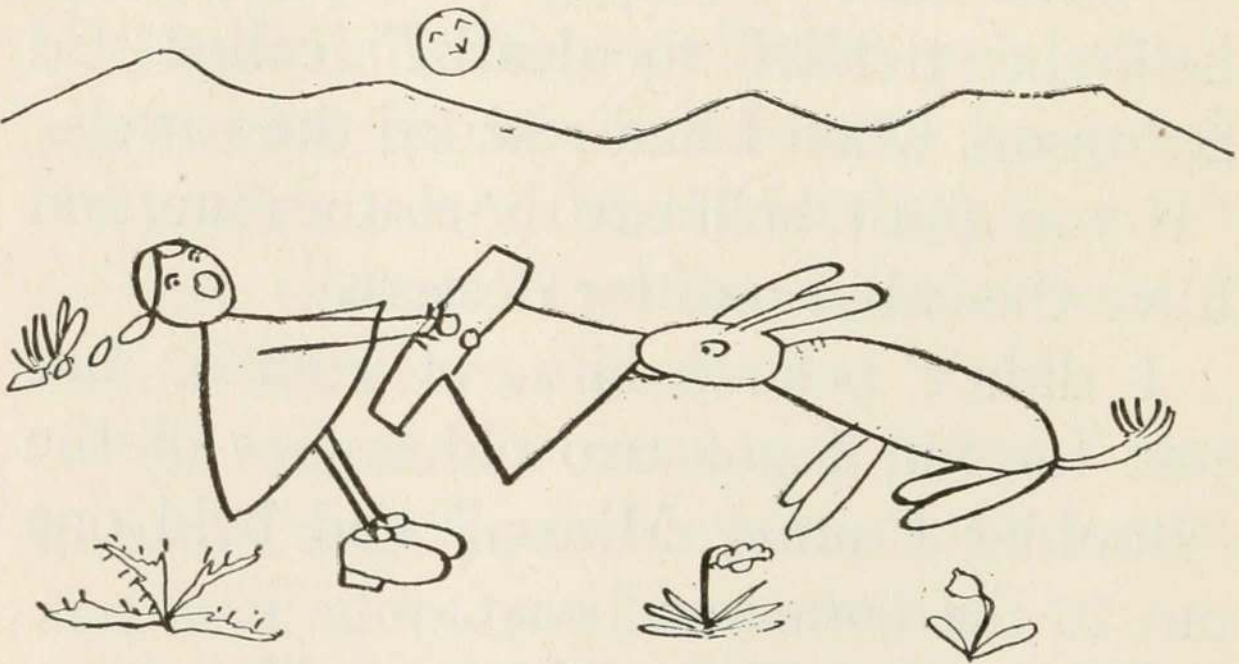
He smelled of it, laid back his ears a little, bared his teeth, and began on that paper. The more he tasted it the better he seemed to like it. My eyes must have fairly popped out with astonishment

when the last of that paper disappeared down his rough red throat, and he stuck out his dirty white muzzle for the next.

“Hooray for the burro! He knows a first-class newspaper when he tastes it,” shouted Sam Paul. “He’ll be a regular subscriber now.”

“You’d better go to work, and stop laughing at people,” I retorted.

To set the example I gathered up my towels and went in to finish washing the floor.



The dust we have to fight in the mountains is different from that in other places. It comes from the sliding, crumbling rock, and is white, heavy, and full of grit.

To wash the floor I poured on water. At first it ran about over the dust in a hundred little streams. Then I spread it about with the broom till the dust soaked up the water.

After this was done, another pail of water, well brushed about, would wash the dust away, down the cracks, and leave the floor white and clean.

In half an hour I went out again, to hang up the broom, and have some more fun with the burro, but the burro was gone, and so was the clothesline. Two wet, chewed ends showed where he had bitten the line off as high as he could reach.

Burros are queer little creatures, that look like donkeys, but are much smaller. They are often so small that a tall man can sit astride and have his feet touch the ground. Their woolly heads seem almost as big as their bodies, and their great ears wave about in all directions, giving them a most grotesque appearance.

All through the southwest you will find these little beasts trotting along the rough

trails, up the steepest mountains and down the sharpest slopes, with burdens on their backs so large that all you can see coming toward you is a great load, with a head and two waving ears.

Among all the people in these parts none depend so much on the burro as the prospectors and miners. The burro is the miner's best friend. His nimble feet carry him and his load safe and sure when even a mountaineer stops to consider his chances. All day long in the hot sun or cold blast, he will trot along before his master, patient and steady.

The burro can penetrate the rocky mountain regions, where fodder of all kinds is scarce, and pick up a good living from stuff that horses would never touch.

Yes, the burro is the champion eater of the world, I am sure of it. When Sam Paul told me all those impossible things he would eat I thought it was only a joke. I found out right then and there that it was no joke at all. Later I learned that he would eat, not only the list Sam men-

tioned, but many other articles no one ever thought of as food.

Behind mining camps, where the men throw tin cans and other refuse, I have seen burros browsing for hours at a time. I can hear now the clink, clank of the tins, as they pushed them about trying to nibble off the paper; for paper with flour paste on it is a special delicacy.

My memory brings the picture of a group of burros making a meal from Russian tumble-weed, with the greatest satisfaction to themselves and every one else, for the more tumble-weed is eaten the better the Colorado people like it.

Russian tumble-weed grows rapidly in the spring, and becomes a mass of leafless stalks and stems. In August the weed dries in the hot sun, comes loose from the ground, and begins to roll about in the wind. The masses grow bigger and bigger, until they are four or five feet high. These blow up against the fences, and then along comes another ball, which rolls up on the pile against the fence and over

into the next field, scattering its seeds as it rolls along.

The stems of Russian tumble-weed are as easy to chew as copper wire, and have spines at every little joint as sharp as needles. A starving cow will sometimes try to eat a few bunches of this. Even starving she usually gives it up as a bad job. But the burro will stand about and nibble tumble-weed as if it were the best of food. His wonderful jaws crush the stems, and the tough skin of his mouth protects him from the thorns.

My own particular burro, that took my clothesline by surprise, was a rough specimen. His face was a dirty white and his back was slate gray, shading to dull white on the sides. A piece was gone from one ear, and he gave, with his rough, tangled coat, a ragged and tattered appearance.

I began that morning an acquaintance with Chrysanthemum, as I christened the old pet, which lasted through several years. Sometimes he came to camp alone, and sometimes he would escort a

group of friends, no doubt with tales of the good lunches he picked up around camp.

Seeing my interest in the cute little rascal, the miners would tell me about his tribe.

"Queer critter, them burros," said Sam Paul. "You can put just so much on them, and no more. Every burro knows his own burden to a pound. If you put a pound more on, down he goes, and down he stays, till the extra pound is taken off.

"When you take the extra weight off he'll get up just as if nothing ever happened."

"Clever birds," put in Ed. Sampson. "They know that if they start with too much, the day's journey will last longer than their strength. With a fair load they will make a fair end to a long day, and be ready next morning for another, but if you try to pile on, that little burro just lies down and quits."

"You remember, Ed," asked Sam Paul, how we explained it to Windy Mc-

Clintock?" Sam chuckled, and poked Ed in the ribs.

"How was that?" I asked.

"Well, you see, Princess, Ed here was passing down by the forge in Nederland, and Windy was just starting out prospecting. He was about as green as a cat's eye, and had loaded up too heavy.

"His burro was down on his side and Windy made things worse by kicking the poor midget. You can't hurt a burro, but you can make him mighty mad.

" 'What's the matter Windy?' said Ed.

" 'Why, this pesky burro won't go. I paid three dollars for him, and now he just lies down and quits.'

" 'Oh,' says Ed, 'didn't you know that burros won't carry a red box. See that big red cracker-box? He'll never carry that!'

" 'Aw shucks, that aint much of a load,' says Windy. 'Hey there, get up.'

" 'Don't say hay to him,' says I. 'He'll shake his load off if he thinks there's hay around. He looks plumb starved.'

“ ‘Aw, gwan,’ says Windy, and he fetched Mister Burro another kick on the ham, but he never moved.

“Ed untied the ten-pound red cracker-box, and put it carefully behind a rock. Then he gave a hoist on the load, and up came Mister Burro, like a calf for clover, with his burden ten pounds lighter.

“ ‘Get along there now,’ says Ed, and the burro started out just like the very best little freighter in the world.

“ ‘Now Windy, you just tie this cracker-box on your back, and don’t ever expect a burro to carry any red stuff, for he won’t do it,’ says Ed, as he strapped on the box.

“I stood by, solemn as a deacon, and vowed Ed was correct.

“Now every time Windy McClintock gets a red box, he makes them do it up in brown paper. He vows his burro won’t carry a red box. They think he’s plumb crazy, but they have to do the boxes up just the same.”

My Chrysanthemum had probably be-

longed to a prospector, who left him loose in the hills, and had gone on to other fields of endeavor. He just visited round, but as I paid some attention to him, he spent a good deal of time at our camp.

The miners teased him, and were so rough that I threatened to take the firewood to them, but Chrysanthemum was absolutely hardened to the world's evils. He took it all as part of a day's life and soon returned for more of the same.

Once his appetite nearly brought on a sentence of death, which was voted by everyone but me. He had eaten my dill pickles, left outside on a shelf, and I forgave him. He had chewed the top of a boot, Father left out to dry by the door, and it had to be cut off several inches. For my sake he was once more forgiven. But his most deadly crime was never really pardoned.

Sears, Roebuck & Co. used to send a large catalog each year to camp, to tell us the latest styles and prices.

This was to us a great event. It was read over and studied by every mortal in camp. Those who could not read enjoyed it most of all, for they could look at the hundreds of pictures and tell the prices of anything that caught their eye.

It happened that I was up the gulch picking harebells one day when the postman came by. He had only this catalog, and, seeing no one about the cabin, he laid it on the piazza, and went on his way.

When I returned with a bunch of harebells, I saw Chrysanthemum standing by the piazza, switching his tail as if he were very happy. I approached. He was eating. I had left nothing about. We had learned to shut up all such objects long ago.

I hastened toward the house, wondering if the poor beggar could actually be eating the boards of the piazza; for Ed Sampson said he would some day.

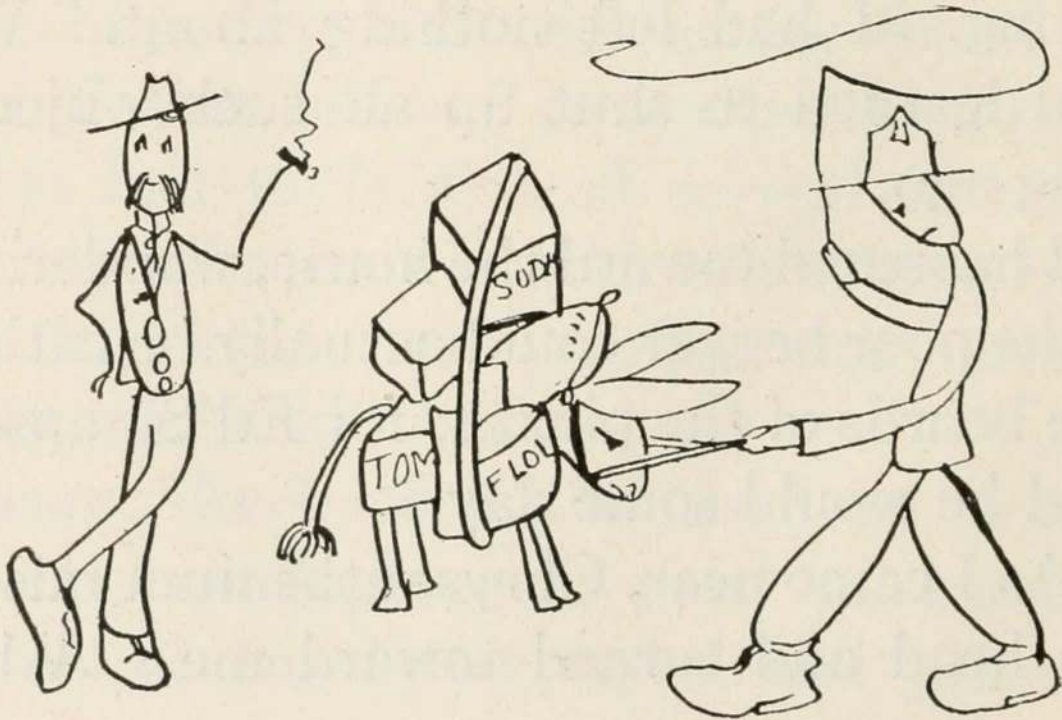
As I came near, Chrysanthemum raised his head and turned toward me. A bit

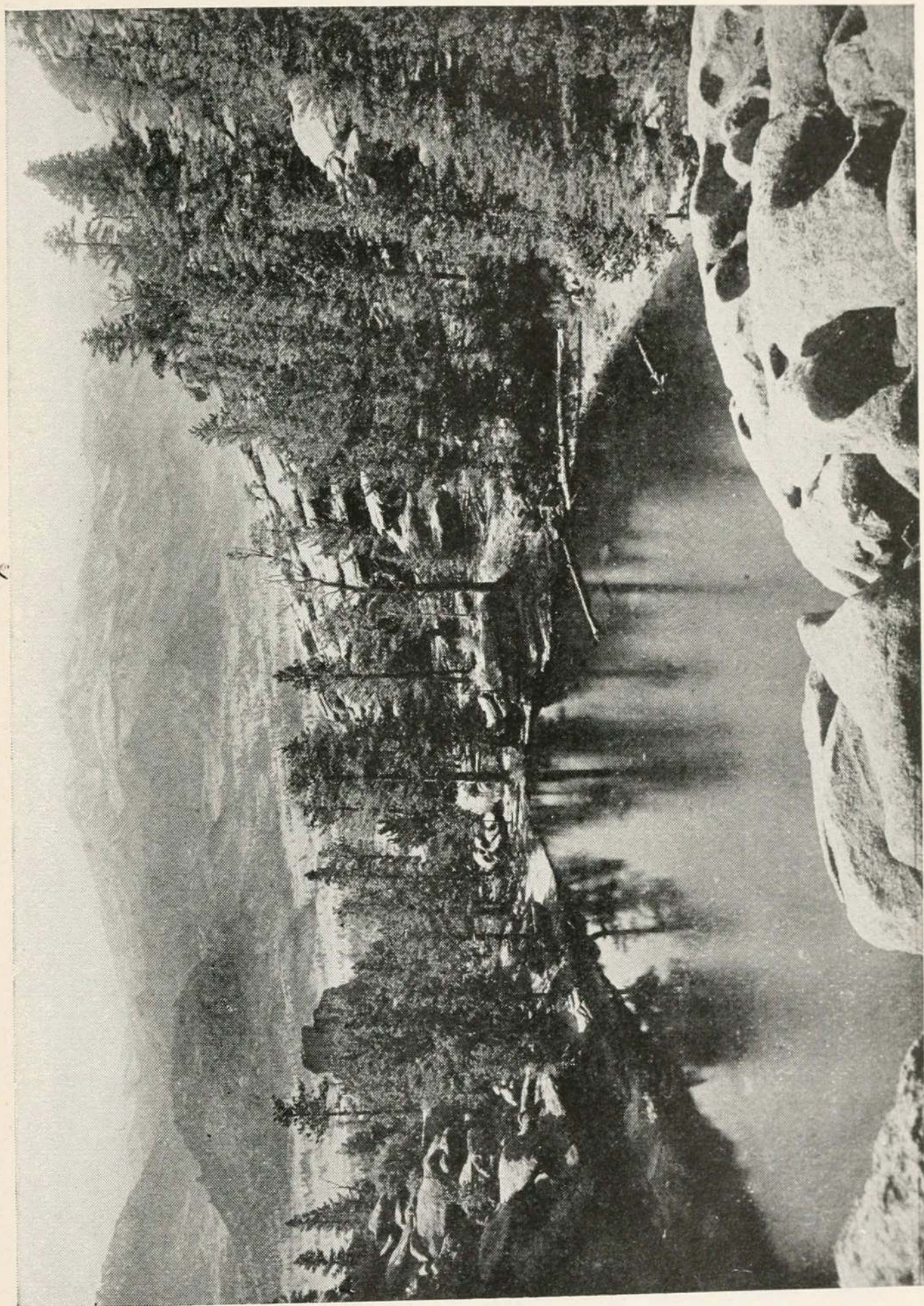
of paper hung from his lips. Before him on the piazza was a package.

In a second I had snatched the bundle away from his next bite. A single glance told me it was the long expected catalog, half eaten.

Poor burro felt the bitterness of sin that day, for I pursued him, with sticks and stones and hot words, down over the gulch and way across the first clearing.

It was lucky for him that I did. Had Chrysanthemum been present when the miners saw that catalog, a burro's hide would have hung drying in the shade of the mine shed, for sale to any prospector, for moccasins or leggings.





GLACIAL LAKE AND SCoured ROCK

The glacier often dropped its burden so as to leave irregular hollows which became lovely lakes. The potholes in the foreground were drilled by streams which fell down cracks in the ice, grinding the debris round and round in these spots.

CHAPTER IX

MINER'S LUCK

“VELL, how vas the leetle question-box today? A great many things she wants to know, eh?”

Mr. Linderman picked me up in his great hands and held me way above his head. Big as I was, I weighed little to him.

Mr. Linderman had come up to look over the mine, and see how the ore was coming out. The first work had been done, and Father was anxious to know if Mr. Linderman thought well of the vein they had uncovered.

“Oh, yes,” I replied, “I want to know many things.” I was always glad of a chance to ask him questions, because he was so kind, and he spoke with a quaint accent.

“Well, den, ve must go see how she

comes along. Efry mine is a hole in the ground, but efry hole in the ground is not a mine, na, na."

We all laughed as Father led the way to our hole in the ground, which we hoped would be a mine.

The shaft had already been well started, slanting down into the bowels of the mountains. It was almost square, with a rounding hollow at one side, where the ladders went down, out of the way of the bucket.

As the shaft was slanting, the bucket, which brought up the ore, slid on the heavy timber that was built in on all sides as the shaft went down.

Near the mouth of the shaft the ore was piled up in a heap of black jagged fragments.

Mr. Linderman lifted a chunk, and the rubies on his hand flashed in strange contrast to the dull, dark ore.

He squinted at the specimen, turning it this way and that, hefting it and noticing the weight.

“Goot,” he said at last. “She grows petter when she grows older, as all mines and maidens should do.

“Vat you tink?” he added, poking me with his finger, as he let the ore fall with a thud.

While we stood there a fresh load of ore was hauled up. Mr. Linderman watched it carefully as it was turned out. He took a piece and cracked it with a small hammer he carried in his pocket.

“Petter and petter!” he exclaimed, looking quickly at the fresh ore.

“This is a hole with a goot mine at der pottom. It vill turn out all right, Mee-ster Pettipone, I am quite satisfied.”

Father smiled, and looked very happy.

“I thought it would pay to try it anyway,” he replied. “James Brewster said this vein might run out after a while, but he is sure we will strike another down below it.”

“Ve spoke of that, yes.” Mr. Linderman looked about, and walked over toward the gulch. “Vat we can see we can

see. Vat we can guess we can guess. I promise noddings, you haf a goot vein now which would pay any man to work. Ven that is ended, I guess der same as Brewster. It is my pest guess you will find more veins pelow.

“Vat you tink?” he turned quickly, with a wink, and poked me in the ribs.

“I think it is just wonderful!” I replied. “And we shall all be rich.”

Father laughed.

“I guess not, Lady Love. If we can make a living we shall be lucky.”

“Vell, some peobles get rich by silver mines,” declared Mr. Linderman. He wagged his head solemnly, making his long white beard wave in the air.

“Yes, but mostly the men who sell stock in New York, not those who dig the ore in the mines,” replied Father with a laugh.

Just then we heard an exclamation from the men. They were talking so we could hear their voices at the mouth of the shaft. Then we could hear steps on the ladder.

Ed Sampson's face appeared at the mouth. He seemed quite excited.

"Our lucky day," he called, and he beckoned with his great finger.

"Come on down, and have a look."

"What have you found, a spring of pure water?" asked Father.

"Well, perhaps not quite so good as that. I wish we might, though, and cross my fingers on it, for I'm sick of arsenic water."

"Vell den, is it a pocket of silver?" asked Mr. Linderman.

"No, not that, come on down. It's good luck."

"I'm glad py golly, it is no pocket. Der is no goot luck in dat. Let us descend and discover his goot luck."

So we followed down the wet, slippery ladder, after Ed Sampson.

The faces of the other men at the foot all glowed with pride and satisfaction. They seemed to take as much interest in the success of that mine as we did.

"Vell, poys," said Mr. Linderman, as he

stepped to the rough floor of the shaft, "here are we to behold the goot luck."

Ed Sampson stepped forward like a circus man running a big side show. Though the shaft was not yet very deep, it was dark at the bottom. The miners held their lamps, while Ed removed an old coat from a jutting rock.

There in the light of the miner's lamps I could see a hollow, like the inside of a cantelope. Within were crystals that flashed and sparkled, as the rays fell upon them.

"Py golly, that's miner's luck! Purple amethysts! A goot sign, Meester Pettipone, a ferry goot sign."

Father smiled and held a light close over the nest. The crystals were a deep purple in some places, and a blue in others.

"They are a clear, deep color," he said. "I suppose if miner's luck counts for anything, they will bring it to the Gold King."

"Yes, siree, look at the vein, see how she is spreading." Old Sam Paul held his light near the floor. "We are taking out more

and more every foot, and she'll crush out a pile of the white stuff, too."

Everyone was happy, for a pocket of amethysts was a sign to miners that the vein would pay well, and the ore would yield a high percent of silver, or white stuff, as Sam called it.

"It may be a foolishness," puffed Mr. Linderman, as he clambered up the ladder again, "but miners is no fools after all, and they know what they have seen."

"Do you think it will pay me then, to send for an engine, and lay it out in regular style?"

"Well, that is my best guess. If I owned der Gold King I should order me an engine and rails for a dump car, and all the hoisting machinery, too."

Father thought a minute. "That would cost a lot of money," he replied.

"So silver costs a lot of money. You pay much for machinery, and you sell der silver for much more. Who is best off den? Vat you tink?" and he turned to me with his queer chuckle.

Mr. Linderman watched Father in silence as we returned to the cabin.

As he was about to go, he said: "Vell, now, Meester Pettipone, if money is not blenty, I haf a bit for investments in goot mines. It would gif me pleasure to invest a few dollars.'

"Thanks, Mr. Linderman, that is mighty good of you. I guess I have enough. I should hate, of course, to get all that money into machinery and then see the vein run to nothing. But everyone seems to think it is a good location, so I think I'll carry it through."

"Vell den, go ahead, and my plessing on it. If you need money, speak to Linderman."

The good old man climbed into his ancient spring buckboard, drew the lap-cloth about his neat suit of fine black broadcloth, and said good-bye.

How my heart beat as I watched Mr. Linderman drive away, down the trail! The mine was not just a hole in the ground. It was a real success, and Father would

have a chance to settle down and do the work he liked best of all.

Here on this magic mountain I could come during the warm months and be Father's little pal, as everyone called me. Here I could wander at my will, and pick the wonderful flowers, and listen to the breezes that sang with the birds in the branches above me.

"Father," I said, after supper, when we were looking way down the valley, in the evening light, "how did such amethysts get into those rocks? They were hidden away in the middle of that hard white quartz. How could they ever get in there?"

"Well, Lady Love," said Father, "if I may believe what the wise people have written about those crystals, it is a wonderful story. But I guess we had better go in, for it is growing cold."

I took one last look at the glow where the sun had gone; then I ran in and lit the lamp. Father sat in his big chair, so he could hold me in comfort on his knee.

Then he took from his pocket one of the crystals he had brought up with him.

“The most wonderful thing to me, Nita,” he began very soberly, “is that these amethysts, as well as the rock crystals and emeralds, and topazes and many other crystals, are made from water and tiny atoms of mineral mixed together.”

“Can water make these hard crystals?” I put the amethyst against my teeth. It seemed the hardest object I had ever touched.

“That is what they say. When the rain falls, some of it runs off on the surface, down into the brooks and rivers, and so back to the sea. Some water runs into the cracks of rocks, or soaks into the ground, and works its way along through the soil or the crevices below the surface till it comes to a well or a spring. Then it may rise and run off to join the surface water.

“But much water never comes back again to the surface. It is used in making the rocks and crystal forms like this

amethyst. This water soaks slowly down till it is far below the surface.

“Now let me show you something about water.” Father went out and brought in a lump of moist earth from a pile by the well. It was much like clay, but not so sticky. This earth he patted and smoothed into a cake, nearly an inch thick.

Then he took a spoonful of water and dropped it on top of the earth.

“Now watch, Princess,” he said, as he held up the cake. Soon the point below the spoonful of water grew moister. Then a drop began to appear. Father held a spoon and caught several drops as they fell from the earth.

“Taste it,” He passed me the spoon. The water was clear, with no sign of mud. I put it in my mouth.

“Can you taste the earth a little?”

I nodded.

“Now let’s try this.” He put salt into the water and dropped it on the earth. Soon it came through into the spoon.

When I tasted that, it was salty.

“Now we will try sugar.”

The water that came through was clear, as it had been before, but it was sweet.

“This shows,” Father went on again, that water can soak down through the earth quite rapidly, and carry with it material picked up along the way. The first taste shows a little earth picked up, the second shows salt, a mineral, carried down, and the last proves that sugar also is carried with the water in solution right down through the earth.

“Many other substances besides these may be dissolved and picked up by water. The hotter water gets the more it can dissolve, and if it is under pressure, it can dissolve more still.

“When this water was soaking down through the earth and rocks, long ages ago, it gathered tiny bits of mineral as it seeped through.

“Some day I will take you down into a deep mine. At first it is cool, but then it grows warmer. Far down in the earth

it is very hot, and the pressure is great, from the enormous burden of earth and rock.”

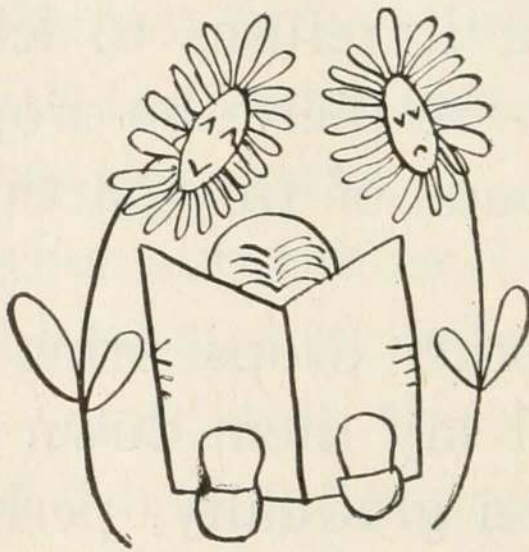
“Oh I see, then this water gets hot as it goes way, way down, and it is under pressure, too, so it can pick up many tiny bits of mineral,” I said.

“Just so, but there comes a time when the water can go no farther. It comes to a crevice or pocket where the rock is so hard that it refuses to let a drop of water pass. So there the drops of water, with their loads of tiny particles, have to stop.

“Slowly other drops bring down their burdens and lay them down by the first drops. Then gradually, perhaps after a million years, they work their way upward and evaporate, leaving these wonderful crystals behind them.”

“That is just what I wanted to know. I think you are the best teacher in the world,” I said, giving him a big hug. “You must have read all that in the big books you were studying last winter.”

“I read some of it, I guess, in those same big books,” he laughed. “And now my Lady Love must duck under the covers for a good sleep, because the sand-man is climbing right up her cheek at this very minute.”



CHAPTER X

A POCKETFUL OF CATS

“NITA! Oh, you princess! Hey there!”

A loud voice bawled outside the camp early one Sunday morning, as I was pulling a few of the worst snarls out of my hair.

Father was writing letters at the table.

“Looks like some one had arrived back from town, Lady Love,” he said with a smile.

“Oh, inside thar! Neeeta! ”

I stuck my head out of the door. There stood old Sam Paul.

“Well, for mercy sakes, what do you want?” I called.

Poor old Sam! He had passed a hard night somewhere on the trail, after a long visit to the saloon at Nederland. He was a good miner, and earned high wages, but

he never had a cent in his pockets. Saturday night was the end of the week and of everything else for him.

Now he looked like a ruffled grouse in moulting season. His great rough coat was tied round with a strand of frayed rope, for all the buttons were gone. His old felt hat was torn on one side, a flap hanging over his ear.

“Princess, Little Princess,” he mumbled, “your daddy ’lowed you were wantin’ sumpin’.”

“Well, what of that? I want a whole lot of things.”

“You just put your hand in my pocket, an’ see what you find.”

Ugh! I hated his dirty old pocket, but I never could stand it now not to know. The pocket bulged, and seemed to move. I drew back my hand.

“Oh, don’tee be afeared. Nothin’ to hurt anybody.” Sam Paul looked down at me with a sad, mellow smile.

I was too proud to show fear, so I took a deep breath, and plunged my hand

down into his coat. Something soft and warm was there, something that squirmed a little as I touched it.

“Haul it out. Haul it out. It’s for you.” Sam held on to the flap to help me.

I tried a little to pull, but could not lift it out.

“Oh, well then, I’ll do it. I’ll do it.”

He thrust in his huge paw and hauled out what was left of the blackest black tabby cat I ever saw. The poor thing hung limp and dazed in his hairy fingers.

“Sam Paul,” I cried, “you give me that cat!” And I snatched it out of his hand.

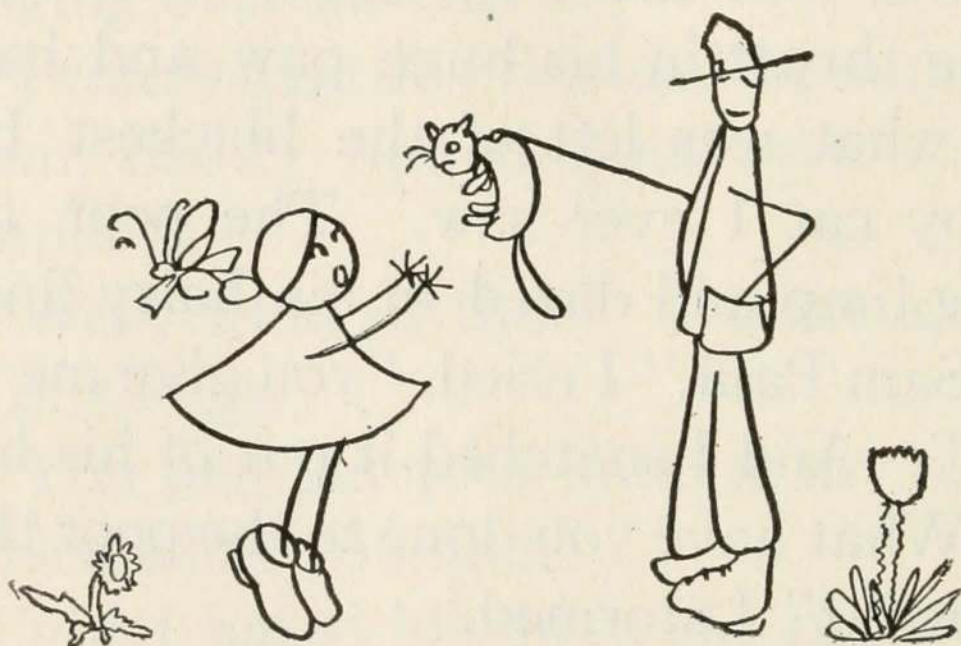
“What have you done to the poor thing, anyway?” I stormed.

“Done to it? Nothin’. I hain’t done nothin’ to it, Princess. I brung it up along for you. I got her for a quarter. She just needs some canned milk and a leetle rest. We’re both a leetle mite tired, Princess.”

“Well, I did want a cat, and I’m much obliged,” I said, “but it’s a wonder the

poor thing didn't die. The next time you carry cats any place, Sam Paul, I hope you'll have sense enough to put them in a basket."

"Yes'm, yes'm, I'll do that, I'll do just that same, Princess," replied Sam, as he shuffled off to the cook house, for a big cup of coffee.



"Well," called Father, as I went back up the steps, "what is your prize this time?"

I put down my gift. She looked around just like Sam Paul, dazed and weary.

"A cat," I said.

Father looked at her.

“A cat, a cat? I should say you had what was left of the last family of cats. Great guns and little fishes! Sam ought to be arrested for treating a lady like that.”

The lady looked up at him, as if she would bring no complaints against Sam Paul, so long as she had some canned milk and a long rest, as Sam recommended.

I took part of a can and mixed it with warm water. When I set it before her, the cat lapped it up eagerly.

“What shall we name her?” I asked.

“My dear Princess, there is only one name for a black lady cat, and that is Dinah.”

So Dinah she was christened, and when she had finished her milk, I fixed a little bed behind the stove, where she curled up, and was sound asleep in less than a minute.

For a while even Chrysanthemum was utterly neglected for the new pet. I brushed and smoothed, and fed and watered my darling Dinah, till Father, who didn't care greatly for cats, threatened to drop her into the gulch.

But almost every day she would appear with a great rat in her mouth, and this made Father feel better.

"Go to it, old girl," he would say. "Help yourself to every rat on the range."

Then, when Dinah had been with us about three weeks, she suddenly disappeared. Where could she have gone? I went around with a dish of milk. I called her loudly and then softly, but no cat came in sight.

"What, you haven't gone and lost Sam's cat, have you?" asked Ed Sampson as he went by.

I noticed his foolish grin.

"Yes, I have, and I'll bet you know where she is, too."

"No, no, honest to goodness I don't, but I know she's all right. She must be all right. She'll come back in a day or so. You see if she don't."

He went down to dinner, and in a minute I heard roars of laughter from the miners. I knew they were laughing at

me, and I was mad as a hornet. I hated to be laughed at.

Just the same I was bound to find my Dinah, so I went to every nook and corner where she might have hidden.

“Oh, don’t worry about her, you’ll drive me crazy,” said Father, as I looked under the bed for the hundredth time.

So I hunted outside. In despair I went round behind the cabin, where there were some big packing boxes in the woodshed.

In answer to my calls it seemed as if I heard a faint meow.

“Come kitty, kitty. Come Dinah,” I called.

“Meow, meow.”

Ah, there she was, somewhere in that pile of boxes. I followed the sound and peeped into a big box that was half full of paper. Then I gasped for breath. My eyes stuck out so far I do believe you could have knocked them off with a stick.

In that nest of paper was my darling Dinah, and snuggled about her were seven

kittens, each one just as black as the mother.

Such a time as I had then! Father pretended to be greatly surprised. The miners roared again with laughter, and declared Sam Paul ought to go back and pay for the rest of his cats, because he had paid for only one.

Two kittens died, and were buried with solemn pomp beneath a big pine by the gulch. A one-pound candy box with gold letters makes a splendid casket for a kitten.

The rest throve wonderfully. Dinah brought in rats until not a one showed himself within a mile of the camp. She proved a bountiful provider, and when rats got scarce she took after the magpies.

Poor Dinah! One old magpie proved almost too much for her.

We were sitting at breakfast on a lovely morning, with the door wide open, when we heard a voice calling, "Come kitty! Come kitty!"

I hastened out to see who it was, just

in time to find Dinah scratching up the pine tree by the door.

“Come, kitty! Come, kitty!” A shrill voice came from the branches, followed by an idiotic laugh.

Dinah scrambled up on the first limb in great excitement just as a magpie flew out and made its way to another tree across the door yard.

“Come, kitty! Come, kitty!” The cackling laugh broke out again in the other tree.

Father had come out by this time.

“Go get him, Dinah old girl,” he called, “I wouldn’t let a magpie sass me that way.”

Dinah jumped down again, and started up the next tree faster than ever. But she was too late. Again the sly old bird flitted away to another tree, leaving poor bewildered Dinah to follow as fast as she could.

“It is Buddy’s magpie, come up from town; the one that learned to talk,” said Father. “They say he teases the store cat half out of his wits.”

Just then, as Dinah was mounting the third tree, the same old tirade burst out.

“Shut the door! Shut the door!” The command was followed by a stream of terrible words and a silly laugh.

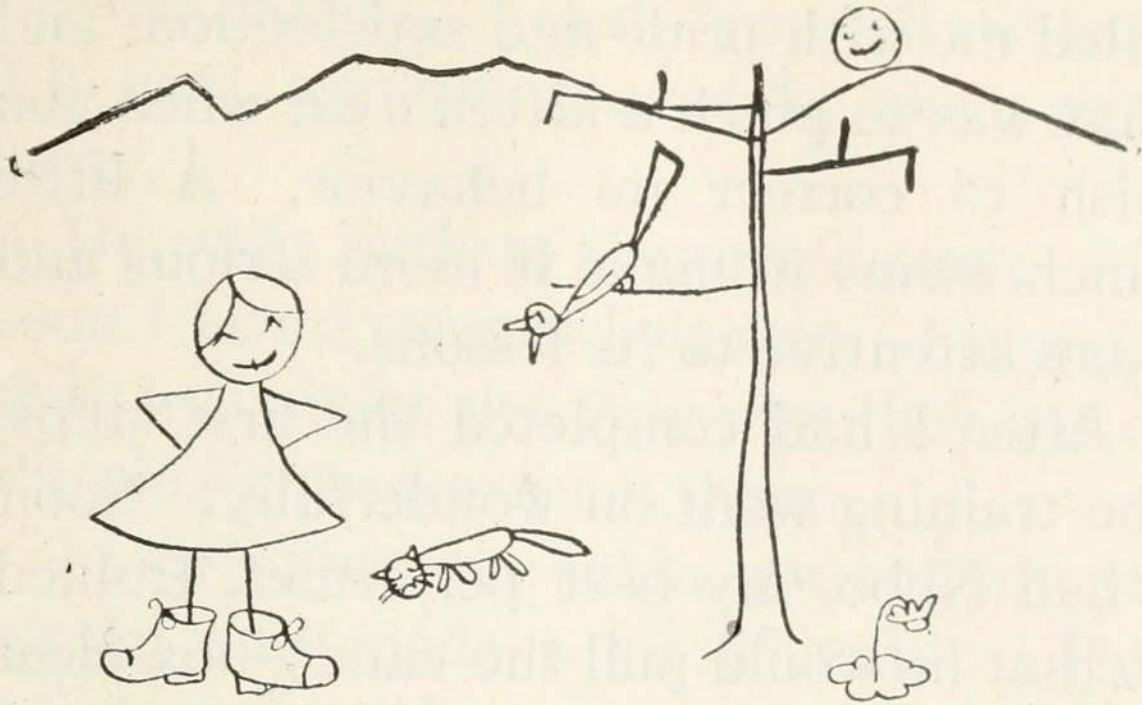
This was too much for the cat, who crouched on a limb and glared at the insulting magpie till, with a final cackle, it winged away down the gulch.

We found out later that it returned to the store after a day or two, probably glad enough to get back to a quiet spot where food was plenty.

It was several days before Dinah seemed to pluck up courage enough to go after the magpies again.

As the kittens grew, I busied myself teaching them little tricks, which they learned very well. Finally I had a grand idea. Why not teach them to pull a cart?

No sooner said than tried. A paper box did for the cart, and a piece of twine served for a harness. There was no use asking me to run errands or to do chores



after that. My whole existence was devoted to training cats.

My new adventures gave the miners a fresh opportunity to roar at me, but I scorned their jokes and kept right on. Of course the kittens got tangled in their harness at first, and tried to chew their cart to pieces.

I learned one thing right away: that kittens and whips do not mix well at all. If I took a little switch to correct them and make them behave, they either tried to grab the switch and chew it, or they ran under the piazza to hide.

Then I learned something else, that

filled me with pride and satisfaction, and that was to pinch a kitten's ear when you wish to correct its behavior. A little pinch seems to make it more serious and more attentive to its lessons.

After I had completed the first steps, the training went on wonderfully. Soon I had Nebo, my best performer, trained so that he would pull the candy-box clear across the piazza. After this, as they grew older, I could harness two or three together.

Then Ed Sampson appeared one day with a bundle covered with a piece of canvas.

"We thought, Princess," he explained, "that probably you'd want to take on some jobs hauling freight up from Boulder, so we made you up an outfit."

He took off the canvas, and there was a little cart with real wheels and a pole, just like the carts they used for freighting. With the cart was a set of harness, made of little straps, and a whip with a leather thong.

“Oh, thanks,” I said, “you tell the boys I’ll haul something over for them right away.”

He went back to the men’s camp, and soon I heard roars of laughter. I suppose that was about the only way they had of showing pleasure at anything.

I hurried into the cabin, got out my pet kettle, and made a lot of taffy. This was one thing I could cook well, and the men were very fond of it.

While it was cooking, I hitched up my two best pullers, Nebo and Sambo, in the new cart. They seemed proud of the outfit and behaved wonderfully. This done, I put the bag of taffy into the cart, gave Sambo’s ear a little pinch, and started off in high style, waving the whip, but being careful to keep it well away from my black chargers.

The men were just getting through dinner, and came out to watch my approach. It was a proud moment in my life, for the team worked wonderfully, in

spite of the gale of laughter that swept over them.

“Hurrah for the Gold King Limited!” yelled Sam Paul.

I drew up on the smooth spot in front of the door, and delivered my bundle, which was received with great solemnity and gratitude.

“Will you need a receipt? What are the charges? Was it prepaid?”

They were all chewing candy and asking questions as I picked up my outfit, turned it about, and started for home in proper style.

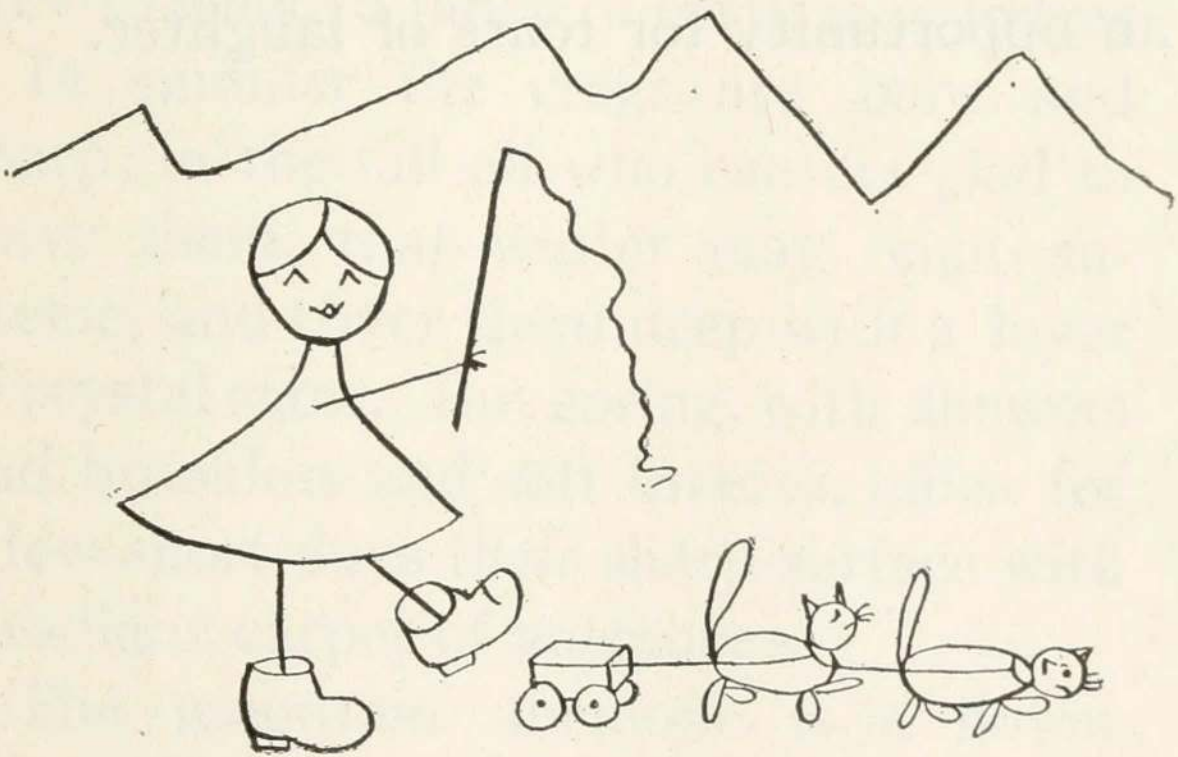
But Dinah had missed her children and was trotting down to meet us, her black tail waving high in air. At sight of her, the team suddenly remembered that it was dinner time, and broke into a run, paying no attention at all to my loud “Whoa, there!”

The wagon lurched along on the uneven ground, bouncing higher and higher as the pair rushed ahead to meet their fond mama. One wheel struck a round stone,

the cart fell over, and the valiant steeds met poor Dinah head on in a tangle of cats, carts, and harness.

“Never mind,” called Father from the porch, “you delivered the goods, and that is more than a lot of people can do.”

Of course the men all roared again, and of course I was vexed, but I went right ahead training my cats.



From that time on we were never without black cats about the mine. They all seemed to hold true to color, and were so black that the men declared they couldn't

tell whether they were stepping on cats or shadows.

Once in a while some pet would wander off and fall into the clutches of a hungry bobcat or mountain lion. For these I mourned, but the race was a fruitful one, and whatever might happen I could always depend on finding some cats left to provide me with a chance to show my skill, and to provide the miners with an opportunity for roars of laughter.

CHAPTER XI

NITA'S SPRING

Who has seen the hills of Colorado in spring, covered with anemones that raise their purple cups from every tiny crevice where a pinch of earth may lodge?

In summer the crags are bare and sharp; in the fall all who can are glad to leave them, that winter may reign supreme, and cover them deep with a layer of crystal snow. But spring, with showers and brooklets and soft breezes, hides for a few short days their sharp surface with a radiant carpet of anemones.

The mountain anemone is a flower almost beyond compare, as it blooms in countless millions on those dark, rugged slopes. Its purple cup, as large as a tulip, rises a few inches from the rock on a fuzzy, stout green stem, and the purple

bowl is held firmly in place by a calyx of the softest green velvet.

I shall never see the anemone without a feeling of joy and new delight, for with that springtime flower came the days when, after a winter of school, and books, and indoors, I could fly up to our mountain camp once more for long months of freedom and flowers, and birds and forest winds, and rocks and running brooks, and best of all my own dear Chrysanthemum.

Where that little rascal lived in winter I never knew. Perhaps he wandered southward a few miles into the more sheltered valleys and parks, where he could pick up a living and peg out the winter months.

In the southern part of Colorado there are many spots where warm springs keep the grass and reeds growing almost all winter, and the sun lies so warm on the south side of high cliffs that a tough little burro might get on very well, as the elk and buffalo lived.

But what was grass or reeds compared with tomato can wrappers and real flour paste, or stray ends of rope, or perhaps a copy of the Boulder County Miner now and then?

As sure as we opened camp and started up the fires, a ragged and trowsled burro would make its way up the gulch, and the laughs and jeers of the miners would announce Chrysanthemum's return.

It was the second season in camp that Chrysanthemum helped me to fulfill a dream I often had. Pure water was the one thing we lacked more than anything else to make life on the mountain pleasant and happy. In my wanderings up the mountain I often found a pool, or branch of the brook, that ran so clear and pure I would taste it, or take home a sample; but always that sweet taste betrayed the poison no eye could see. It seemed hopeless.

One day the men had been rough with my poor tramp, so I said, "Come on, Chrysy, let's go up on the mountain,

where we can get some flowers and have a little fun all by ourselves.”

I put a cookie in my pocket, for Chrysanthemum would follow me to Jericho for a piece of cookie.

I took him quite a way up the hillside, and played hide and seek around the boulders with him until we both were tired. Then the burro began to browse on some hazelnut bushes, while I went on up higher still to explore the mountain and hunt for harebells.

The harebells grow on long black stems, so fine that you do not see the stalk at all a few yards away, and the blossoms look like little blue stars floating in the air.

I gathered a bunch of these fairy flowers round about among the ledges, and came at last to a pool of water I had never seen before.

“Can this be my spring?” I said to myself. How clear and limpid it was, lying there in the rocky cleft!

I bent down to taste it. The first sip

was enough, for the flavor warned me to swallow none of that.

“O dear,” I thought, “I shall never find a spring up here, I guess.” I took up my harebells and started back toward camp.

I had not gone far before I caught sight of Chrysanthemum, coming up to meet me. I still had half the cookie, and I guess the little scamp probably knew it.

“Oh, that’s it, is it?” I said, as he tried to shove his nose into my pocket. “Come on and get it then.”

I held a bit almost to his nose. He reached out to get it just as I slipped behind a rock and ran across to a clump of scrub pine.

Chrysanthemun knew this game, and in a second he was after me. Round he came, full tilt, and I scampered down hill to another big boulder.

But the burro was hungry for that cookie, and was right at my heels. Just as I reached the boulder, he grabbed my skirt in his teeth, so I had to give up the piece of cookie to get free.

As soon as Chrysanthemum had swallowed his tidbit I fished out the last piece, and the race was on again. I dodged about rocks and trees and bushes, gradually working down nearer the camp.

As I caught sight of the shaft-house I suddenly remembered Father's warning not to run on places where trees were few, and rocks were loose.

"Remember, little whirlwind," he said, very seriously, "that the surface of these hills is coming loose all the time. The winter frosts work in and split off fragments. The summer sun makes them looser still. Sometimes they are just ready to slide down at the slightest jar."

The miners had told me the same thing.

"Up Cripple Creek way, by gravy," said old Sam Paul, "there was a bunch of tenderfoot prospectors one minute, and the next minute there wasn't even a bunch of whiskers to show they ever had been there.

"We were wandering along on a slope above the creek one day, when one lunatic

gave a round stone a toss down the ledge. She rolled and bounced along, starting another here and there on the way down, and at last they all smashed into the creek with a grand roar.

“They thought that was great fun, but I started hot foot for the top of the ridge, where some spruces stood.

“‘What are you scared of?’ they yelled, ‘Nobody’s goin’ to hurt you.’

“‘You quit that funny business,’ I hollered back, ‘or you’ll be mighty scarce round here.’

“They never paid no attention, but just threw down another, and laughed to see me skedaddle. I was about up to the trees when I heard a groan and rumble. Then the greenhorns began to yell bloody murder.

“As I looked back, I could see the rocks, where they stood, start for the valley. They tried to run back up the ledge, but they were too late.

“My hair most stood on end as I watched the poor critters struggle against

the slide. It took 'em down faster and faster, with a mess of boulders smashing down after.

“They all went over the last jump together and landed in the water, with tons of loose rock on top. I tell you I just hung on to a spruce tree and shook like a man with the chills.

“And since that day,” he always wound up, “I feel ready to shoot any cuss that starts rollin’ stones on a mountain.”

Father’s warning, and the picture of those poor prospectors, flashed across my mind as I dashed out onto an open space with Chrysanthemum in hot pursuit.

The rocks were loose and crumbly here, and gave way beneath my feet. I tried to stop, but the stones slid under me.

Behind was the crazy burro, also trying to stop, and sending down more stones onto me in his struggle.

It was awful. In my imagination I saw the rock slide, with me on top of it, sweeping down upon the camp, carrying off

cabins and men, and the Gold King itself into the canyon.

In the terror of the moment my knees gave way, and I sat down in the midst of a mess of sliding rock slabs. The next minute I went into a thicket of hazelnut and scrub-pine bushes that grew heavily below the clear space.

The bushes, well rooted in the deep fissures, easily stopped my young avalanche, and I lay in the midst of the thicket, scratched a little, frightened a great deal, but unharmed.

For a few moments I lay there to regain my courage and my breath. Then I put out my hand to raise myself. The ground gave way slightly beneath it.

Looking down, I saw that I was pressing on what seemed to be the top of a basket. At the same moment I heard a faint sound just like the trickle of running water.

My first thought was that some pack-basket had been thrown here, and had gathered moss in the thicket. I took hold to lift it, but it refused to move.

“You will move,” I said, “if I have to get a crowbar.” Nothing made me more impatient than to fail in doing something that seemed easy.

I got up and pulled away some of the stones that lay about. Then I cleared off the leaves and moss a bit. It was not a basket, it was a sheet of wattling.

Wattling is woven by the Indians, for basket-work, and litters, and covers for stuff they wish to hide in the ground. They often dig holes, put in what they wish to preserve, cover it with a sheet of wattling, and hide their treasure beneath a layer of earth and leaves.

I had found an Indian hiding-place, or cache, as they called it. Grasping the edge of the woven cover, I gave a hearty pull. It came up a little. I pulled again, and raised it nearly a foot. With one more heave, I tore away the ends that still clung to the moss, and uncovered the cache.

Beneath my astonished eyes lay the prettiest little mossgrown spring I had ever seen.

It was about a foot deep and a yard across, with moss and tiny ferns all about the edge. At the bottom were white stones and sand. The water bubbled up in the center, stirring the white sand in little eddies, and ran off into the thicket with a faint trickle you could hear if you sat very still.

For a moment I stared in wonder. Then the truth came clearly to my mind. This was a pure spring. The Arapahoes had found it years before, and had covered it with wattling to keep the secret safe from the white people who came to take away their hunting grounds.

Yes, this must be the truth. It must be pure, for they never bothered to cover the poisoned springs on the hills. There it had been, all the time, just above the camp, but no one ever went into the thicket, which had grown green and dense, fed by the water of the spring.

“You had better taste it just the same,” I said to myself, “for they’ll roar, and make awful jokes if you cheat them.”

So I made a cup of my hand and scooped up a mouthful. I could taste the dirt on my hand, but nothing sweet. I rinsed my paws and tried again. No sir, not a trace of arsenic, not a single trace.

How my heart beat! I would be perfectly natural and composed; as calm as plump Aunt Betty. I would just walk down and ask them all if they wanted to see something interesting. I would hide a cup under my waist, and would lead them up here and lift the wattling, and then, what a triumph!

So I laid the wattling back in its place and started down to camp. The white puff of steam from the whistle told me it was noon, and the shrill blast came to my ears a second later. Ed Sampson was laying sticks of dynamite in the sun by the shaft house as I went along, quite unconcerned. He looked at me and then stopped short.

“What in kingdom’s name has struck you, Princess?” he asked. “Have you been fighting ghosts?”

“Nothing has struck me, Mr. Sampson,” I replied, angry to think he noticed anything unusual, and passing by with great dignity.

“Haw, haw, haw!” A burst of laughter came from the cook house. “Come on in out of the wet, Mister Sampson. Dinner is ready, Mister Sampson. It’s a chilly day, Mister Sampson.”

Sam Paul and Smithy stuck their heads out the open door, and laughed again.

I had never called him Mr. Sampson before, and they all thought it a grand joke.

“Now what have you gone and done to her, Ed?” they asked, as I moved on.

“Just asked her a question, that’s all,” he replied. “Never supposed she’d treat her old friends that way.”

He spoke loud, so I might hear, but I paid no attention to him, and walked straight on to our own cabin. I didn’t care if they never had a drink.

Father was on the piazza washing his face and hands. He had just started to

dry his face with the towel when his eye fell on me. There he stood, the water running off his nose, the towel hanging from his hand.

His eyes were very serious, but his lips were smiling.

“Are you much hurt, dearie?” he called.

That was too much. My temper, already heated by excitement, and the miners’ laughter, almost boiled over.

“No, of course I’m not hurt. Who said I was hurt? I’m all right. Don’t I look all right?”

“Certainly, Duchess, certainly,” he replied, and he led me in to the looking-glass that hung by the window.

Taking it from the nail, he passed it to me with a deep bow. After one look, I forgave everybody everything, and laughed right out. I was the most terrible sight anyone could imagine.

When the rocks slid down about me they had raised a cloud of dust. This had settled all over me, in my hair, over

my clothes, on my face. Even my eye-lashes were coated with it.

A streak of blood ran down my neck from a scratch I got in my plunge. A great smudge of dirt and dust covered my forehead where I had wiped it with my wet hand. My stocking was torn, and my hat was still up there in the thicket, forgotten in my grand surprise.

I had been so excited that the dust and dirt and scratches had all gone unnoticed.

“Shall I order the perfumed bath for her highness?” Father was always polite and sarcastic when I tried to put on airs.

“Now, Father, you stop. I’ve got something to show you; something you’ll be glad to see, too.”

“What is it now, another bushel or so of cats?”

“Oh, no,” I replied, putting down the mirror and slipping a cup under my arm, “it is something you’ve wanted a long time. You come along with me, it won’t take you three minutes.”

“Very well then, Miss Secret, I follow at your command.”

Father hung up his towel, and we went down by the cook house.

“Come along, boys,” I called, “if you want to see something that will make your eyeballs jingle.”

“Can Mister Sampson come too?” asked Sam Paul.

“Yes, Mister Sampson may come if he can behave himself and not ask too many questions.”

So they fell in behind, while Smithy whistled a march, and we made a real procession up the ledge.

When we came to the thicket, my heart began to beat again. Suppose it should turn out an impure spring. Suppose I had made a mistake, after all. No, I must be right. The Indians would never have hidden an impure spring.

“Well,” said Father, as I hesitated, “here we all are. When does the show begin?”

For answer, I moved forward and took

hold of the wattling. As they saw it, the men changed. The smiles left their faces, and they bent forward intently. They recognized the wattling at once.

“By gravy!” cried Sam Paul, as I raised the cover, “I knew it when I set eyes on them twigs. It’s an Injun spring.”

“Try it,” I said, with a grand-duchess air, as I brought out the cup.

“I don’t have to,” he answered. “Those Arapahoes never hid bad springs. They knew pure water.”

But Father took the cup and filled it. He drank and passed it to Sam Paul.

“Best water I ever tasted,” he said.

The rest tried it. All nodded.

“Princess,” declared Ed Sampson, in a solemn tone, “I’ll never laugh at you again. I swear it.”

He filled the cup to the brim and drank it all.

Then the men pulled away the wattling and cleared the edges of the spring.

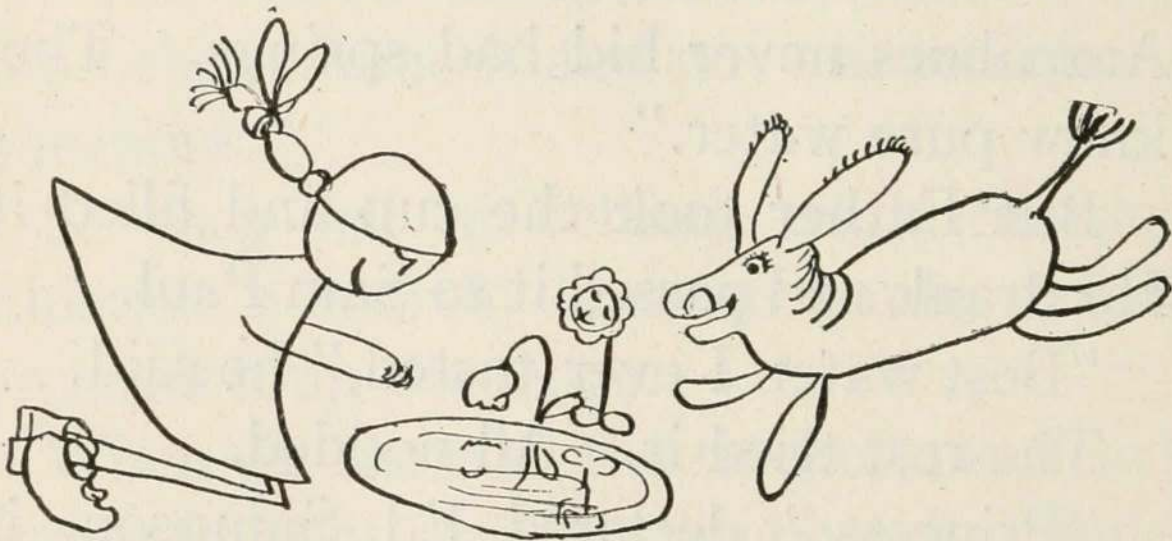
Father didn’t talk much at such times, but I felt his hand on my shoulder.

“This will mean a whole lot to us, Lady Love,” he said.

“Everyone will be happier with plenty of fresh, pure water to drink.”

I was a proud girl when he lifted me to his shoulders, and all started back to camp, talking of our good luck.

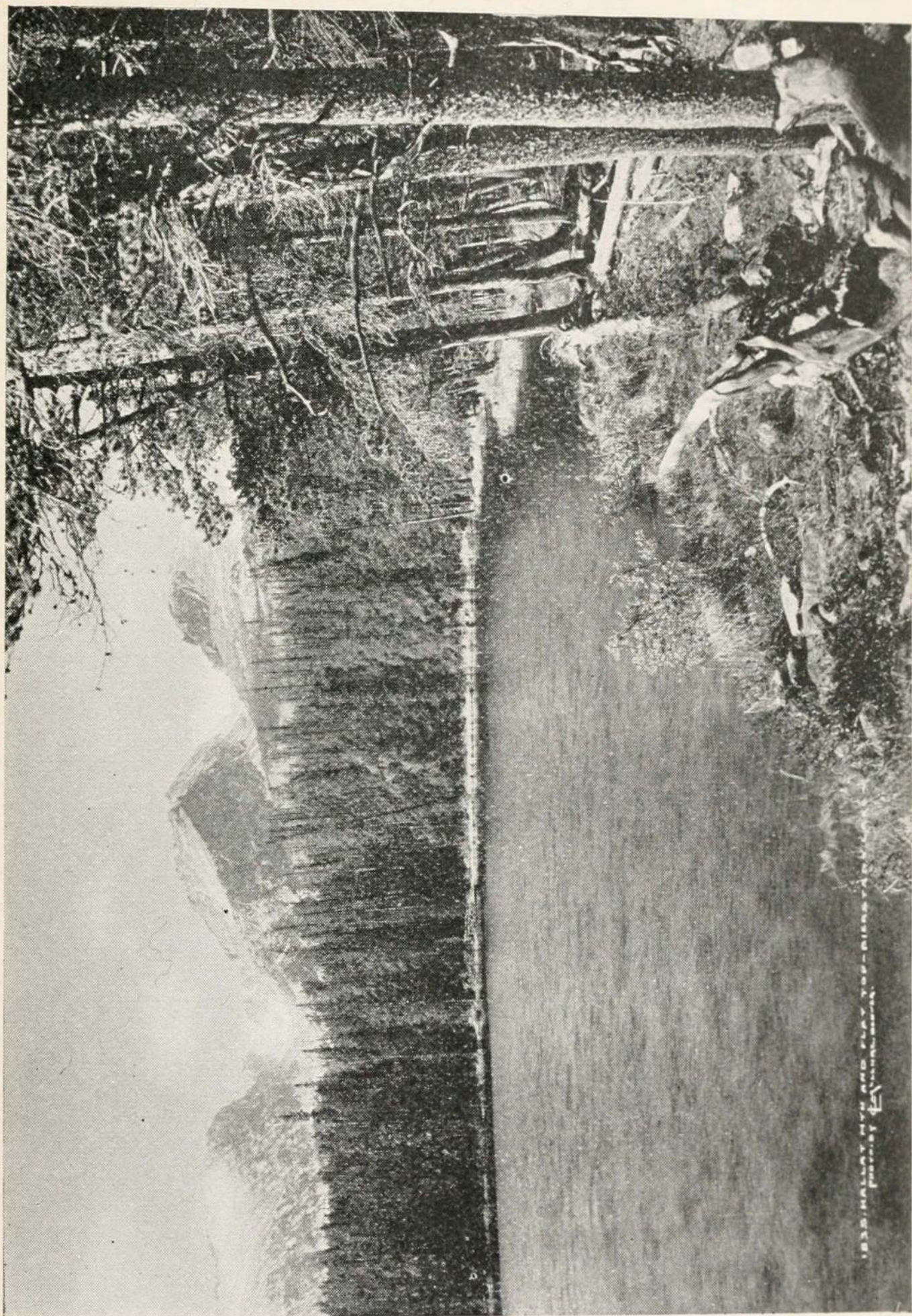
After dinner, Father and I went up to clear away bushes and saplings till we



had made the spot look like a little picnic park. Then Father made a larger basin and stoned it up to keep the water clean.

The news soon spread, and before long the miners all about heard of our fountain.

“Plenty of good water thar for every thirsty soul, man and beast,” Sam Paul



A GLACIER OF TODAY

In the valley at the left is a glacier which moves slowly down between the mountains. High valleys in the Rocky Mountains, the Alps, the Andes, and other high ranges, still contain glaciers.

declared to all he met, just as if he found it himself.

And so there was. We never refused a supply to those who needed it, and among the miners and mountaineers it came to be called "that Pettibone kid's spring."

CHAPTER XII

THE TRAIL OF A THOUSAND PICTURES

OVER the hills to the east from our camp was a spot I had often heard of, and was eager to visit. Rangers told of the fantastic painted valley of St. Vrain, where springs of water gushed in all the colors of the rainbow, and the rivers ran radiant with brilliant hues.

The miners had gone down to town one day for a "time," as they gently called it, while we were waiting for new drills and a hoisting cable to finish the mine equipment.

I got out Father's best shoes and blacked them. I washed out his black silk handkerchiefs, and ironed them smooth and even. Then I took his big Stetson and cleaned the band all off with gasoline, making the hat as good as new.

After all this I put on my best smile.

“Father, you can’t do much work on the mine today, can you?”

“Oh, I see. You have blacked my boots, and washed my clothes, and cleaned my hat, and you’re the very best girl in all Colorado, so now what do you want?”

“You know you promised to take me over to Saint Vrain some time.”

“I don’t remember that I promised.”

“Oh, yes you did, and if you didn’t, I know you will, won’t you? Let’s go today. There will never be a better time.”

Father smiled and looked around the cabin.

“I suppose we had better go now and have it over with. I might as well die of starvation up at Vrain as be teased to death.”

“Hooray!” I cried. “That’s a good old daddy. I’ll fill the feed-bags and get lunch in ten seconds less than no time.”

“Never mind the lunch, or the feed. Just put the feed bags into the saddle-roll.

We can get feed for every one down at Nederland.”

I went at the poor horses like a young fury, for I never could delay a minute on such occasions. I brushed their coats and combed out their hair, without bothering much whether it pulled or not. The bridles and saddles went on slam bang, and the bags and camp stuff flew into the saddle-rolls, along with blankets and some extra clothing.

By the time the horses were ready, Father had locked up important papers and books in the big black tin box, shut the door, with the latchstring out, and was ready to join me.

He pretended to go just on my account, but I knew he enjoyed it, too, for he was fond of riding about the mountains. Father had spent years wandering over the great West, and knew all the trails as well as any scout.

We picked our way down the rough path to Nederland, and stopped at George Tobey's store, to get our lunch.

As we entered, a sharp voice called out:
"Shut the door."

I was rather startled, and shut the door quickly, but saw no one except George, at the counter.

"Well now, Princess, the nags have chosen oats for their lunch, with a lump of sugar as dessert. What shall we have?"

I looked about the shelves. It would seem like a queer little place to most of us, I suppose, but that store was a miracle to me.

Canned goods were piled on the shelves till they reached the ceiling. Lanterns and traps, and halters and chains hung from hooks, scattered in and out among hams and strips of bacon, or dried beef, with bologna sausage.

On the floor, at the end of the counter, stood the barrel of kerosene, beside the molasses cask that I always sampled with my fingers as I passed. The smell of the kerosene and the taste of the molasses still linger in my memory.

“Let’s have some smoked beef. I want some of that,” I announced.

“Dear child! Just remember that good water on this trip may be mighty scarce. You will be a great deal dryer than that beef is before you have eaten much.”

“Well, then, we’ll have a can of peaches.” I knew those were Father’s special pets.

“Now you said a mouthful. Yes, we can start with some peaches.” Father was pleased.

“And a can of tomatoes,” I added. These Father always took. Canned tomatoes, acid and juicy, were ideal for hot dry trails. They quenched the thirst better than water. Every ranger loaded up with these.

“Good,” said Father. “Make it two cans.”

“And crackers and cheese, and cookies, and bologna sausage,” I said, to complete the list.

George smiled, and was starting to do up the crackers, when the door opened, and in walked Rocky Mountain Joe.

"Howdy, Joe, quite a stranger." Father had been over the trails with Rocky Mountain Joe often, and liked him much.

"Shut the door!" came in sharp tones, as Joe was about to reply.

Rocky Mountain Joe heard the command, half turned as if to obey, and then turned back with a shrug of the shoulders and a look of contempt on his face.

"Shut the door."

My ears burn now as I hear again the awful language that poured out at Rocky Mountain Joe. It was shrill, and loud enough to go a mile.

In some places people call each other names, and very little comes of it, but the mountaineers resent bad names to the very death, unless they are called in a joking manner.

Of all the mountain men I ever knew, Rocky Mountain Joe was the most proud and resentful.

His face blanched almost white. Instantly his hand flew to the six-shooter, which always hung by his side. Out it came.

“Say that ’ere again, where I can see you,” he commanded.

I followed his look into the shadows behind the door, but no one was there.

“Shut the door! Shut the door!” And again came that stream of awful language.

We all looked up to a spot near the ceiling, beyond the window light.

As we turned, a shrill laugh burst out, ending with, ‘Shut the door! Shut the door!’”

There in a cage hung a saucy magpie, thrusting his sharp beak out between the bars, and chuckling in his crazy way.

Rocky Mountain Joe stared at the bird a moment; then his stern face broke into a smile, as he raised his gun.

“I’m about ready to shoot your pesky head off, you saucy critter,” he said. “You deserve it, anyway.”

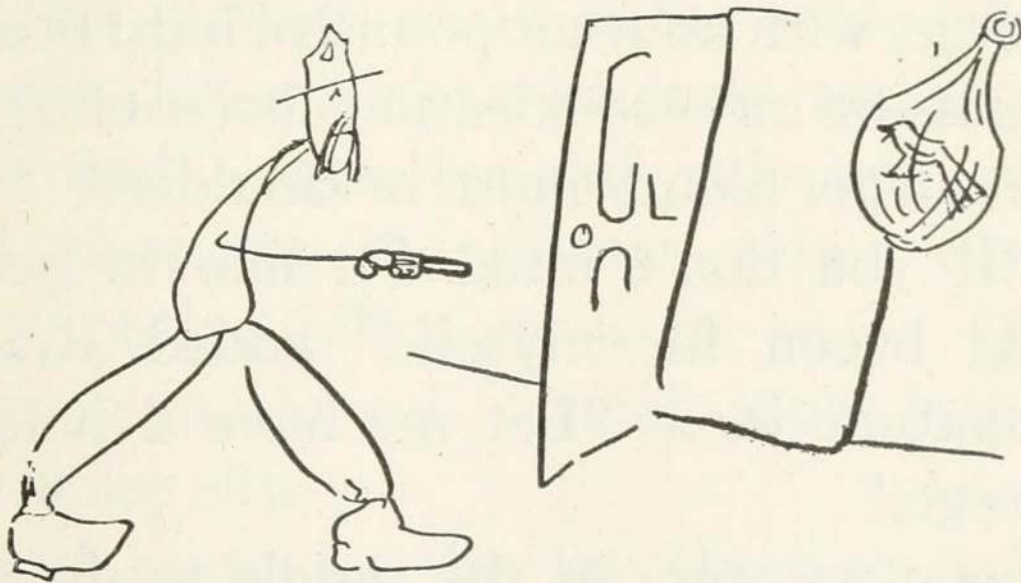
“He’s Buddy’s.” George Tobey spoke in apology from behind the counter. “The kid split his tongue, and showed him how to talk. But he never taught

him all that stuff," he added in haste. "He picked it up from the miners."

Rocky Mountain Joe turned on George, as he put up his gun.

"George Tobey, you tell that to the Arapahoes. What miner cares a rap whether your old door is shut or not? That bird ought to be a solemn warning to you."

"Joe has you covered, George," added Father, with a laugh. "You had better



enter Sunday School, next Sabbath, and take old Mag along with you."

So we all laughed together, and started to gather up our bundles.

“Which way do you travel, if I may ask?” said Rocky Mountain Joe.

“I’m taking my pal up to Saint Vrain for a little junket. Can’t we induce you to ride along, and show us the sights?”

Rocky Mountain Joe thought a minute.

“I dunno but I could,” he replied. “We might ride round by the Estes Park trail, too. I guess I’d better stock up a bit.”

“Not a crumb, you’re invited. Put in another can of tomatoes and peaches, George, with another pound of hard bread. I guess we have cookies and cheese enough. We can get plenty more in Boulder.”

“If you don’t mind I’d like to get a little bacon for myself,” added Rocky Mountain Joe. “Let me have a pound, George.”

Soon we were in the saddle again and off over the trail of a thousand pictures. At one point you look up to the sharp crags of a majestic mountain. A few rods more and you come upon a giant pine, beside a vast rock which has towers

and battlements like the castles of story land, all shut in by beetling crags.

After a few moments the view broadens and you look down upon a vast confusion of ledges and rocks, which tumble to the edge of the green gardens in the distance.

Again the trail winds along a precipice so sharp and steep that your look descends a thousand feet and more, into the shadows of a canyon, where, walled in on all sides by solid rock, Boulder Creek dashes down its gloomy gorge.

Most glorious of all is the scene which unrolls through vistas of rocks and pines, cliffs and ledges, beyond vale and pool and river, to the distant range where lofty peaks, piling mass on mass, raise their pinnacles of crystal snow into a turquoise sky.

Such scenes as this lay about us as we rode onward in the clear Colorado air. There was so much to see and hear and learn that the miles seemed short and the hours flew by. Father explained about the trees and rocks and rivers, while Rocky

Mountain Joe told of his experiences in former years over these trails, where he had lived so long.

“This was a favorite camping ground for the Arapahoes,” he said, as we were passing a gulch, well up toward Estes Park. “Just ride in yonder a bit and see one of their big camps.”

We turned into the gulch, and soon came to a vale, covered with grass, and level as a parlor floor. As we rode slowly in upon the turf I saw rings of stones here and there.

“What are those queer rings for?” I asked. “Were those for an Indian game like hop scotch?”

Rocky Mountain Joe laughed. “Oh, no, those are tepee stones. When the redskins put up their lodges, the top was hoisted by poles, and to hold the skins down they put all those stones around the lower edges.”

“Then every ring of stones means that a wigwam stood there, does it?” I asked.

“Yes, marm, and most of these rings mean a new tepee too. Those poor Injuns had to build a new house every year.”

“Every year?” I looked up at him in surprise.

“Yes, marm. You see those Arapahoes made their tepees from buffalo hides. The squaws would soak them and then scrape off all the hair and fat and gristle. After that they rubbed and rubbed and rubbed, till the hides were soft. My country, what a mess they made of it! Phew, I can smell 'em now.”

“I should think that leather would last more than a year. Our saddles are older than I am,” I ventured.

“Yes, but your saddle leather was tanned by some one who knew more than those squaws, and besides, they are dry most of the time. Where those stones lay on the hide it would be damp all winter, and by July the leather would begin to rot around the bottom.

“Then in the fall the tribes would all

pile up here into the best buffalo grounds, to get their hides and meat for the winter. Such a time they had, killing and feasting, and telling all about it round the camp fire."

"You must have seen some big herds about here," said Father.

"They used to go through by thousands, so thick you could see only buffalo as far as you could see anything. They made food and clothes and shelter for the redskins."

As we rode back to the trail I thought of the great herds that had grazed on this waving grass, and the red men who had hunted them, only a few years ago. There were the stones and black fire spots, just as the redskins had left them. There were the hollows, now grassed over, where the great beasts had made their wallows in the wet weather.

Now, in the space of twenty years, the buffaloes were swept away by heedless slaughter, and the Indians were

crowded back upon their reservations, forbidden to hunt over these grounds where for centuries they had wandered wild and free.

“If you don’t mind climbing a piece, I’d like to show you my pet camp,” said Rocky Mountain Joe, after we had gone some distance. “There is a good shelter there; leastways there was a year back, and we can put in a warm, dry night.”

As he spoke he looked over at the range, where dark clouds were sifting in and out among the peaks.

“We might be glad of shelter tonight,” replied Father, “those hills look rather wet. We’ll follow you.”

CHAPTER XIII

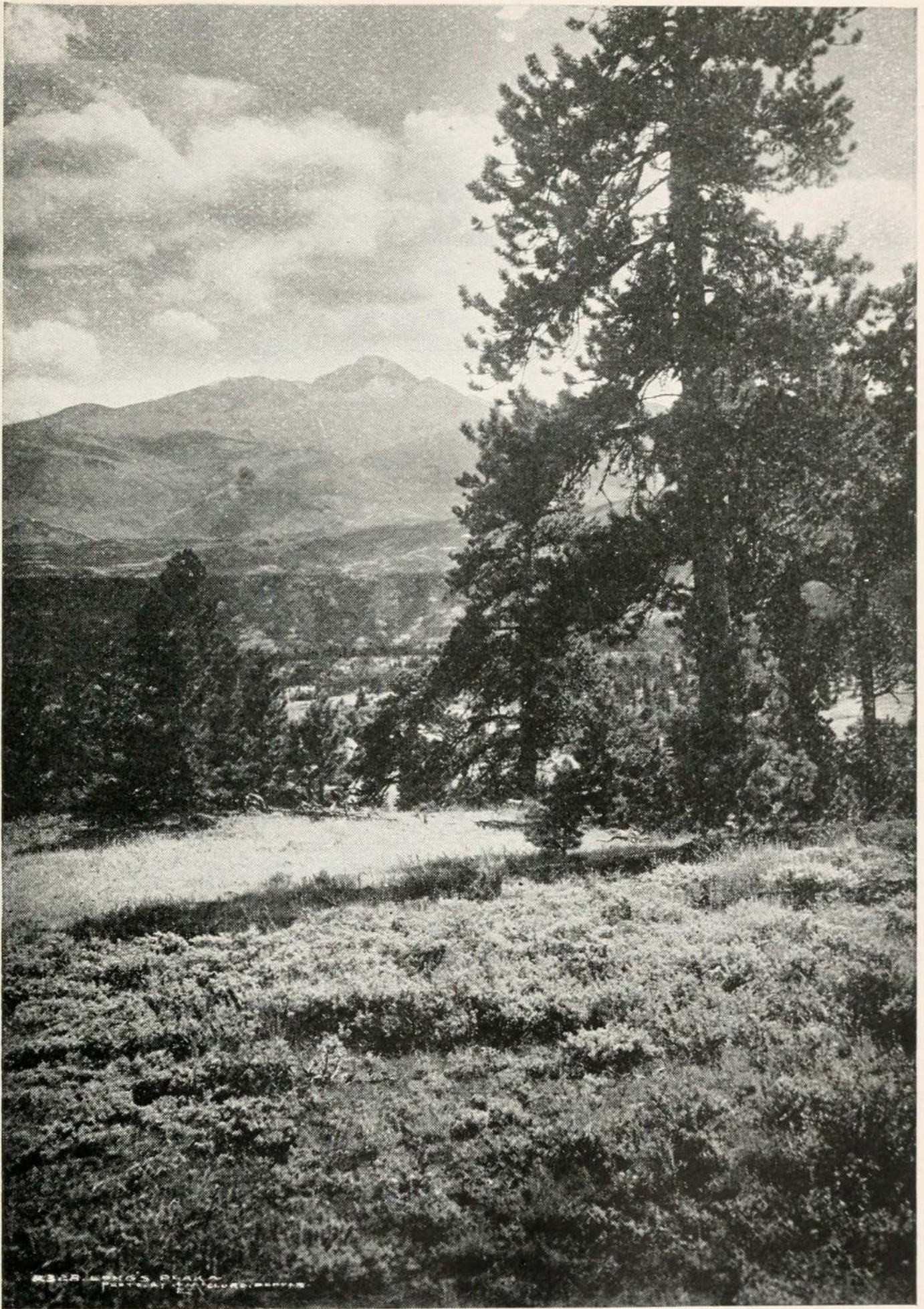
NIGHT IN CAMP

Soon the gray scout turned his horse from the trail and climbed into a gulch, which led up a steep defile. Spruces and pines grew on the ledges, thrusting their roots into deep cracks to hold themselves in place. A noisy stream splashed and gurgled beneath our feet.

Up and up we climbed, following the bed of the brook, that wound its way down through the defile.

“It’s quite a climb, but we must climb for the best things, and we are about there now.” Rocky Mountain Joe turned to the right beneath some spruce trees, and we could see an open space ahead.

In another moment we had come out upon shores of a mountain lake, nestled in between cliffs that rose straight up for hundreds of feet.



LONG'S PEAK

This lofty mountain is visible for many miles about Denver and Boulder. It is capped with snow most of the year.

Close by the shores of the lake, reflected in its placid depths, were tall spruces and pines, in a narrow fringe. The water lay so still that every branch and twig stood out in clear relief.

In the center the reflection of the great cliffs seemed to sink deep down into the water, giving place at the very bottom to a patch bluer than the sky itself.

The shadows were already long as we followed Rocky Mountain Joe around the edge to a spot where, a few feet back from a sharp wall of stone, stood a lean-to, facing the cliff.

“Well, that’s good luck, the old roof is whole,” said the scout, as he inspected the covering of bark and boughs. “I’ll put on a patch or two, and then let her rain, if rain it is to be.”

He threw the reins over his horse’s head and lay flat on the water’s edge, drinking deep from the limpid lake.

“Well, I’m glad to know this place,” said Father. “I was afraid of the water up this way.”

“Right you were, too,” replied Rocky Mountain Joe. “The water round these parts is poor stuff, mostly, but this little pool is about perfect.”

After all six of us had quenched our thirst, and brushed the thick coating of alkali from our clothes, the three horses were hobbled, and the three people began to get camp and supper ready.

The scout soon fixed the roof with strips of bark that he ripped off with his bowie-knife, while we were laying fresh beds, with twigs of fir, beneath our blankets.

Above the jagged cliffs wisps of vapor began to sail across the sky, and patches of the clouds clung to the highest rocks like bits of cotton wool.

In the gathering shadows the two men brought in a pile of dry branches, which were quickly cut up with the camp axe and thrown just under the edge of the sheltering roof.

“There now, let her rain, let her rain, we’ll be tight as a new barrel.” The

scout looked about with an air of satisfaction.

"Now you just come along, Miss Princess, and see if we have any luck for supper," he added, and went over to a spot where several small holes had been left in the broken ledge.

Thrusting his hand far down into one of these holes, Rocky Mountain Joe brought out a small reel, with a line neatly wound upon it. He grinned like a happy boy.

"Thar she be," he chuckled, "Just where I left her, three years ago."

A trout hook was fastened to the line, which he unwound a little, and tested.

Stepping back to the lean-to, he cut from the bacon a small chunk.

"Now, lady, if your head is steady I'll take you round to the prettiest place to fish you ever did see," continued our old guide.

I followed him round beneath some heavy trees, and along the edge of the lake, to a point where the ledge had

tumbled and left a pile of great fragments at the water's edge.

One of these fragments, long and narrow, jutted out over the water, about twenty feet above the surface.

Rocky Mountain Joe walked out over the narrow rock as surely as a panther, and I followed, proud of my own steady head and nimble feet, to a little shelf at the end.

Deftly hooking on a bit of pork, Joe let down the line till it lay just on the surface of the water. Then he twitched it back and forth.

In a few seconds there was a splash a few feet away, as a fish rose to the surface. Then we could see his shadowy form swimming beneath the bait.

The form rested quiet a moment, and suddenly disappeared. In the same instant there was a splash just where the bacon hung in the water.

"Got him that time," cried Rocky Mountain Joe, who at once threw several feet of loose line into the water.

"I'll give him lots of slack line," he explained. "He may take time enough to swallow it."

As he spoke, the line grew taut in his hand, and he began to pull in gently but swiftly.

I could see the fish darting about as he came upward. Then, with a great splatter, he rose to the surface, as the scout pulled in steadily on the line.

"Steady, steady thar," muttered his captor, raising him toward the rock. "Mebbe I'll get you yet."

I held my breath as the squirming beauty came nearer.

"Now gal, just hold that," he said, as he passed me his bowie-knife.

I took the sharp knife and placed it in his hand, just as the trout came level with the rock.

With a deft stroke Rocky Mountain Joe drove the blade through the fish and laid it safe on top of the stone. Then, holding it with his foot, he cut the backbone, in two or three places.

“Now he’ll stay put till he’s safe inside,” laughed the scout.

“You see, Princess,” he added, “those fish won’t fry well just out of the water, unless you cut the backbone. They curl up like a roll of birch-bark the minute they strike a hot pan. You can’t fry ’em nice and brown unless they lie flat.”

In another minute the hook was back in the water, and several breaks on the quiet surface showed where fish were rising.

“They’re just green with jealousy,” chuckled Rocky Mountain Joe. “Why, I’ve seen ’em so hungry here that I had to hide behind a rock to bait my hook. Thar now, I’ve got you.”

A big fish broke with a flash and a splash. Now the tight line was moving round and round through the water. Gradually, as he had done before, the scout drew it to the top of the water.

A dash of spray, a swirl, a sharp tug on the line, and the trout was off for the deep seclusion of the lake bottom, to

look up and wonder what it was that bit him.

“Never mind, never mind; plenty more in this pond.” Rocky Mountain Joe drew up the hook, straightened it a bit in his strong fingers, slipped on a fresh strip of bacon, and tried again.

“A trout’s mouth is mighty tender, little Pal,” he explained. “Sometimes I lose three or four in a string, but plenty more are waiting to try their luck. When they swallow the hook I get ’em every time.”

The fire glowed brightly through the gloomy forest, as we made our way back to camp with three large trout. The flames lit up the lean-to, that welcomed us like a warm and cozy home.

The clouds were dropping lower, and a damp chill I had not noticed while we were fishing was creeping into the air.

Father had placed several flat rocks near the fire to make a low table, and on this was spread the supper: bread, bologna, and tomatoes, peaches, cookies, and cheese.

Oh, people who live always in houses never know what real life may be.

“Now, if you’ll just be patient a minute, I’d like to add my part of the feast,” said the scout.

Once more he went to the crevice in the cliff and drew out a square of tin, which once had been the cover to a large tin box. This he scrubbed with sand by the shore till it was clean; and returned with the three trout, dressed and ready for the griddle.

Next he placed two square stones a few inches apart. With a thin scale of stone he scooped up a heap of burning coals and dumped them between the two rocks.

“Now little Pal, if you’ll put some small wood on the coals, and get those rocks good and hot, I’ll shave off a little bacon.” Rocky Mountain Joe took his trusty knife once more, and cut some slices of bacon, while I hastened to build up the fires.

In a few minutes the delicious odor of frying bacon rose in the evening air. The

scout stirred it about, and turned it with the same useful bowie-knife. It is said that a frontiersman could build a house and make all the furniture with a bowie-knife.

The bacon, soon broiled golden brown, was moved one side to make room for the trout. How they spluttered and sizzled, as they dropped into the hot fat! I might try a hundred ways to describe how they looked and smelled, but the only way you can really know is to ride all day in the Colorado hills, and then, with the darkness closing in, and a bright fire snapping and sparkling before you, to test the odor of fresh trout dropped into hot bacon fat.

“Blow the horn, Princess,” Joe called at last, “supper’s ready.”

Then we gathered about the rocky table and had a feast that would make Old King Cole more jolly than ever.

When it was over, and I had tucked away every crumb I could hold, we sat before the fire and listened, while Rocky

Mountain Joe told us of his wild life in the hills.

“And this old hole,” he said, as he swept his hand out into the gloomy shadows, “made a snug nest for a lone critter. My mustang would step up that brook and leave never a trace in the running water. Here, with the cliffs all round, and the climbing so bad, I was safe from those pesky redskins.”

“I could light my fire and warm my toes, for no smoke rose above the ledges. If they had found out where I was, they would have been mighty slow to tackle me, for those imps just hate to make a fight where they have to lick or be licked. A redskin wants plenty of room to run in if things go wrong, and here there was no chance for that if they got cornered.”

Even stories of Arapahoe raids could not keep my heavy eyelids up very long, and soon Father tucked me under the blankets on the soft boughs.

Almost at once I dropped asleep, and knew nothing more until a rattle and

clatter on the roof awoke me. It was the dead of night. Hail was falling in scattered showers.

I raised my head to look about. Father was sleeping quietly by my side, but Rocky Mountain Joe sat before the fire, smoking his stubby pipe.

The lean-to was so arranged that the hail fell upon the roof, but none struck the fireplace, for the crag above jutted out to protect it and made a flue to draw up the smoke.

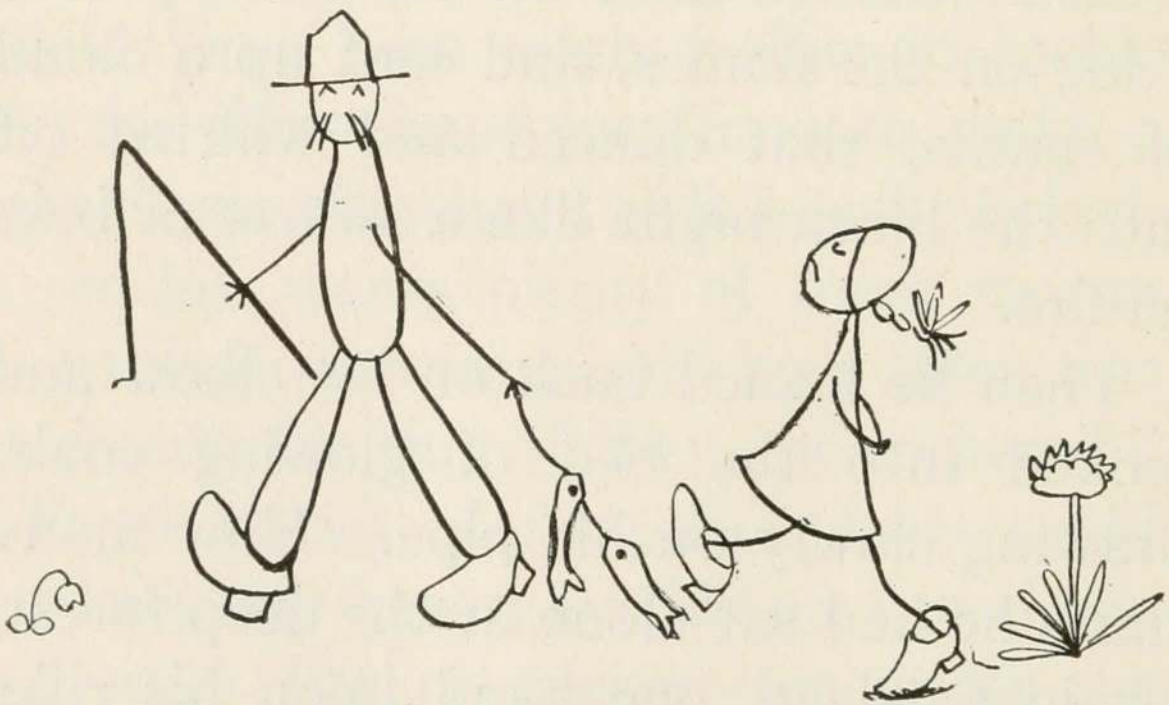
As I watched him, the old scout placed a log on the flames, and sent up a cloud of sparks, that danced and whirled off into the black night like a swarm of bees on fire.

Then he leaned back on his elbow and looked into the bed of glowing coals, drawing slowly on his pipe. How many times he had sat alone in the deep forest, afraid to sleep, one hand upon his rifle, with ears alert for any sound of danger.

How many weary nights he had spent beneath a sheltering rock or tree, shiver-

ing with cold and wet, not daring a fire at all because it might betray him.

Far up above the cliffs the wind was roaring through the trees. Hail fell upon the roof with a sharp rattle. Without was a raging tempest, but the fire glowed warm within our shelter; the gusts of wind only served to make it flame more brightly. My head sank back upon my balsam pillow, and the scout, with the flickering fire gleams, faded into slumber.



CHAPTER XIV

THE PAINTED VALLEY

DAY flashed across the sky when I awoke. The last clouds of the storm were golden with sunlight, which would hardly get into our deep nook till nearly noon. Rocky Mountain Joe was turning some bacon by his little stone stove, and watching a pail of coffee at the same time.

“Breakfast! breakfast! Blow the horn, Nita,” called Father, as he brought up a fresh supply of wood to throw upon the large fire.

Up I jumped, and hastened down to the lake for a good wash, and a big drink of water; for the supper of trout and bacon had left me very thirsty.

When I got back to camp, the blankets were all rolled up, and a breakfast of peaches, bacon, bread, and coffee, waited on the stone table.

I was eager to be off on the trail, so wasted no time in devouring my share of the chuck. The men were as quick as I. Before many minutes packs were made up, saddles were cinched, and we were saying good-bye to our cozy shelter.

"The canyon trail is quite close at hand," said Father, in answer to my questions. "We will strike in there before very long."

So we did, and I found it even more wonderful than I expected.

Imagine a narrow trail, leading along a canyon, hundreds of feet deep in spots, with walls cut down by the stream as cheese is cut with a knife.

Across the cut, the walls were made of stone, layer upon layer, in all the colors of the rainbow. Red, green, yellow, and brown of different hues, appeared. Sometimes several colors lay in brilliant contrast at one point.

In certain places, where the canyon was straight, the lines of red and green, or brown, would run in great ribbons, as far as the eye could reach.

“How ever did those layers get placed so evenly along in this canyon, Father?” I asked, as we stopped to look up and down the cut.

“Well, if I can believe those big books up there on my shelf, it was done a long, long time ago; so many years ago that no one knows just how far back they were formed.”

“A thousand years?” I ventured.

“Yes, probably a million years or more. In those days most of this land was covered by a vast sea.

“Gradually, as the waters drew back, and the land rose, the sea became smaller, and rivers ran down in many places to the shores.

“You know how water gathers up dust and dirt as it runs along. The rivers gathered up the bits of sand, and crumbs of rock from the surface of the earth.

“These were all brought down and dropped in an even layer along the shores of the sea.

“While the rivers were bringing down

all this material, the waves were busy pounding the shore, wearing down the rocks, and grinding the pebbles into tiny bits.

“Away from the shore where the water was deeper, the fine particles sank to the bottom and stayed there. This layer would grow thicker and thicker till it had risen to the surface, and no more was added for a long time.

“But when it got to the surface the rain and sea began all over again upon it and wore it away till a new layer was added to the sea bottom. This time new rocks had come to the surface on shore, and little plants and shell fish were growing in the coast plain, so the new layer would be of a new color.”

“Then all these layers were piled on top of each other. I think I see now,” I said.

“Yes, age by age the surface of the sea along the shores would rise and sink. When it rose, the top would be worn away; when it sank, a new layer would be added, almost always as even and level as you see it here.”

“But how did it turn into stone?”

“That was the pressure of the top layers on those below. This pressure was so great that the mud and sand crushed together into a dense stone mass, as hard as that beneath your feet.

“Most deposits in the world are a dull brown, or gray, like slate, but here in Colorado there were rocks of brilliant color, and these, as they wore away, in different ages, made the layers we see as the river cuts through and shows the different deposits, one above the other.”

“Wal,” grunted Rocky Mountain Joe, “that makes a mighty fine yarn, I’ll admit; but you come down along here and I’ll show you something I know about myself.”

Father winked at me. The old scout didn’t believe a word he said, but we only smiled and followed him down into a little hollow.

“Thar,” he demanded, “tell me why that runs blood.”

He pointed to a spring that bubbled in a grassy nook. Its water rose as red as blood.

“The vein runs through a lot of this red rock, and picks up so much mineral that it runs full of it. See here.”

Father reached into the saddle bag for a tin cup, got down, and started to dip up some water.

“Don’t touch it. That thar water’s sure death. The redskins know it for bad medicine.” The scout shook his head in solemn warning.

“Oh I’m not afraid. I have my life insured,” laughed Father, and he dipped up a cupful. For a moment it stood red, and then the top grew clear. Gradually the color faded till it seemed quite clear.

At Father’s request, Rocky Mountain Joe looked in also, but he passed it back quickly. Many scouts were as full of superstitions as the Indians themselves, and he was taking no chances.

Later we found a spring of green water, bright and vivid. It was a wonderful spot, full of wonderful things to see and remember.

"The Arapahoes all say this place was painted up by the Great Spirit for his best parlor," declared the scout, as we rode along toward Estes Park.

"They know that Colorado is God's Garden, the place he loves best of all in the world, and for the very best lodge of all, he painted these valleys round Saint Vrain."

"I don't wonder they thought so," said Father. "See there, Nita," he added, jumping from his horse and handing me a bit of stone.

On the flat surface was the image of a fern, pressed clearly into the hard rock. It seemed as if the leaf lay there before me.

"Thousands of years ago," he went on, "that fern grew here on a marshy bank. Perhaps some great animal stepped on it or rolled it into the mud. Then other mud piled over it before the fabric could decay. The mud changed at last into rock, and now we find it after all the ages, just as it was buried."

“They found a bone, a while back, down near Morrison,” added Rocky Mountain Joe, “that was near ten feet long. They say the beast that toted it round was almost a hundred feet long and thirty feet high. Do you believe that?”

“I can’t help believing it,” laughed Father. “Could anyone fool you on a buffalo bone? Suppose some one tried to show you a steer’s rib for one left from an old bull buffalo, what would you say?”

“I’d say that I know every joint on a buffalo, I don’t care how long he’s been dead.”

“That’s the way with these men of science,” replied Father. “If they see a bone, they can tell what kind of a beast it came from. They know how long and big it was and what it did, almost as well as if they saw it alive.”

I slipped the fossil into my saddle-bag and resolved to make Father take me down to Morrison some day to see the great fossils there.

I was wondering about the enormous beasts that used to wallow in the warm, shallow sea that covered this land ages ago, when we rounded a curve and saw, rising between the trees that lined the road, a massive peak, towering naked and barren above the green slopes. It looked as if a giant had scooped out the top with a gigantic spoon.

“Oh, what a queer mountain! Where has the top gone?” I said.

“The snow and ice have worn it off,” replied Father. “Most of the year a glacier is sliding slowly down the steep slopes into the bowl. There it grinds around and scours it deeper and deeper every year.

“Notice that sharp cut on the left, Princess,” he went on. “That is a thousand feet down. No one has yet found a way into the bowl over that precipice, though a good many have tried it. Two young men back here on a vacation from college made the attempt a little while ago.

“They got up there on top of the ridge

at the left. One started first, working his way down from ledge to ledge. He had hardly begun the descent when he stepped on a piece of stone already cracked and about to fall.

“Without any warning it gave way beneath him and he went down headlong in a cloud of dust from the falling stone.”

“Did they find his body?” I asked, looking up at the great bowl and shuddering.

“Yes, his friend was driven almost out of his head by the sight of such a death. Three days later he wandered into the village and told the story. Some expert mountaineers agreed to climb around to the bowl by the other side and find his body if they could.

“It was a tough job, but at last they reached the poor lad. It was impossible to bring his body down, so they made a tomb there in that quiet spot and walled it in with heavy stones. No one has tried the climb since, and I hope no one ever will.”

Father sighed as we rode on, and Rocky Mountain Joe took his turn and told of the things he had seen in this wonderful country about Estes Park.

While he was talking we gradually descended till we could look down across a gentle slope covered with sage brush, and broken by a great pine here and there. At the foot lay a broad park, level as a table, verdant with rich meadows and groups of trees. Beyond this the mountains rose abruptly, ridge on ridge, to the crown of the great range, outlined snow white against the deep blue sky.

“Yonder lies Estes Park,” said Rocky Mountain Joe, as we reined up.

I looked about at the intervale, so flat and smooth and green in these rough hills.

“How did that get so smooth and level in there?” I asked.

“Glaciers make some of these places, and beavers made some also,” Father explained.

“Once this whole valley was filled to the top of the mountains, and even

higher, by an enormous sheet of ice and snow.

“These glaciers brought along stones and gravel in their track. When they melted they often dropped so much material in the channels of mountain streams that the water was dammed back to form a lake. The stream above brought down soil and sand which settled in a level sheet to make this intervale on the bottom of the lake. Then, as the ice disappeared, the lake subsided and left these lovely meadows.”

“But you said the beavers made some, also.”

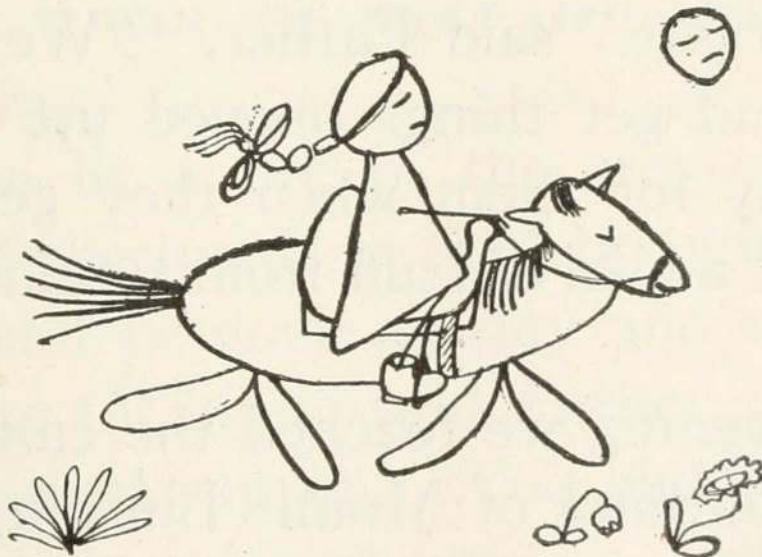
“Yes, the beavers build their little houses mostly under water in ponds and lakes formed in running streams. They often make their own lake by building a dam across the stream. Then the earth, the stream brings down, settles in the quiet water, and builds a level intervale just as it does back of the glacier dam.”

We rode down across the intervale, watered by a limpid mountain stream, and

sprinkled with flowers, while Rocky Mountain Joe told of the hunting trips into these valleys, that used to be filled with wild game of all kinds.

How I wish every child could take that wonderful ride, swinging round by Estes Park trail and back toward Boulder.

The breezes were blowing fresh and free, the rivers were rushing and tumbling along the trail, the magpies calling and whistling in the great trees, and the mountains sparkling under the blue, blue sky. Surely the Arapahoes were right when they called Colorado the chosen spot of the Great Spirit.



CHAPTER XV

A SURPRISE

WHEN we got back to Nederland from our trip through Saint Vrain and Estes Park we found that the men had gone back into the hills to do a little prospecting on their own account.

"They left word that they would show up in camp tomorrow or next day. They were expecting you back about then," said George Tobey.

"All right," said Father. "We will go along and get things opened up, and be all ready for them when they get back. I expect a load of stuff from Boulder right soon."

By evening we reached the camp, just as the outlines of Mount Lincoln, across the gulch, were disappearing in the dusk, which was smoking over the hills. Darkness comes fast in Colorado. When the

day goes into the west, night is close behind.

There was the key, safe on the lintel above the door, and the lantern just within.

“Ha,” said Father, as he lifted the globe and lit a match, “now for some supper and a good sleep.”

He lit the lantern, and we looked about. Then a frown came over his face. Several tools we had left in the corner were gone. Some wandering prospector had made off with them. These Father would need right away.

“Well, Lady Love, let’s have some chuck. I can get more tools tomorrow, I suppose.”

So he lit a fire in the stove and we finished the lunch we had brought along.

“I shall be gone all day and may not be home till late,” said Father, after we had finished supper. “You had better go down with me and stay in town till I return. It will be lonely for you up here in camp.”

“No, I don’t want to stay in town,” I replied, “I want to stay here and keep house. I shall not be lonely nor afraid. There is nothing up here to hurt me. You have said so yourself, many times.”

I felt independent and just longed for a chance to keep house all by myself. I had no fear of the silent mountains, or the dark forest, or the furry folk that lived there.

“I’ll have a hot supper all ready for you, Daddy, and I’ll have the most beautiful time.”

Father lifted one eyebrow and looked down at me.

“Well, I suppose you are safe enough. I was afraid you would be lonely here by yourself all day.”

“Oh, I shall be too busy. I am never lonely here in the mountains; the trees and rocks are so friendly. Don’t you remember that old grey wolf that came when you were down in the mine? He just looked and looked at me, and I stared and stared at him. Then he turned and

walked away, just like a peddler who has sold us nothing. I suppose he expected me to ask him in to chuck."

"Well, I am willing to try it, and I'll get home as soon as I can. You can have a grand time all by yourself, but if any wolves or mountain lions come to call, I wouldn't ask them in to eat. There is the gun, and the cartridges are on the shelf. Hold it steady, take your time, and you'll hit anything you aim at."

"You will find all the food you need up there on the shelf, I guess," he added, pointing to a row of cans on the wall. We had left them there to start house-keeping with on our return.

When Father had kissed me good-bye and swung into the saddle before dawn the next day, I lay awhile listening to the bird notes that came in through the open hole in the roof.

As the light sifted through the great pine trees, and the range across the gulch began to show its peaks against the rosy sky, one bird and then another began to

twitter. After the first faint note, he would clear his voice and sing at his very best.

When the first rays of sunlight shot like golden spears through the forest, the great pines echoed with birdcalls.

Still I lay and shivered under the blankets. It is cold up there in the hills at night. As soon as the sun has set, darkness comes at once, and with it the cold, which lasts until the sun is above the trees, even in summer.

Outside I could hear the scratch of the chipmunks, climbing the logs of the cabin, and the rattle of little stones, as they scampered across the path.

Then the mountains began to groan and crack, as the sun played full upon them. At night, as it grows cold, the rocks shrink. In shrinking they boom, and groan, the upper layers pulling and scraping across those beneath, which are not affected by the cold. In the morning the heat of the sun makes them creak and groan like a tenderfoot after a night on the bare ground.

When the hills began their labors I knew it was time to rise, so up I jumped and washed my face in the cold spring water by the door. Then I cleared the little iron stove, and started a hot fire of dead pine sticks.

“Now, let’s see,” said I, “what I’ll have for breakfast. There is the bread we brought up last night. I’ll make some toast of that.”

Then I looked over the cans on the shelf. There was jam, and canned peaches, and pears, with corned beef and tomatoes. I had not had any jam for a long time.

“I’ll have some toast and jam, with a little corned beef,” I said to myself, as I pulled the high stool over to the shelf.

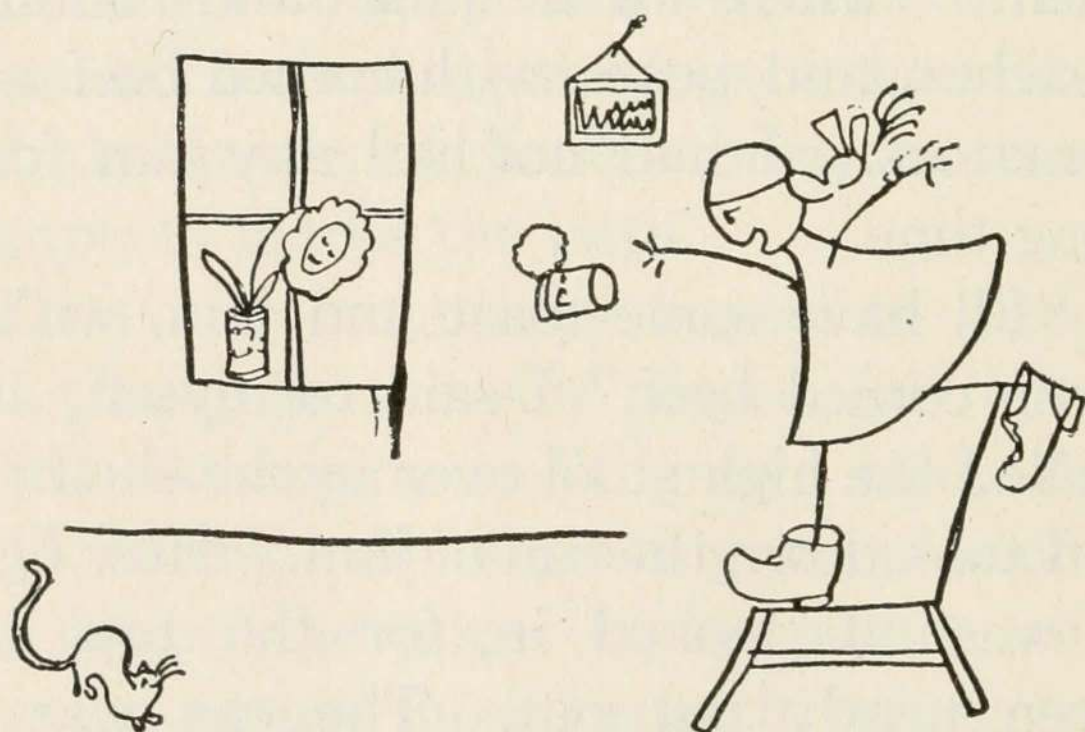
I took down the can of jam. How light it was! I looked in, for the top had been neatly cut out. The can was as empty as a prospect hole. I took down the beef. The can was as bare as the cupboard of Old Mother Hubbard.

I was so angry that I threw the can

with all my might into the corner, where the wood was piled. Then I let out a yell and jumped up onto the shelf, for three great rats scuttled out of the wood pile across the floor to a hole in the corner.

Those mountain rats are horrid great creatures, big as small cats. They will gnaw through anything, and there is no use trying to keep them out of a cabin.

After they had gone I jumped down again. Then I looked into all the cans.



Everyone had been cleaned out and put neatly back on the shelf.

At first I thought of some words

that Father used to say on such occasions, but I think I really didn't say them. Some human magpie had gone up that way and cleaned out our food. Then he had put the cans all back as natural as life to cheer us on our return.

Well, I had the bread, anyway, so I made a breakfast on toast, with a little cambric tea, made from a can of milk we had in the pack.

After breakfast I got several pails of water and washed the floor. As the mountains scrape and crack, a fine dust rises, and this had covered the floor of the cabin with a thick white coat. I can hear myself singing, "Come all ye jolly hunters," at the top of my voice, as I worked.

After chuck I was hanging the towels out to dry, when an old stage driver came up the trail.

"Tell your dad they have some good beef today down at Nederland," he called, as he went by.

I thanked him, but did not tell him my father was away, for he had warned me

many times not to tell too much. "A noisy tongue, my child, fills many a quiet grave," he used to say. I had learned to speak with care except to those at home.

As soon as he was gone I began to think. We didn't always have fresh meat up there in our mountain camp. How good it would taste if Father should find a piece of steak broiling on the fire when he came back! He would smell it way down the gulch as he rode upward, cold and hungry.

I knew George Tobey, who sold fresh meat, down in Nederland. It was two miles down there, over a steep, rocky, narrow trail. Going down it would take less than an hour, but the return trip would take more than twice as long. It would be a stiff climb for me.

"I know I can get back before dark," I said to myself, "and I can have supper ready before Father comes."

I kicked off my moccasins, put on my heavy boots, latched the door, put the key on the ledge above it, and started down the trail.

All went well, and there were some good cuts left when I got to the meat store. I had never bought anything there alone.

“Well, well, well, how’s Pettibone’s little pal? What can I do for you?” asked George Tobey in some surprise.

“I want some meat,” I replied. Then I told him how our cans had been emptied.

George looked at me gravely. “That gent thought he was very clever, he did, he did,” said George. “But just look here.”

He laid his hand on a large coil of new rope. “We are planning to hang a dozen or two of those frisky gents right away, and then p’r’aps they’ll let your food alone. How much meat did you want, sister?”

For a moment I hesitated.

“Oh, about as much as Father usually gets.”

“He usually gets about ten pounds.”

“How much is ten pounds?”

He laid his knife across a large piece of beef.

"Oh, I could never carry all that up to camp."

"I should say not. Suppose you try half."

He cut off a great slice that weighed about five pounds. I thought I could carry that. It made my mouth water. I longed for a piece of steak.

George did it up in a piece of paper; a rather thin wrapping, for paper was costly in Nederland.

"I think I ought to have Buddy go up to camp with you. That trail is too rough and lonesome for a little girl."

"Oh, no, I don't want any boy," I replied. "I came down all right and I can go back all right."

"Well, you had no meat on your way down, but you're a plucky one so maybe you'll haul your load."

He passed me the beef and I started off.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MOUNTAIN LION

THE shadows were already getting long on the trail, for the sun sets early in the Colorado hills.

Up and up I climbed, over rocks, and along ledges. Now and then I could look almost straight down on the town I had left, and could see way off toward Boulder.

I had gone almost half way when I began to get tired, and with the weariness came a feeling I could hardly understand. Something was wrong. I was nervous, almost afraid. Nothing had happened. I had heard nothing, seen nothing.

Those who live in the mountains, on the plains, and in the forests, alone, away from other folk, learn to feel things they

cannot see nor hear. There is a sense that tells them the path when there is no path, that leads them to water in the bad lands, that warns them of danger.

With this feeling upon me I began to go faster. Then I thought of Father.

“When you are afraid,” he always said, “go slow, and keep cool. The faster you go to get out of danger, the more fear you will have, and the greater your danger will be.”

Father had lived in danger all his life, and had never come to harm, so I remembered what he said now and stopped dead still. Then I started on again slowly.

“There is nothing to be afraid of,” I said to myself. “I’ll go slow and keep cool.”

But I walked softly and listened with big ears, watching the trail on every side.

After a while I was sure I could hear something behind me. I turned sharply. Nothing was there but the rocks and fallen trees in the gully.

Again I started on, determined to keep

cool and drive away the fear that was creeping on me.

Then the mysterious sounds came again; the softest faintest sounds. There was no snap of twig nor rattle of stone, no noise I had ever heard before. Truly my ears could not prove there was any sound at all.

Still I felt those sounds. I knew they were about me. Pad, pad, pad, like the falling of a fairy cushion.

I stopped and listened. No sound. I clutched the meat tightly under my arm and started on again.

Pad, pad, pad. The sound went with me.

Looking ahead I saw with joy a clearing where the path was free and clear. If I were followed I could see my pursuer there; for in the clearing it could not hide behind rocks nor stumps.

In spite of my resolve to keep cool and go slow I went faster, for a half mile beyond the clearing was camp and safety.

With my new courage the sounds seemed to disappear. I stepped on

bravely, almost to the clearing, when suddenly across the open space went a long yellow body.

It did not seem to run, but to float over the ground without effort. It was out of sight in a second, beyond the pine trees, moving like a shadow, silent and swift.

I rubbed my eyes and looked again, but it was gone. The sight was as the sound, hardly enough to believe true.

I knew now what I had heard and seen. I was followed by a mountain lion.

“Well,” I thought, “you have got to keep cool and go slow.” So I clutched the meat tighter still to my light dress, and started on. I felt really less frightened than before. Now I knew what the danger was. Father had seen and killed many lions, and never seemed much afraid of them. I took most of my thoughts from him, so I did not fear so much as others would.

Across the clearing I was going on up the trail, when I heard a terrible cry, way off to my left.

The cry of the mountain lion is an awful sound. Even when one is safe in camp it makes you hold your breath. On a lonely trail it was like a cry of agony and despair.

The first sound is a low moan, which seems to rise from the earth all about. The air trembles and every other sound ceases. The moan rises and grows louder into a wail; then suddenly it bursts into a sharp, snarling screech that seems to rend the very air.

No resolve to remember my father's counsel could keep back a sob, nor check my flying feet till the echoes had died away. Then I stopped and drew a deep breath. I must not be afraid, I must not run.

Again I went on steadily up the trail.

Soon from behind I could hear the soft pad, pad, pad; but turn as quick as I might, I could see nothing.

The sounds ceased. Once more the moaning howl began, off on the right.

I went on, clutching the beef tighter than ever.

Another clearing came in view. Home was almost reached, for just across a little gulch beyond lay camp.

Suddenly the yellow form flitted across the clearing. It seemed to move without touching the ground. The lion was too cunning to follow in a spot where he could not hide.

In the next minute the scream came once more, far off to my left. He was making another circle to get behind me, and moved faster than the wind.

Beyond lay the hardest part of the trail, narrow, with shelving rocks and scattered boulders. I knew the danger there. Perhaps the lion knew it too.

Still I went on, hugging the fresh beef. I did not cry out, I did not seem more afraid, I just tried to keep cool, and went on, over the clearing to the spot where the trail began again under a twisted pine.

Another noise reached my nervous ears. It was the sound of steps, coming down. Then around the tree came Ed Sampson.

At sight of me he called out, "Here she

is.” Then he jumped right up in the air, and rushed toward me like a crazy man, yelling and firing his pistol.

He grabbed me in his arms. The meat fell down, but he did not pause. Up the trail he ran with me, over the rocks and through the rubble, yelling as if he were crazy.

I kicked, and struggled to get free, but he gripped me so tight he almost broke my ribs.

Another man stood near the camp.

“Get some pure water,” called Ed, “and be quick about it.”

Into the cabin to the bed, down onto the blankets I went, without a chance to say a word.

Then Ed opened my dress at the shoulder and looked at my chest and arm.

“Where are you hurt?” he cried. I hardly knew what he was talking about. “Why, no where. I’m not hurt, except where you squeezed my ribs so.”

“Well then, where in thunderation did all that blood come from?”

I looked down at my dress. It was red from the beef I had hugged so close.

“Ed Sampson!” I demanded, “go back and get that beef. You knocked it out of my arms.”

Scratching his head in great bewilderment, Ed hastened down the path, while I hurried to get on a blue flannel dress.

When Father came home the steak was broiling on the fire, but the meat man had seen him in Nederland and told him about my going down, and Ed had met him to tell all about my trip back. They hadn't heard enough about noisy tongues and quiet graves.

Father didn't scold me. He smiled just a little, and raised his eyebrows way up.

“Why didn't you throw down the meat and trot along? That is what the lion wanted.”

“I didn't bring that way up here for any lion. I brought it up for you,” I answered.

“Well it does smell mighty good,” he said, as we sat down to supper.

CHAPTER XVII

FIRE

IN October I had a great and joyful surprise. Mother arrived at camp to see what it was like, and help us close up for the winter, because it would be too cold to stay up there after freezing weather began. She was not able to stay long in a spot so high, for she could not breathe the rare mountain air in comfort.

One day, not long after Mother arrived, Father came rather late to dinner. He sat with his head resting on his hand, eating little, and saying hardly a word.

Mother noticed this, but she made no remark. She had trained us all to think twice before we spoke once.

“Your brain doesn’t get a fair chance, if your tongue is too busy.” This was a precept she herself followed in the varied

life that led her into so many strange and difficult places.

So while her tongue rested, her brain was busy.

For dessert she got down a can of peaches, a favorite dish, and placed a large serving before Father.

He hardly touched them. He was very quiet.

At last Mother spoke. She knew that if he let peaches escape, there was trouble somewhere.

“What is wrong, Father? Aren’t you feeling well?”

He looked up quickly, and smiled. “Oh, yes, I’m all right. I was just thinking.” Then he took his spoon and proved it by cleaning up every peach.

“Mother,” he said, as we were getting up, “when did those tourists go wandering through here, down toward Eldora?”

“You mean the three men with the fancy rifles?”

“Yes.”

“That was day before yesterday, I

think. „Wasn't it Lady Love?" She turned toward me.

“Yes, you know they had got off the trail. They were just as green as spring willow.” I answered.

“That's what I was thinking,” said Father, as he went out. “They were too green altogether to be wandering round these hills without nursemaids.”

I watched him. Before he went down to the mine he walked to a little ridge, and stood looking southwest, toward Eldora. When he had gone I went over, too, and looked in the same direction.

At first I saw nothing. Then I noticed a bluish haze, several miles down the valley. As I stood there it moved a little with the light breeze. It almost disappeared, and then grew deeper. I had lived in the mountains long enough to know what that haze meant. There was only one thing it could mean—fire.

I knew why Father had been silent, and why he had not eaten much. A fire in the forest country is a deadly danger.

When I went back to help clean up and wash the dishes I said nothing, for I surely never wanted my noisy tongue to help fill any silent graves. I knew Father would be glad if I showed I could keep a secret, too.

At supper time I was out there by the ridge when Father came along. He stood a moment and looked back. The haze was thicker now.

"Does Mother know?" he raised one eyebrow as he looked down at me.

"No, she has been in camp all day."

"Well, what the eyes don't see the heart can't feel. Let us wait a while. It may burn itself out."

"Do you suppose those greenhorns set it?" I asked.

"Very likely. They are always lighting pipes and throwing down the matches, or dropping cigar-butts along the trail. They don't know what dry wood really is on the Coast where they came from."

At supper we talked as usual, and



A GLACIAL BOWL

When a glacier starts high up in the region of perpetual snow it eats back into the mountain, making a glacial bowl. The cliff at the left of this bowl has never yet been scaled.

Father proved his good health by eating a hearty meal. I did not feel so anxious as he did, for the fire seemed a long, long way off, as indeed it was. So I ate a good supper also, and was sure that Mother noticed nothing wrong.

That night I heard the door creak once or twice, and knew that Father was slipping out to keep track of the fire.

Early the next day I walked out and looked off toward Eldora. Everything seemed about the same. The smoke was certainly no thicker, and appeared to me rather lighter than before.

At breakfast Father seemed easy in his mind, but I said nothing about the fire. He said nothing about the fire. Mother said nothing about the fire. I was sure she had not noticed it.

About three that afternoon two men came along with a camp outfit. They were going down on the Eldora trail also, and stopped a while to get some drinking water and make sure of the trail.

Father talked with them a few minutes

to see if they knew much about the mountains, but found right off that they knew nothing at all.

Father always hated to give advice when it was not asked. Mountain people and plainsmen meet many strange characters, who wish to go their own way and mind their own business.

“Ask me no questions, and I’ll tell you no lies,” is a motto among the mountains. Still he felt that people who knew the hills must show themselves friendly to those who might come to harm.

Going over to the ridge he motioned toward the smoke, which I could see had spread northward.

The hunters did not seem to notice anything except the splendid view.

“There seems to be a fire down that way,” Father said.

“That’s so; it looks like a brush fire,” replied one of the men.

“Fire is fire up here in the hills, when it gets a start.”

“I hope it won’t do much damage,”

said the other tourist, stooping to pick up his gun.

Father lifted one eyebrow, as they got ready to start along.

"We could put you up at the camp, all right, if you wanted to wait over a bit and see how it acts."

"Oh no, I guess we had better be moving on. Thanks just the same."

I could see Father shrug his shoulders and turn away. They were hopeless. But he turned back once more.

"You'll pardon me for helping to mind your business, stranger," he said, "but I know these hills, and I wouldn't go far down that trail just now unless I had to."

The men looked at Father, then at the smoke, then at each other. The smoke seemed quiet and harmless off there over the gulch.

"Much obliged, and no offence at all," replied the tourist, "but we had better make a start, anyway. We'll make camp early, and if it looks bad we can come back."

So they started off. We watched them awhile, as they went down the trail. Then Father went back to his work, and I returned to the cabin.

“How is the fire getting on?” asked Mother quietly, as I entered.

“Why what fire?”

“Did you suppose I couldn’t tell a forest fire when I saw it?”

She motioned toward the bed. There were all my clothes laid out in a neat pile. Most of hers were gone from the hooks, and a packing-case stood strapped and ready, behind the door. While we had been keeping our secret she had kept hers, for she saw the smoke just as soon as we did.

“Folks may have to travel out of here tomorrow,” she said. “Any fool can start a forest fire, but ten wise men may not stop it.”

I just stared at her. This was quite a surprise to me.

“You see, Lady Love,” she explained, “That piece down there is not clean land.

They were cutting timber down there three or four years ago. All the slashings, the tops of the trees, and the branches are left in great heaps all through the forest. This has been a hot, dry spell, and those piles of slashings will burn almost like gunpowder."

"Why do they leave them there, if they burn like that?" I asked.

"It is the easiest way. If they took the time to drag them into clearings and burn them, they would save most of these terrible fires, and probably the wood ashes they got would pay for the trouble, for wood ashes are valuable to make plants grow."

I had often seen Father sprinkle wood ashes in the garden as fertilizer, and had heard him talk fiercely against lumbermen who left their slashings about. Now I was to see the results of this for myself.

When he came in to supper Father swept the room with his eye and noticed everything.

"Oh, I guess it isn't so bad as all that,"

he said, with a little laugh. "The wind is dying, and the fire moves very slowly. It is miles off yet, and probably will work down the other way."

He never said such things unless they were so. "Travel light, tell the truth, and mind your own business, and you'll get almost anywhere you want to go," he used to say to me. So we knew now that he was free from fear.

We were all tired that night, for we had been awake most of the night before. After we had gone to bed I knew nothing more till I awoke, quite late.

I smelled smoke.

Sitting up in my bunk I looked around. No one was there. I ran across the floor and put my head out the window. The air was full of flying ashes. Beyond the big ledge I could see that the wind was blowing hard.

I ran back and jumped into my clothes. When I got to the ridge my heart sank with terror. The flames were on the edge of our clearing, and Father was right down

among them. Mother was standing near the ridge. Over near the trail Ed Sampson held a torch in his hand.

I ran toward Mother, my knees shaking under me. She saw the fear in my face.

“Don’t be frightened, Lady Love,” she said, putting her arm around me. “This is a backfire, that Father is burning about the camp.”

“Why?” I shivered at sight of the flame in spite of her quiet voice.

“That is to burn all the dead wood about our clearing a little at a time. If Father starts the fires himself he can make them burn against the wind. In that way he can keep them small enough to handle, and look after the buildings. Then if the big fire should run up here it would come to the spot where our fires have burned all the brush and dead wood. There will be nothing left for it to burn, so it will run around beyond the clearing.

“And we shall be safe then?” I asked.

“Well,” Mother hesitated, “we shall be safer than we should if this were not done.”

Father came up just then.

"Hello, Lady Love," he said, putting his arm around me. "We had a grand sleep, didn't we?"

He tried to be free and easy, but I could tell from the squeeze of his arm that he did not feel so.

I could see the other men coming out of the brush here and there, where they had been watching the backfires.

Ed Sampson came up close to Father.

"What do you think of getting down to Nederland?" he asked in a low tone.

"If I had heard this wind last night, Ed," he replied, "I should be there now, we certainly did sleep like deaf dormice."

"I would have heard a wind from any other quarter," said Ed, "but the ledges shut that south wind off from our cabins, so it seemed quiet as a Quaker meeting. Do you think it is too late for the trail?"

Father took a long look about, then he nodded.

"You men might make it. If I were

alone I might take a chance, but not with women.”

“It wouldn’t take very long to get down there.”

“I know it, Ed, but I have no way of telling just where that fire is now. We could see this morning that it had made some big jumps. With this wind it could run down a coulee and cut us off before we had any warning.”

“I suppose it does run pretty fast,” replied Ed. “I wish I knew where it was now. Our own smoke makes it hard to tell.”

“Run back on the hill a piece will you, and find out what you can?” asked Father.

Ed started off, as Mother called me into the cabin.

“We’ll get up a good breakfast,” she said cheerfully, “for they will be working hard.”

As she took the fry-pan I saw that her hand trembled. Her face was pale.

“Is it so very bad, Mother?”

“Oh, it might be worse, Lady Love, but

I wish people could see the results of their careless ways. Just a little match thrown down, just an ember left in a camp fire, just a spark dropped from a pipe, and soon we see a whiff of smoke, a tiny blaze, a roar, and the forest is a terrible torch, sweeping off trees, and houses, and people. All that suffering could be saved by a bit of care."

I felt the shivers creeping up again. This was a long lecture from Mother.

Father had come in to breakfast when Ed returned.

"Sit down, Ed, and eat," he said. The men had their own stores and their own cook, but Mother planned to feed them this morning. Ed sat down.

"Any chance by the trail?" asked Father.

"Nope. The fire has worked into the coulees. The Eldora trail is swept clean. We shall see it over the blue ridge in an hour or two if the wind holds."

"Did you say it had burned over the Eldora trail?" I asked.

He nodded.

“Won’t those tourists have to come back?”

Ed looked at Father.

“Might as well tell the truth, Ed,” he said. Then he turned to me.

“Those people would be back now, if they were ever coming.”

“Well,” said Mother, “you tried your best to save them. I don’t see why people who know nothing of the hills refuse to listen.” She sighed and left the table.

I could eat nothing more. The picture of those two fine young men down there on that blazing trail filled my mind.

CHAPTER XVIII

NIGHT IN THE TUNNEL

AFTER breakfast the flames of our back fires were dying out, near camp, and Father got out the plow and told the men to plow the clearings.

“It will help kill the ground fire when we may not be able to get out and fight it,” Father said, when we three were alone in the kitchen. “It will keep the men busy, too,” he added. “They are getting frightened, and need to keep busy all the time.”

A few minutes later there was a shout from the men. We hurried out and saw them pointing down toward the blue ridge.

A cloud of white smoke was rolling above it. In the cloud we could see tongues of flame here and there, leaping up into the sky.

In the clear Colorado air it seemed right upon us, though it was really still some miles away. On this side of the ridge there was a stretch of heavy timber, where cutting had been done.

“She’ll go some when she gets into that patch,” said Ed Sampson, as all stopped work a few minutes.

“Well,” replied Father, “we’d better get on with our plowing. Lucky for us the slopes of this hill are partly bare.”

“That’s so,” agreed Ed, as they went back to the plow and picks, and began to turn up the fresh sods again.

I looked down the sides of our mountain, but they didn’t seem very bare to me.

The fire burned fiercely up the south side of the ridge, driven on by the wind, that blew harder than ever, but it was some time before it got a good start on this side. After we had eaten the dinner which Mother got ready we could see it really had a good start on our side.

Mother did her best with that dinner.

She had me fry a lot of bacon and potatoes, baked nearly a hundred biscuit after her favorite rule, and made a great big peach shortcake. With this she boiled a large pot of coffee, enough for dinner and the afternoon, for the men were fond of coffee.

No one felt hungry, but the dinner tasted so good that we all ate much more than we thought we should.

After dinner we went out to watch the fire. It had spread on all sides now and was starting down the ridge toward us. There was no escape on any side, for to go away from it, up the mountain, would lead to certain death.

“Well,” said Father, “we shall sleep tonight in the tunnel, I guess, so lets get everything packed up.”

The tunnel was a shaft Father had driven into the mountain below his silver mine, to drain away the water and keep the mine dry. It was high enough to walk in if the men stooped a little, and was timbered all round to keep rocks and dirt from falling down.

I shuddered when he spoke of sleeping in the tunnel, for I had ventured in there more than once.

"Oh, Father," I cried. "That tunnel is just full of rats and lizards."

He lifted his eyebrow and looked down at me with a smile.

"Not so bad as that, Lady Love, I am sure," he laughed, as he lifted me by the elbows. "We'll have the men clean it all out as slick as a mole's back."

So the men all went to work cleaning out the tunnel, and taking boards and hay to a spot part way down the tunnel, that was wider than the rest.

At camp Mother and I were busy getting all the clothing packed away, and everything of value ready to move.

When these were prepared the little chamber in the rocky cavern was ready. Mother laughed and joked with the men as she loaded the beds on their backs and covered their heads with the pillows.

All seemed satisfied to do as they were asked except old Sam Paul. Every now

and then he would look down the hill at the fire, and mutter.

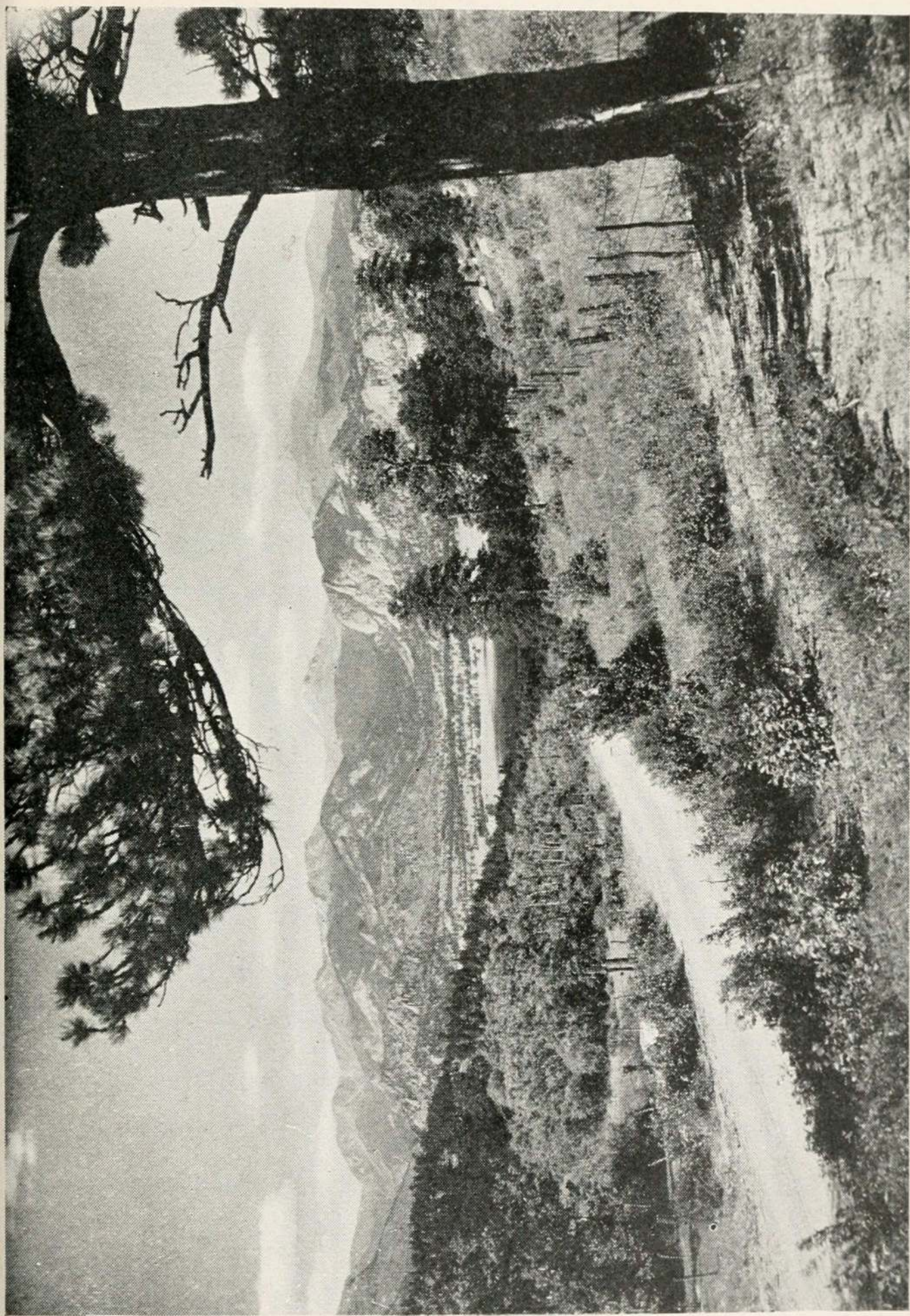
“Just waste o’ time, sheer plumb foolishness.”

Sam Paul was the oldest of the miners. He had lived all his life in the hills, and the others laughed a good deal at his queer ways, though they all agreed that he knew more mountain secrets than most men.

When the clothes and beds were all taken in, Mother got the food together, with the coffee-pot and fry-pan. These, with a good load of firewood, were placed near the mouth of the tunnel.

The little cabin was empty and bare now, and I ran out to the ledge to view the fire. It had crept down the ridge, jumped parts of the valley, and was already sweeping over the low hills that lay at the foot of our mountains.

It was so near now that I could see the trees as they caught fire. A great pine stood in a small open space. It was too old for the lumberman, so they had left it there, surrounded by slashings.



ESTES PARK

These parks, level, green and luxuriant, are found scattered through the Rocky Mountains. They are made by glacier deposits or beaver dams, which block the streams and allow sediment to settle on a level floor.

The flames rushed across the open space like wolves upon a wounded elk. They paused a second at its base, then writhing and coiling like serpents, they darted up the venerable trunk till they flashed on the very top, giving it a crown of flame.

A few minutes, it seemed not more than two, it stood, splendid in its glowing garments of fire, in the valley where the evening shadows already fell. Then, leaning before the power of the overwhelming foe, the stately pine, which had faced so many winter tempests unmoved, swayed and disappeared in a thousand wolfish flames that leaped upon it and devoured it entire.

With this cruel task complete, the fire would rush on to another tree, or group of trees. I could hardly believe my eyes when they went down before the fire. The flames would hesitate at the base, run curling up the trunk, and down would go the tree. Never did I dream that fire could burn like that.

The wind brought hot gusts to our faces

now and then. The ashes floated by, white and light as snow. The smell of smoke grew stronger.

A rabbit would run out on the clearing, look about, and then hop into the bushes beyond. Poor Bunnies, how many must perish today!

Overhead the birds began to fly about as if bewildered. They chirped and cried in a most pathetic way. The wisdom of their forest lore, which guided their flight so surely through the changing seasons, was useless to them now, before this unknown terror. Sometimes they would wing off beyond the mountains to the north and safety. Sometimes they would fly back straight into the fire and instant death.

I stood as one enchanted till I heard voices behind me. The men were taking their property and bedding into the tunnel.

“Old Sam Paul won’t take his bed into the tunnel,” Ed Sampson was talking to Father.

“Why not?”

At that moment Sam Paul came up.

“Aren't you taking a chance on the tunnel, Sam?” asked Father.

Sam Paul shook his head.

“No, thankee,” he replied, “I don't feel I have any call to die like a fly in a stove-pipe.”

“What is your idea?”

“Wall, I plan to hang round the mouth of the tunnel till the fire comes, and she's a coming some time tonight unless the wind changes. Then I plan to duck under the sloping rocks back of the shanty. I'll have a chance in the open, anyway.”

“But I have hung blankets that will keep the smoke back pretty well.”

“Yes, for a few hours, but it will be many an hour before the smudge drifts off. Smell her now. No, sir, that rat-hole is no place for a man to die in.”

No place to die in. Fire coming tonight sure. Die like flies in a stove-pipe. These were words that broke into my confused mind with a sickening sense of horror.

It had seemed much like a very exciting adventure. I knew that the cabins might burn, but I had supposed we were safe enough in the cold, wet, deep tunnel.

Father saw my face, and came close beside me.

“Poor old Sam Paul,” he said, with a little laugh, “I guess he has lost his wits this time for sure. You had better go in to Mother, Lady Love.”

But I wanted to stay out. Could nothing be done? Would the fire be just as awful up here? Would the wind not change? Might it not rain? A little girl is always thinking of things that might happen, when grown folks dare not hope for them.

At the thought of rain I looked all about. It was almost evening now. At Boulder old Turnip Top always told us of rain if clouds gathered on his crown. I could tell just about where he stood, off to the southeast. If it rained there the wind would bring it straight to us.

My view was not very good where I

was standing, so I ran up on the ledge behind the camp. Was that smoke way off there on the horizon, or was it a group of clouds? It was darker than the smoke near by, and there was no other smoke around it.

I strained my eyes and looked again. It was a cloud, a heavy dark cloud.

As I started to tell Father, I trembled. It couldn't be true. I must be mistaken. One last look. No, it was still there.

"Clouds over old Turnip Top?" Father looked down at me, and raised one eyebrow as he always did when he was thinking all to himself. He turned and looked. Then he climbed to the ledge and looked again.

When he jumped down and walked quickly toward the tunnel, I almost jumped for joy.

In another minute he came out with his field glasses. Ed Sampson followed him.

From the ledge we all looked again. Soon the whole group joined us.

“No question about it. Those are rain-clouds.”

Father looked around at the men. Even old Sam Paul nodded.

“I guess I’ll take a chance on the tunnel, after all,” he said.

The hope might be slim, but it was hope, real hope. Ed Sampson whistled as he grabbed old Sam’s bedding and took it into the cave.

We watched the fire and the rain-clouds until, as dusk fell, the clouds, which had grown bigger and darker, were lost to view, and the fire flamed and glowed brighter and fiercer down the mountain side.

At the mouth of the cave Mother cooked bacon and potatoes on a little fire built between two stones, and talked cheerfully as she went about her work.

With the hope of rain our appetites had arrived, and we ate well.

Then the men decided to have one stand guard and report any news, while the rest came into the cave and played cards. The smoke outside was already thick.

“Let’s be real he men,” said Sam Paul, “and show some nerve.”

I saw Father smile a little at this, for Sam didn’t seem so bold two hours before.

Mine lanterns were stuck about on the walls, and the cards came out, while I lay on a mattress and watched.

I was weary and sleepy from the excitement of the day, and before long my eyelids drooped. The voices became confused; the lamps grew dim before my blinking eyes, and I fell fast asleep.

The next thing I knew was a rush of feet, and a rattle, as the card-table fell on the stones.

“She’s a-coming. She’s a-coming.” It was Ed Sampson’s voice.

All were going down the tunnel. Sleepily I roused and stumbled after.

What was coming? The rain? The fire?

At the open air they gathered in a group. The fire was blazing fiercely, down the slope, still more than a mile away. As I gazed up into the black sky a drop of

warm water fell on my cheek. Another struck my forehead. Then down it came, the blessed rain. In great drops, in gusts, in sheets, it swept over the clearing.

For a moment we stood and watched the drenching storm from the shelter at the tunnel's mouth. The red glare below grew dimmer, wavered with little flashes of flame here or there, still defying the downpour. Then the flames died away, leaving only red spots where glowing coals turned the raindrops into clouds of steam, until they too gradually vanished.

I felt Mother's arm around me. She was weeping. It was the first time I had ever known it of her. This was the relief I needed also, for, now it was over, we could both weep for joy.

The next day, when the storm had cleared, only black stretches of waste land showed where the forest had covered the hills. The fire was quenched, and we had nothing more to fear, but to this day I shiver when I see a careless spark left unguarded or or unquenched.

CHAPTER XIX

SAM PAUL'S NEWS

I was sitting on the porch one morning, watching some camp robbers fight over a bit of meat they had found. Camp robbers are like blackbirds with white breasts and long tails, that stay about the camp, living on what they can steal. They are very tame, and will hop right up to the open door looking for crumbs.

As I watched the quarrel I heard some one approaching. It was Sam Paul. His head was bent and he shuffled his great boots over the loose rock, kicking up little clouds of dust at each step.

"Where's your dad?" he asked, when he raised his head and saw me.

"In writing letters."

Sam said nothing more. He only stood there and kicked at a round stone in the

ledge. He knew that I knew he wanted to speak to Father. He looked downcast.

“Well,” said Father, who had heard his voice, “what’s up, Sam? Something gone wrong?”

Sam Paul pushed back his hat and scratched his head with his thumb. He looked up at Father like a faithful dog who knows there is sadness in the house.

“Come on, come on,” exclaimed Father, rather impatiently. “Anyone killed?”

“No, nobody hurt.” Sam smiled feebly.

“Well, out with it. You can’t scare me with ghosts.”

Sam Paul opened his mouth to speak, held it open a moment and then mumbled:

“We flipped a coin, an’ they made me come up an’ tell you.” He gasped for breath and then almost shouted:

“She’s give out.”

“The vein is ended?” Father was pale, but his voice was quiet, as if he had asked whether they needed more dynamite.

“Yes, siree, plumb gone flat,” said Sam Paul, getting his wind again.

"I don't understand that, I thought it was coming better than ever." Father reached for his hat.

"She was. Two days ago we struck a big pocket and Ed an' I, we agreed to say never a word till we saw if it meant the end of the vein.

"You see," he went on in apology, "Thar warn't a thing you could do about it except worry, if we did tell you; was there now?"

"No, I suppose not, but I should be just as much obliged if you let me decide those things for myself."

Father walked down the step, and they started for the shaft house. Of course I followed.

Here was joyful news! The machinery was all bought; every thing was set up and working in good order. Father had saved carefully to pay the heavy cost of his engine and outfit.

Now the vein was run out and his hard work had brought a small reward. It was true that the mine had already paid

for itself, but we had all expected to be well off and lay up money.

After all, that was not the worst. Money meant very little to me compared with other things. We had always had food to eat, clothes to wear, and horses to ride. Father would never fail to provide these things. But suppose the mine were closed the place abandoned, and I should see the spot no more.

Suppose, suppose, suppose. I thought of the little verse: "Suppose, my little lady, your doll should break its head. Could you make it whole by crying till your eyes and nose were red?"

Even if I could mend nothing with tears, a few stole down my cheeks in spite of my resolve to stop them.

Oh, must I give up my trees, my spring, my brooks, my cats, and my Chrysanthemum? That would be the saddest thing in my life.

I heard voices in the shaft. The men were coming up.

"I'll get Mr. Linderman to come over,"

Father was saying. "He and Brewster agreed that we could probably pick this vein up again, but just where we'll find it is the question."

"Wal, I can't see why you won't find it right down below where it ended. The face of that rock stands right up and down."

Sam Paul had picked up his courage and was feeling better.

"That sounds encouraging," replied Father, "and I hope what you say is true; but we'll get Mr. Linderman up and have a council."

So Ed Sampson started off after Mr. Linderman, while Father came in to finish his writing and have lunch.

After dinner he got down a big book on mines and metals and began to study over the pages. I watched him till he crossed his fingers, with his elbows on the arms of his chair, and looked out of the window, whistling softly. Then I spoke up.

"I wish I knew how that silver got into

such a vein. What makes you think that vein starts again down below?"

"Well, Lady Love, I don't know if I can make it clear enough for you to understand."

"Oh, yes you could. I understood about those amethysts. I could tell you the whole story right now."

I was not to be put off in any such way as that.

"Well, then, I'll try. First remember that this old earth was not always hard on the outside as it is now. It was a ball of rock so hot that it was melted.

"Gradually this ball of melted, glowing rock cooled on the outside and turned hard."

"That's easy enough to understand," I put in, climbing up on his knee.

"I'm proud to know it. The surface was very flat then. There were no mountains here, and few brooks and rivers, but low mounds of rock and a vast shallow sea.

"The rains and waves of the sea,

combined with the heat of the sun, wore away this rock, washing it down to the edge of the water, where it slowly formed into new rock. This made the sandstone and conglomerate or pudding-stone we see so much of about here. The sand beneath, under the great weight of the upper layers, formed the sandstone, and the pebbles and rocks on the beach, mixed with sand and mud, made the conglomerate.

“In the warm water millions and millions of little creatures with white shells were growing. These shells were of lime, so when they died they left deep layers of lime behind them to make limestone and marble.

“Now we come to a period of great interest. The next time you see a baked apple notice how plump and round it is as it comes hot from the oven, and how it shrinks and wrinkles as it grows cool.

“That is exactly what happened with this hot old world. As the surface grew cooler and cooler it began to shrink and

wrinkle. The wrinkles on a great ball more than seven thousand miles through were very big ones, and we call them mountain chains."

"So we live on one of the biggest wrinkles at this minute," I said, anxious to show that I understood every bit.

"Yes, marm. Now run out and get me a lump of moist earth near the well."

In a minute I was back with a lump of earth as big as my two fists.

"Now," Father went on, as he patted the earth into a flat cake, "let us see what happens when we press on this."

Taking it in his hands he pushed in on the edges. A hump showed in the middle. Slowly he pushed more and more. The hump raised higher and higher till cracks appeared at the top of the ridge in the center.

"There, that is just what happened to our earth all up and down the Rocky Mountains, and also in many other places. The crust shrank and pulled till the rocks heaved up and cracked near the top.

“You remember, Nita, what we said about hot water, and how it could carry so many bits of mineral substance with it?”

“Oh, yes, that is what made the crystals.”

“Just so. After they rose in ridges, the rocks were all full of cracks just as this mud is now. The heavy rains fell on these ridges, the water poured down and ran far, far below the surface to a point where it was very hot. Then, boiling and seething, it spouted out again.”

“I know. We saw lots of those holes in Yellowstone Park, where hot springs and geysers spouted hot water all the time,” I added. “Then the earth must be hot inside still.”

“Quite so, quite so. It is so hot that the rocks are melted there, and when water gets down where this heat lies, it begins to boil, and rushes out again, full of bits from the rocks round about the cracks.

“Besides this, many men of science believe that there is much water and gas

boiling under great pressure down in that hot region.

“The central part of the earth is twice as heavy as the rock on the surface, so we believe that there is a vast amount of metal there in the molten rock, because metal is much heavier than stone.

“Silver, lead, copper and zinc were all brought up together by this boiling water and gas. When the stream came up it ran off into the crevices among the hard rocks. As it cooled in these surface cracks it dropped the particles of mineral as it flowed along. The stone particles formed into the quartz you find all about the silver ore, and the metal seemed to run together in a streak down the bed of quartz.”

“Well, I should think that was easy enough to understand,” I declared. “The earth was hot, and cooled on the outside, forming solid rock. This washed and wore away and formed deep layers of new rock. Then the earth cooled and cracked till it made high ridges like the Rocky

Mountains. When it rose, it cracked. Water ran down into these cracks and got boiling hot, or gas and water down below spouted out, bringing up metals and bits of rock from those deep, deep cracks. This flowed into the open seams in the surface rock, and filled them with quartz, leaving veins of silver in the middle. There now, don't I go to the head of the class?"

"You get the first prize. I guess you can understand all right when you want to." Father smiled and pinched my cheek.

"Now you can see what happened to that vein of mine. There was a long cleft in those immense rocks. The water brought up rock bits and metals and filled it all up with quartz, with a vein of ore in the middle made of silver, lead, zinc, and some copper.

"Later on, perhaps a thousand years after the vein was completed and solid, the earth pulled again on this ridge. When this new wrench came the shoulder

where my vein lay was split. One part moved up and the other moved down. We have just come to the place where the rock split. Everyone feels sure that the part where the vein continues is not far down below the point where this ore bed ends. The question is: how many feet down must we go to find it?"

"Why," I said, "it can't have slipped down very far, everything is so solid about it."

Father laughed as he set me on the floor.

"Some rocks slip so far there is no hope, but Mr. Linderman knows a great deal about rocks. He can help us decide if anyone can."

He sighed as he put me down and took his little hammer. With this he walked over to the shaft and spent the rest of the day looking about at the rocks.

While waiting for Mr. Linderman, the men cleaned up the ore in the shaft we had opened, taking it down to the cars for Boulder, where it was to be smelted.

CHAPTER XX

HUNTING THE LOST VEIN

THE next day Ed Sampson returned, with word that Mr. Linderman would be following right along after. And so he was, with his old buckboard, his fine black clothing, his long white beard, and his glowing rubies.

“Vell, den, we haf to find der lost mine, eh?” said good old Mr. Linderman. “Let us be cheerful. Ledges apout here have not slipped ferry far. Come, now, let us perceive.”

He smiled and poked me in the ribs as he went down toward the shaft house. I followed as far as the mouth of the shaft, and waited impatiently till they came up.

After they came back again Smithy went down, and soon I could hear his single-jack banging away on a drill. Then

the shaft-bell rang twice, and we let down the ore-bucket, bringing it up with several pieces of rock.

These Mr. Linderman had the man carry out to the ledge just below the shaft. There he broke off pieces from the cliff and compared them with the samples from the mine-tunnel.

After this he climbed above the mine and noticed carefully the ledges and the faces of all the cliffs.

“Aha!” he cried at last. “Alretty we have it, I should suppose yes.”

He pointed to a high ledge above us.

“See then, pehold der cleft, and der spot of prown stone on der right, up above.”

We all looked up. The ledge was cracked and separated about three feet. Fifty feet up was a spot of brown on one of the broken faces of the rock.

“Now, presto, pehold!” Mr. Linderman raised his hand and pointed to a spot on the face of the opposite rock near the ground.

"It was once der same spot, der same piece altogether. Den came der split. One rose up, one sank down. It was der same split as what spoiled your vein, it surely vas."

The good old man was as happy as a boy with a new kite. His face beamed with pleasure as he measured the height with his eye.

"That is mighty good news to me," said Father. "If that is all we have to dig, I guess the boys will be down to the vein before very long."

Everyone turned back to the camp with happy faces. The miners were well treated, and had a real affection for us. They seemed as sad as we were when the vein gave out, and were glad to believe that Mr. Linderman knew just what he was talking about.

"Well, beavers," said Father, "lets have a swell feed, and then start down after that silver."

Poor Dinah and Chrysanthemum must have thought themselves badly neglected

for from that time on I hung to the shaft house like a caterpillar to rough bark.

Everyone was eager and excited. The bell would ring. Down the ore bucket would rattle and bump, then the bell again, and the engine would snort and groan, hoisting up the load. At the top it would crash into the little ore-car and roll away below the shaft-house to the dump, when it would crash out again into the pile of refuse quartz already heaped up on the sharp slope.

That little dump-car on its iron rails was a fascinating toy for me, when it was not in use. I could climb up there with a few cats and give the family a glorious ride in the mountain air.

I would loosen the brake and push it back and forth with a pole. The miners brought up a bell from Nederland, which they screwed to the side, so I could ring the bell and stop at all the stations along the route.

Dear good Father was a bit worried

when I began to play there, but instead of making me stop, he fixed the bumper at the dump so high and strong that the car could not possibly roll over it and take me on a quick ride to Boulder by the air route.

The car was made so that when it coasted slowly down to the dump, it would tilt up and throw out its load of rock, and this clever device gave me a surprise one day that I never reported to him.

I had been giving Dinah a long ride in the sunshine, and stopped at all the stations, including Boston and New York. After travelling thousands of miles I grew weary, so I set the brake to keep the car from coasting, and sat down for a little rest.

The sun shone warm, the car was cozy, and before long I was dozing gently with my head against the side of the car, holding Dinah fast asleep in my lap.

But while I slept something happened. Did the wind blow suddenly against the car? Did a blast of dynamite shake the

rails and start us off? I never knew, but I woke to find myself coasting merrily along toward the dump.

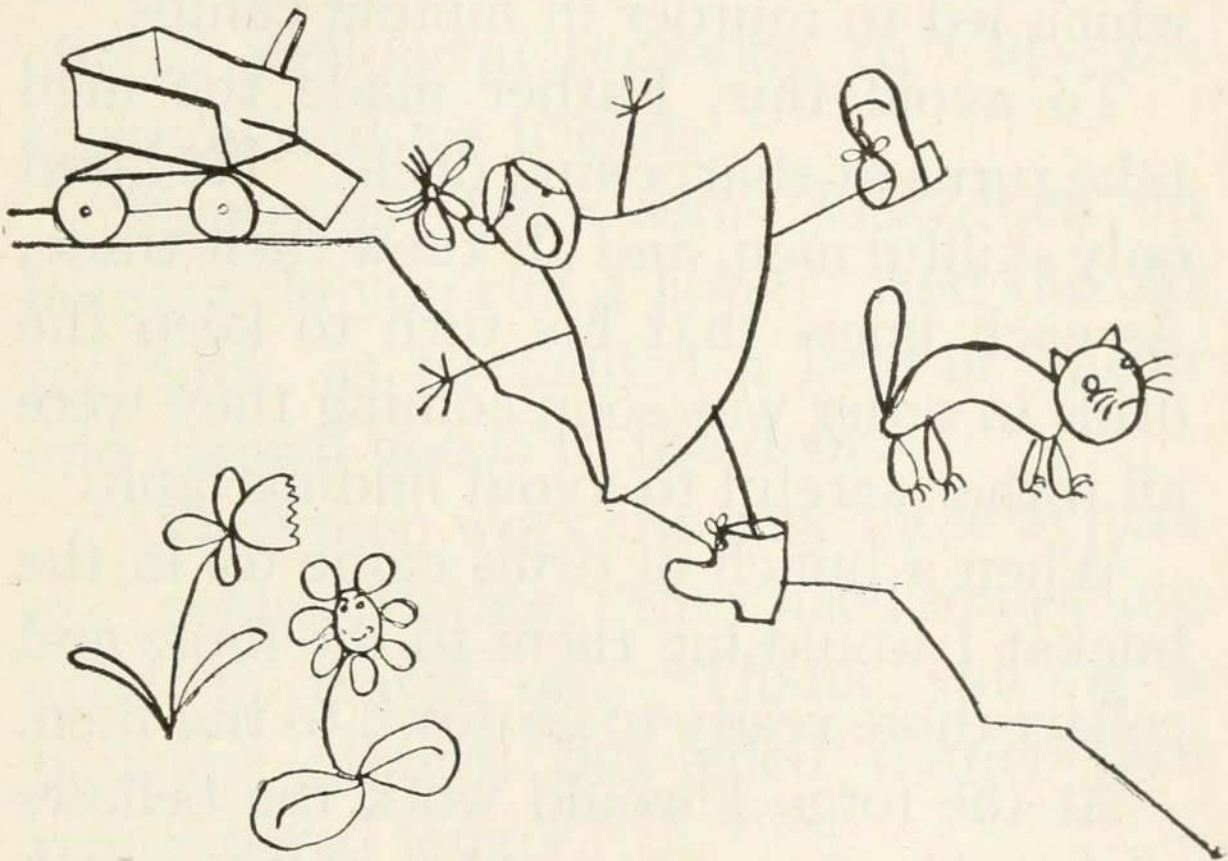
I was too sleepy to understand just what had happened. I looked wildly around, then thought of the brake. It was too late. The car came against the bumper with an awful bang. The automatic dumper worked perfectly, and with Dinah still in my arms, I sailed out to meet my fate.

Oh! Ow! Those rocks were hard, and sharp, and rough, but, lucky for one careless child, the pile had grown so high that the fall was short.

Dinah clawed and struggled to be free, and I was perfectly willing to let her go. As soon as I had recovered my breath I found that I was not much hurt after all, and scrambled back to the car to get it set right and in good order, for fear some one should see me and stop my long and pleasant journeys to all the cities I knew by name.

Good luck still followed me, and I

escaped unnoticed, but I took no more naps in the Overland Limited, and whenever I set the brake after that, I took care that no chance was left for my iron horse to move again without my full knowledge and consent.



But in these days there was no time for playing in the dump car. As fast as drills could make holes, and dynamite could blast, the rock was loosened and the hole was sunk.

In mining camps there is always more or less trouble over drills. The miners

are superstitious, and complain bitterly if their favorite drills are not sharpened just exactly as they wish. Sometimes you would think that a miner's drill was dearer to him than life itself. Certain it is that quarrels have risen over these tools which led to murder in mining camps.

To avoid this, Father made the men take turns at sharpening drills. He hired only skillful men, and all knew their trade. As each knew that his turn to keep the drills in order was soon coming they were all rather careful to avoid finding fault.

When a bunch of drills came up in the bucket I would lug them to the forge and collect those ready to go down to the men.

At the forge I would work the bellows and get the fire as hot as I could, to watch the sparks spout from the forge like a glowing geyser.

No one was more eager to help get that shaft dug out, for it meant good-bye to my mountain if we failed to find our ore.

"How far down?" I would ask, as the men came up after a long day.

“Four feet today,” or “a good bite this time, timbered and ready,” they would answer. Then they would wash up and eat a mountain of food. Father kept the canned peaches traveling up from Boulder till the tin pile was a little mountain, and offered wonderful browsing to Chrysanthemum and his friends.

“You must have some fussy men up here; or do you run a hotel?” said the old teamster, as he hauled a load of bacon and canned goods to the door.

“When men work the way these miners do,” replied Father, “they need something good to travel on. Thank you’ is a pleasant phrase, but good dinners are remembered longer.”

“You’re right! Bless my glass eye, but you’re dead right!” exclaimed the old stager. He pulled out a large silver watch, hitched to a leather strap. He squinted at it with his good eye, and then squinted at the sun. It was nearly noon.

Father laughed. “Yes, you’re invited,”

he chuckled. "Put on the feed-bags, and then wash up at the cookhouse. That will give you a chance to sample the chuck you haul."

The old fellow grinned, and did as he was told. Sam Paul spoke later of his ability with a knife and fork.

'My suds, but that bull-whacker could swaller food! I thought our gang could punish victuals, but we were just flies on the trough alongside of him.'

"Forty-six feet down," called Ed Sampson that day, as they came up for the night and closed the great trap-door behind them. By law every mine shaft must be closed and locked every night when work is done.

"We ought to be down to the fifty-foot level tomorrow night," replied Father.

"We will, and more. We'll know where that silver is before we go to bed tomorrow," declared Ed.

I slept little that night. I dreamed that we had found a great bed of silver as large as our pile of empty cans, and

Chrysanthemum was gorging on it till his tawny sides stuck out.

At the first peep of day I was up, and ready to carry drills or water, impatient to have the work begin.

Still the rock that came up for the dump was about the same as ever. Load after load went rattling down, to crash into the pile on the slope. The men had never worked quite so hard. They were determined to find that silver this day, if any silver was to be found.

“More than three feet this morning,” they announced, as they climbed out at noon, covered with sweat and dust from the struggle with the unyielding rock.

“No sign of metal yet?” asked Father, who had watched every load with the greatest care.

“No,” returned Sam Paul, “but we can’t expect to light right on it. If you’ll agree, we’ll go down about fifty feet and then we’ll shoot in sidewise. We’ll get it, and we’ll get it tonight, too.”

The men spent little time on dinner,

and soon the loads were coming up again. Father was down in the mine, and I stood near the shaft where I could see the broken stone appear.

Ed Sampson came up about three.

“Any signs, Ed?” I asked, just like a real miner.

“Nope, we’re down about far enough now. We’ll work down another hour, and then drift across till we pick it up. I’m going to fix up some drills that are drills now, I’m telling you.”

So Ed went over to the forge and whistled away as if he had never a care in the world, while he hammered and tempered his drills. His great arms lifted the hammer as if it were a bit of stick.

I always thought that Longfellow should have been in our camp to see those miners. This man had been down there all day drilling into the solid rock with a double-jack. Now he was ready to go back and start tunnels with a single jack.

The single-jack is a hammer, about half

as large as the double-jack, that a strong man can use with one hand. With this and a short drill he works his way into the wall of the mine, hunting for veins of metal. This is called drifting, and in mines where the veins run in various directions a great deal of drifting is done.

Imagine what labor it is to crouch, or lie on your side, and drill holes into rock with a heavy hammer. Surely the village blacksmith's work was light compared with this.

Four o'clock came, and the shaft was down more than fifty feet; as far as they planned to go. Then the men climbed out for a rest, while Ed Sampson went down to start drifting. Only one drift was to be made at present, for all agreed that if the silver were not found to the east at this level they would go farther down and try toward the east again.

Father washed his face and hands in a basin full of fresh spring water. I could see that he was worn and anxious.

"Now, Father," I said, "you must lie

down a few minutes and rest. You are very tired. Don't worry. We shall strike the ore tonight. We certainly shall."

Poor Father. He tried to keep his face straight, but he couldn't. He burst out laughing.

"Oh, Lady Love!" he said, "You'll be the death of me yet. I'm sure I ought to sleep for a week with such comforting opinions as that."

Just then the bell rang twice. They let the ore-bucket down, and Owen Hardy, the mucker, went down the ladder. It was his duty to fill the bucket. The miners never did that work. Their job was to drill and blast.

"He can't have a load so soon," said Sam Paul. "I wonder what's up."

In a few minutes the bell rang again. Soon the bucket came bumping and scraping up the shaft. It was full of water.

"Aha!" cried Sam. "He has struck into the cleft already. That old rat rang twice for the ore-bucket just to fool us."

"That water looks good just the same," replied Father. "It will be fairly easy to work along the cleft if he has struck it, and this water looks as if he had."

Soon we heard steps on the ladder, and Ed Sampson's grinning face appeared.

"We were right alongside the cleft," he said. "I can blow out a whole lot of rock with a couple of blasts."

"How is the new rock?" asked Father.

"Harder than Pharaoh's heart."

"Aha! Didn't I tell you. I'll bet a dollar Mex that we find that ore right pronto. The harder the bore, the quicker the ore."

Sam Paul jiggled about on his stiff old legs in great delight.

"It looks mighty promising to me," Ed put in. "I thought perhaps you had better come down and get the lay of the land before I blast out much."

Father followed him down, and Sam Paul went along also to make sure that everything was just as he hoped. I was eager to go down too, in spite of the wet

and slime, and the sharp metallic smell that filled the mine, but Father said no.

“It is too wet down there now, Lady Love. Ed says that the water is making in fast from the cleft he drilled through.”

So I waited impatiently till they climbed out again. All were in high spirits.

“It looks good and it sounds good and it smells good,” declared Sam Paul. “If it warn’t so late now we could strike metal this very day.”

“Well, it is late, and you boys have worked mighty hard, so we’ll quit for tonight and see what luck we have tomorrow. Nita, you run and tell the cook to give the men the best supper we have in camp. Tell him to spread himself.”

I did my errand double quick, while Father locked the trap-door at the shaft. Then we went over to our own camp. We had a good big supper ourselves, with lots of canned peaches, of course, and some rock candy the men had brought to me from Nederland.

Father ate with a grand appetite, and

I was happy to see that he looked rested and refreshed. Good news is sometimes worth a weeks vacation.

As I was wiping the supper dishes I heard a hammer go clink, clink, clink on the anvil down by the forge. Looking out I could see the sparks flying, and the red glow of the fire in the twilight.

I ran down to see what was on foot, for the men seldom worked after supper. Ed Sampson was pointing up his best drills with special care.

“Got to have these all ready for an early start tomorrow,” he said, as he ran a drill down into the cold water that stood in a barrel close by.

He held it there a moment while the water hissed and sputtered. Then he drew it out and watched it as the colors ran down in shadowy waves along the metal.

“Thar, Princess,” he declared, as he threw it down with the others, “I guess we’ll be all set for a big day’s work tomorrow.”

He winked and grinned in his droll way, and we turned back up the slope.

“Sleep tight now, Princess,” called Sam Paul from the bunk house. “We’ll need lots of help tomorrow hoisting out the silver.”

Of course the men all had to roar and slap their knees then, and wished me pleasant dreams as I went on to our own cabin.

“Well, little Duchess, who’s for bed again?” said Father, closing the door to keep out the cold night air.

“I’m not very sleepy, but I must be up early, so we had better get to bed right away,” I answered with a wise air.

He yawned, and shut the dampers of the stove, getting everything ready for the night. Soon we were tucked under the gray blankets, and I could tell by his deep breathing that Father was fast asleep almost as soon as his head touched the pillow.

CHAPTER XXI

HURRAH FOR EVERYBODY

It took a good deal to wake Father when he once got sound asleep, but I slept lightly when I was excited, and lay for some time, thinking of the mine, and wondering if we should find the lost vein of silver on the morrow.

I had dropped into a doze, and was dreaming of Mr. Linderman, when a creaking on the piazza roused me. I could hear no steps, but the boards creaked and squeaked as if some one were walking on them. Then the door opened part way.

I knew it had opened, though I could hear no sound, for I could feel the night air puff in across the bed. I opened my eyes wide, trying to see who it was, but all was black as Dinah's back.

Who could it be? What did he want?

There was no money in camp worth stealing. I was frightened a good deal, and surprised more than frightened.

As I lay there staring and wondering, there was a tiny rattle near the door, in the place where Father hung his keys.

Then the door shut again, as silently as it had opened. The piazza boards creaked as they had done before, and all was silent.

I listened intently, but the deep breathing from Father's bed was all I heard. I longed to wake him and find out what had happened, but I remembered how tired he was and how much he needed sleep so I decided to wait till morning.

"He couldn't have taken much, whoever it was," I said to myself. "He hardly stepped inside the room."

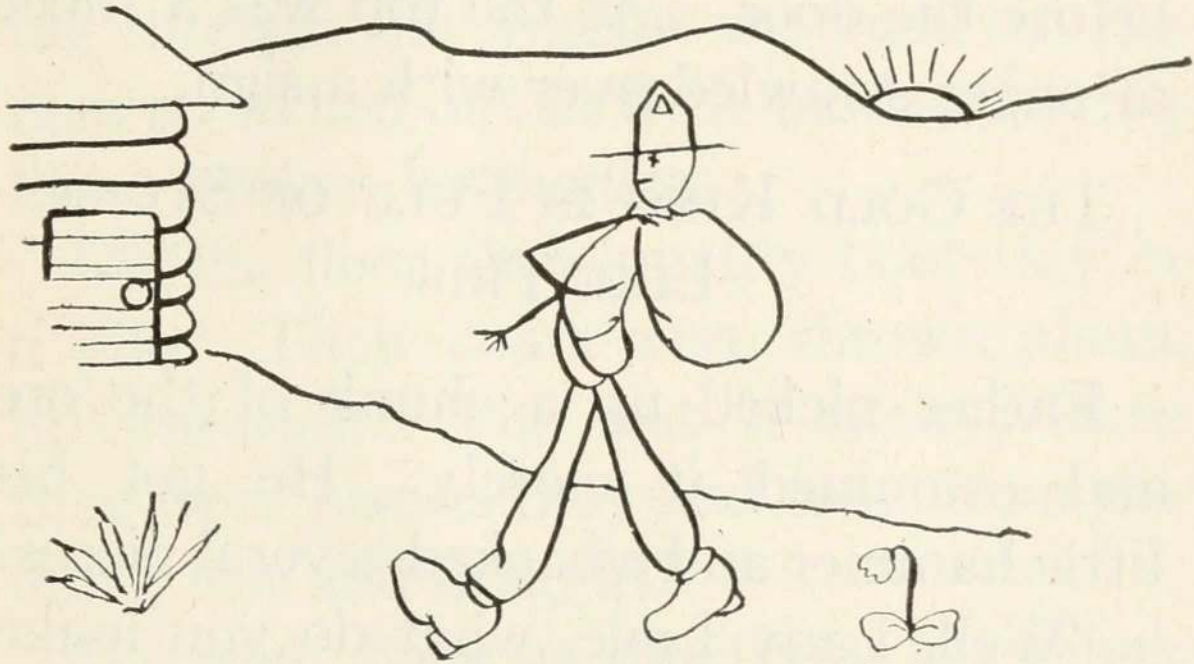
I woke once or twice through the night and thought I heard strange noises, but I knew I was nervous, so I laid it to that and went back to my dreams.

Father was up first. I heard him as he put wood on the stove. The light

was breaking over the hills, and the birds were singing about the beautiful new day.

I was out of bed in a jiffy.

“What’s the rush?” asked Father with a smile. I usually liked to stay snug under the blankets till the room grew warm.



“I’m going to be right on hand this morning when they find that silver. They might strike it the very first thing.”

He laughed. “And they might not. Then what would you say?”

“I’d say Sam Paul lost all his bets, and was an old deceiver besides.”

“Well, I rather think Sam is right, but I’ll believe it when I see it. Now for some fresh cold water.”

Father laughed again and took the pail. As he stepped out on the piazza the pail fell with a clang on the boards, and he stood still.

I hurried to see what was the matter. He was staring at a pile of ore, heaped before the door. At the top was a sheet of paper scrawled over with a sign.

THE GOLD KING IS FULL OF STUFF
LIKE THIS

Father picked up a chunk of the ore and examined it closely. He got his little hammer and whacked several pieces.

“Well, Lady Love, what do you make of all this?” He partly closed one eye and smiled, as if he thought I knew the secret.

“Is it good silver ore?” I asked.

“About the best I ever saw.”

I thought a bit. Then the sounds of the night came into my mind, and I told about them.

“You say there was a little rattle near the door?”

“Yes, it sounded as if some one just

stepped in and took something from the shelf."

Father looked up to the nail where he hung the key to the shaft. It was gone. Beckoning silently to me he went quietly down the path to the bunk-house. Peeping through the window we could see the men stretched out in their bunks, snoring like a broken harmonica.

On the floor their muddy boots lay in a pile. Their coats were thrown about in confusion. The rest of their clothes they wore just as they had come from the mine, wet and draggled.

We went back as quietly as we came, and Father stopped to look over the fragments of ore on the piazza.

"If the Gold King is full of stuff like that, then I guess our troubles are about over, little Princess," he said with a happy laugh.

It was late before anyone stirred in the men's camp. As soon as I heard them about I hurried down, and Father came right along after.

The men pretended not to notice anything unusual.

“Mornin’, nice mornin’,” said Sam Paul, spatting down his hair with a wet comb, and making a pretty scallop over his eyes.

“Yes, it is a good morning for me, that is, if the ore up on my piazza came out of the Gold King last night.”

“It sure did, and there is a pile more of the same where that came from.”

The men all grinned. It was a grand occasion for them. When they thought we were fast asleep they had crept up and stolen the key. Then they went down into the mine and worked nearly all night, using the drills Ed Sampson had sharpened so carefully.

“We weren’t going to back down on our bet,” declared Sam Paul. “We said we’d get silver last night and we did, by hen.”

“I don’t see yet how you got the water and rock up without letting me hear the engine.”

“We never used the engine at all; we wound her up by hand,” cried Ed Sampson.

When their breakfast was over, the men prepared to take Father down to see the vein, for he would not go down till all were ready.

This time I was allowed to go also. As we descended, the bitter smell of the metallic ore became stronger and stronger. If you have ever been in a silver mine you will never forget that rank metallic odor. It smells just like a bottle of ink.

At last we reached the bottom, and there, off to one side, lighted by the lamps of the miners, lay the lost vein of silver surrounded by white quartz. It looked like a great black ribbon frozen in a river of ice.

“Thar she lies,” chuckled Sam Paul. “That ’ere vein will grow bigger as we go in, just as the other one did. We’ll show ’em what a real mine is like, yet.”

“You certainly win, Sam,” said Father. “The very next Mexican dollar I lay hands on goes to you.”

So there was great rejoicing in camp. Father and I rode down to tell the folks at home all about the good fortune, and called on Mr. Linderman to let him know.

“Joost about fifty feet down, yes. That was my idea exactly,” said the good old man. Then he turned and poked me in the ribs. “Vat you tink?” he chuckled.

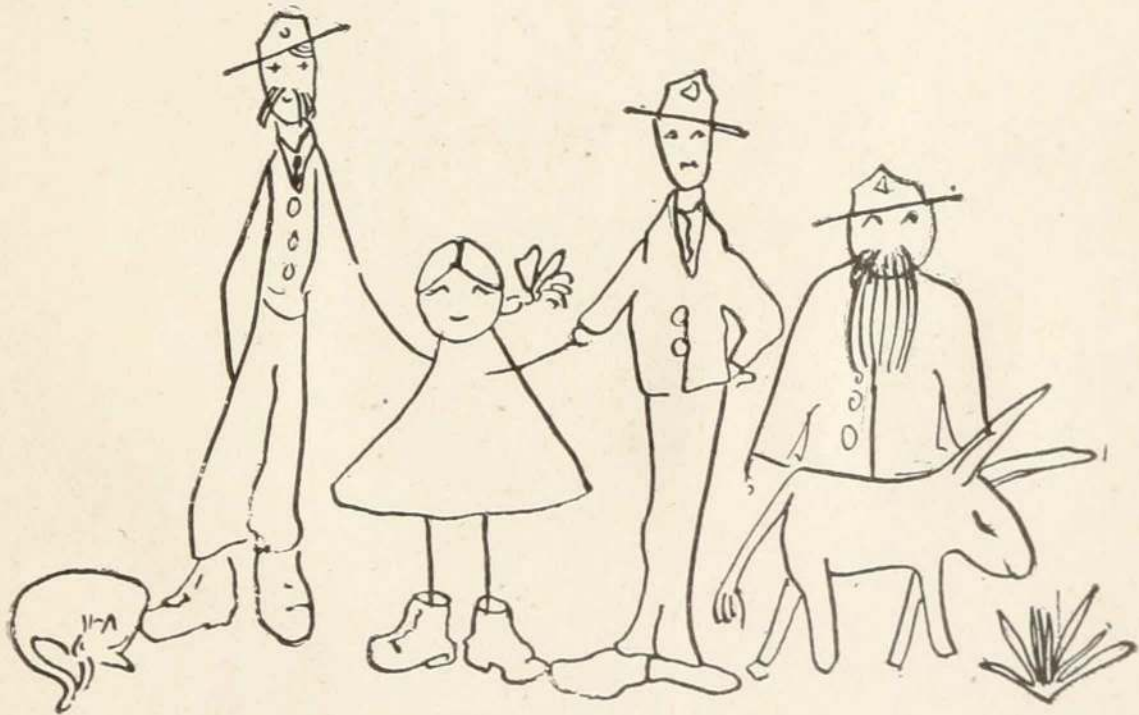
On the way back, Father picked up a load of tobacco and good things to eat for the boys who had worked so hard to help him win his luck.

Then we had a grand feast, and all were happy as butterflies in June. Ed Sampson laughed all the time and slapped his knee till I thought he would break a bone. Sam Paul told twenty times how he measured the cleft just so, and how he figured it all out, and how everything came true just as he said, and he had won his Mexican dollar.

Father said little, of course, but his face and his appetite showed that he was happy and satisfied, for he was now sure of what he had always longed to possess,

and could call himself the proud owner of a paying silver mine.

And I was happiest of all, for my dreams had all come true. Here on this wondrous mountain I could come each year to live in the heart of nature, with the rocks and running brook, the trees and flowers, the birds and all wild living things. I could train my cats, and play tag with Chrysanthemum, and travel all over the land in my little dump-car, and be the happiest girl in this great round world.





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