

## The Heiress of Golden Falls.

—By HADON HILL.

The ramshackle coach, whose only claim to dignity lay in the fact that it carried the United States mails, pulled up with a jerk in front of the 'hotel.' The place was welcome as the first habitation we had passed for miles; otherwise, it didn't amount to much. So far as I could see in the gray gloom of scarce broken dawn, it consisted of a log cabin with an inverted hog's head set in the doorway as an a fresco bar, round which some half-dozen miners were clustered for a morning dram.

While I was wondering whether a cup of decent coffee was within the capabilities of the hostelry, the guard came to the door and addressed me. 'If you're bound for Golden Falls, Judge,' he said, 'there's two ways open to you. Some of the boys have come in from there with a load of dust for us to take to the Bank at Parson's City. You can either go back with them in the mule-cart—a matter of fifteen miles—or you can go on in the coach, and we'll drop you at Blackman's Corner. From there it's a roughish tramp of ten miles to Golden Falls.'

Without a moment's hesitation, I decided to go on in the coach, and walk the ten miles. I merely changed my position from the inside, where I had spent the night as sole passenger, to the box seat next the driver. This would be preferable, I thought, to a fifteen-mile drive in a jolting mule-cart in the company of roughish strangers, who were showing an inclination to celebrate the despatch of their precious earnings by frequent rounds of rye whiskey.

The boxes of gold-dust were soon hoisted into the coach, and, amid cheers from the assembled miners, we started on our lonely road again. The route lay for a few miles through rugged boulder-strewn country, thickly interspersed with pine-trees. At a spot called Blackman's Corner it debouched into an open plain, and it was at this junction of the rocky ground with the prairie that I was to be set down. The one-eyed guard, with whom I was by this time pretty friendly, had just announced our approach to the Corner, and I was rummaging for my valise, with a view to departure, when two masked men stepped quickly out of the rocks, one on either side of the road, and with rifles levelled, shouted the dreaded cry of 'Hands up!'

'Road-agents, by thunder!' said the guard, holding his arms high above his head.—'It's no go, Mike,' he called to the driver; 'they've got the fair drop on us; better pull up and save our skins.'

The horses were pulled almost on to their haunches. One of the men kept his rifle levelled at the driver's head, while the other advanced to the side of the coach and shouted: 'Now then, guard, look alive, and hand out the dust; sixteen packages. You see I've got the office straight, so it's no good your trying to come the bluff.'

'If I hadn't laid down my gun to help the passenger with his baggage, you'd never have got the drop on us, I guess,' said the guard ruefully. But he did as he was bid, and one by one the sixteen little oilskin packages were thrown on the ground in front of the robber. He gathered them into a sack, while the other robber kept his rifle ready. There was no chance for any of us to get to our pistols, though I saw the guard's fingers twitching and the whites of his eyes glistening as his glance turned downward to his belt. It was all over in no time, and the sack was removed to the road-side. I was beginning to congratulate myself that I was not personally to be a victim, when the man who had filled the sack returned to the coach and dispelled my illusion by saying: 'Now, mister, your dollars, please. Don't put me to the trouble of coming up there to go through you.'

There was nothing else for it but to submit. I took out a roll of notes and handed them down. There was no use in trying to conceal any of them with that pair of sharp eyes searching me from the slits in the mask. But the proceeding had the effect of leaving me practically penniless in a strange land, two thousand miles from a friend. With the exception of a ten-dollar bill, which I remembered was in my waistcoat pocket, I had no resources nearer than New York.

'Better help ourselves to a nag apiece, Bill,' said the more active of the two to the one at the horses' heads. 'See here; keep your shooting-iron handy while I do the trick.'

In a moment the two leaders—one a drabbed gray, and the other a bald-faced chestnut—were detached from the team. The sack was flung on the back of one of them, and the two horses were led away behind a bluff. They were no sooner out of sight than the other man, who had watched us while, began to retreat backwards in the direction his companion had taken. He, too, disappeared; and then for the first time for ten minutes we knew what it was to exist without the sensation of a loaded Winchester threatening us at pointblank range.

The driver and the guard set about adapting the cut harness to the two remaining horses; which done, the lumbering vehicle started at a crawl to return to the hotel to replace the stolen steeds, leaving me alone to make the best of my way to Golden Falls. The guard's directions were very simple: 'Point your nose to the west, and keep right on till you get there.'

And while I am taking my lonely tramp, it may be well to explain how it was that I, Arthur Saltmarsh, a

young English barrister, came to find myself in the wilds of the Black Hills, where 'road-agents' and 'shooting-irons' were quite commonplace affairs. Just before the commencement of that long vacation, I had seen an advertisement in one of the newspapers which informed the next of kin of the late Leonard Saltmarsh of New York that he would hear of something to his advantage, by applying to Wilkins & Crowdy, attorneys-at-law in that city. To the best of my belief, I was that individual, Leonard Saltmarsh having been my father's only brother. We had never heard of his marriage, and to the day of his death, my father had asserted that his brother Leonard would have a pile to leave behind him some day. All I knew of my uncle was that he was an eccentric young man; who had gone to America years before I was born. My father and he seldom communicated.

I wrote at once to Wilkins & Crowdy, and by return mail received a civil reply to the effect that my uncle had died suddenly without a will, leaving property to the amount of two million dollars behind him. They were quite prepared to entertain my claim, in the absence of any other applicant; all they wanted was to be furnished with the necessary proofs; and they hinted that, considering the amount at stake, it would be worth my while to run across to New York in person. The idea of spending my vacation in this way pleased me. My father had left me well off; so, whether the inheritance proved to be mine or no, I could well afford the holiday jaunt. I took the next Cunard boat, and on landing, went straight to the offices of the attorneys.

But here a surprise was in store for me. The very morning of my arrival in New York, Messrs. Wilkins & Crowdy had received a letter putting in a claim to the property from another applicant. The letter was dated from Golden Falls, which the lawyers believed was a mushroom mining camp in the Black Hills district; and it purported to come from one Luke Saltmarsh, who said he was a son of Leonard Saltmarsh as the result of a marriage contracted by the latter when 'out West' twenty-eight years before. His mother, he went on to say, was dead, and he was the only child. In the face of this new claim, Messrs. Wilkins & Crowdy, though thoroughly recognizing my position, very properly determined to know more of this latest applicant before coming to any decision. They had written to Mr. Luke Saltmarsh for proofs, just as they had written to me; and expected to get an answer within six weeks. It was impossible to say how long a letter would take in reaching such an out-of-the-world place as Golden Falls.

I chose my own course at once. I explained to the attorneys that I was well off, and only desired that justice should be done. If this young man were really my uncle Leonard's son, by all means let him have the property. But I had no relations living, and quite apart from the matter in hand, it would please me much to make my cousin's acquaintance. My time being my own, I therefore proposed myself to go to Golden Falls and see him, quite in a friendly way; and thoroughly prepared to recognize his claim. My legal training, I said, might even be of some use to him in helping him to procure the proofs which were necessary.

Messrs. Wilkins & Crowdy confessed that they did not like my project. A trip to the Black Hills was no joke, they said; and if by any chance Luke Saltmarsh was an impostor, my life even might not be safe in that wild region. Better, at any rate, wait for his reply. These objections I overruled, and started for the West that same evening.

Thus it was that on the day the Parson's City mail-coach was robbed I was approaching Golden Falls with nothing but a change of clothes and a solitary ten-dollar note. At the end of ten miles the path suddenly dipped over the brink of a ravine, down the centre of which a mountain torrent was bawling. Perched among the rocks below on the brink of the stream were some two-score log cabins, with a few tents here and there, to denote that Golden Falls was a thing of to-day but not of yesterday. All down the course of the brook were the 'cradles' for washing out the gold, and as I could see the various claims with their heaps of dirt on either bank. But they seemed to be all deserted. Spades and picks were lying here and there, as if cast aside in a hurry.

It struck me as strange—this abandonment of work in the middle of the day—the more so as I could hear the hum of men's voices raised, I thought, in angry discussion. Looking again, I saw that there was a crowd round the largest of the cabins about the centre of the row, above which a flag floated bearing the device, 'Ben Baldwin's Saloon.' It flashed upon me in a moment. The miners had heard of the robbery of their gold-dust.

When I reached the saloon, I found that I was right. Three of the miners whom I had seen at the wayside 'hotel' had just arrived with the news of the coach's forlorn return. Round the doorway of the saloon an excited throng of slouch-hatted miners were lamenting and vowing vengeance. I elbowed my way into the saloon, and, having been posted in the customs of West, pulled out my ten-dollar bill to 'treat the crowd' inside. This method of self-introduction left me with only a dollar or two in my pocket.

The excitement increased when it became known that I had been the solitary passenger in the mail-coach. Many were the questions I had to answer as to the appearance of the masked robbers; but I could throw but little light on that. Almost any of the men before me would have remembered them, given the addition of a crape mask.

It was not for fully half an hour that I was able to think of my own affair. Then I asked the landlord if he knew where Luke Saltmarsh was to be found.

'I guess he's totin' around somewhere jawing about the road-agents,' he replied.—'Any of you boys seen Luke this morning?' he added, turning to the throng before the bar.

'Luke started for Parson's City at sunrise,' said one of the miners. 'Expect he'll be back by supper-time.'

I explained to the landlord that I had come from New York to see Saltmarsh on a matter of business.

'Well,' said Mr. Baldwin, 'I reckon you'd best get along to his shanty, it's fourth from here as you go down stream; maybe his sister will fit you up something to eat while you wait.'

Here was a revelation! Luke Saltmarsh with a sister! I distinctly remember that he had described himself in the letter to the lawyers as an only child. Was there something wrong about my unknown cousin, after all?

I thanked the landlord, and turned my steps towards the cabin he had indicated. It was larger than most of its neighbours, and there was an air of neatness about it which would have suggested woman's presence, even if I had not heard of it. A dusky half-breed Indian boy of about fifteen was just entering the cabin with a bucket of water as I approached, and at the same moment a white arm appearing in the doorway relieved the boy of his load.

I cannot describe Naomi as I saw her then for the first time; I only know that I looked upon the most beautiful woman my eyes have ever seen. Tall and fair, and with a stately dignity of her own, the picturesque simplicity of her frontier dress in no way clashed amid those surroundings with her natural grace. There was an air of refinement about Naomi which the roughest setting could not negative. She invited me in; and without going into the object of my visit, I told her that I had reason to believe I was a relative.

To my wonder a look of harassed fear came into her eyes. 'Tell me,' she said, 'is my father, Leonard Saltmarsh, living?'

'Is it possible,' I exclaimed, 'that you do not know? Your brother Luke knows. It is in consequence of a letter from him that I am here. Leonard Saltmarsh died two months ago.'

'Ah!' she said as if to herself, shuddering the while, I thought; 'that explains it then—that explains it. It is as I feared.' Then she went on: 'Mr. Saltmarsh—or may I call you cousin?—there is a story which I must tell you—before Luke returns. I am Leonard Saltmarsh's only child. Luke is neither his son nor my brother. He is my dead mother's nephew. But I was brought up to believe myself his sister, and it is only the other day that I learned the truth. He has known it all along.'

'But how is it,' I asked, 'that you are out here in the wilds? Did not your father and mother live together?'

'Only for two years after their marriage, which took place in Chicago. My mother always said that his temper was so violent that she could not stay with him. So she ran away, taking me with her, and supported herself as best she could by her needle. Luke was her sister's child, and mother took him when my aunt died. Then my mother died when I was twelve years old; but first she gave me a little box, which I was not to open till twenty. I was twenty last May; and when I opened the packet, I found a letter from my mother telling me that Luke was not my brother. I had no one to protect me, and she wanted me to think myself his sister. That was the reason she gave; and she added, that when I was twenty, it would be right for me to know the truth.'

'So Luke has always known that you were not his sister, but you have only lately discovered it?' I said.

'Yes,' she answered; 'I have not told him yet that I know.'

'Am I right in supposing that you are afraid of Luke?' I asked.

She hesitated, and turned the question aside. Seeing the absolute necessity of gaining her confidence, I told her exactly how matters lay, and asked her what I had best do under the circumstances. We both agreed that the only safe course would be to treat Luke as if he were a genuine claimant for the present, and as if I and Naomi were still in ignorance of the truth. I was powerless to aid Naomi, or move myself, till I had obtained a remittance from my banker in New York.

'Even without his knowing that we are aware of his designs, you will have to be careful,' said Naomi. 'Luke is dangerous if thwarted, and this is a lawless place.'

There was a firm step outside, and a young man strode into the cabin. He was of medium height, with sandy hair and complexion. He had a furtive look, and paused on the threshold to eye me askance.

'Luke, here is a cousin from England,' Naomi said; 'won't you bid him welcome?'

For a moment he hesitated, as if making up his mind. Then he came forward and gave me his hand. 'Glad to see you,' he said. 'Guess you've come over after the old man's dollars—that so?'

'Yes,' I said; 'but as I find another claim with more right than mine, I shall go home again, quite contented.'

'That's all right, then,' said Luke; 'stay as long as you like, and make yourself comfortable. Naomi will fix you up.'

After this he became more and more hospitable. He listened with an air of interest to my story of the coach robbery, and offered to lend me a few dollars till I heard from New York. But I said not a word to enlighten him as to my knowledge of his having claimed Leonard Saltmarsh's money

for himself alone, without mentioning Naomi. I wished to fathom him without raising his suspicions. In the course of that evening's friendly conversation Luke informed us that he had been to Parson's City that morning to buy a horse.

The next few days past quickly enough. Naomi and I became fast friends, and whenever she had the chance, she told me much of her early life. But Luke took care that we were seldom alone. He haunted the cabin, under the pretence of entertaining me, and pressed attentions which were almost servile. He avoided talking of his claim on the solicitors, but when obliged to speak of it, always inferred that Naomi was to share his good fortune. It was understood that I was to remain at any rate till the remittance for which I had written to New York arrived.

When I had been at Golden Falls three weeks, an accident occurred which had its effect on after-events. I came out of the cabin one morning and found Luke brutally thrashing Indian Joe, the half-breed boy who fetched and carried for Naomi. In my horror at the cruel treatment, I called Luke a blackguard. To my surprise, he left the lad alone and apologized to me humbly, making some excuse about his temper. When I told Naomi of this, she was much agitated. Luke's civility she felt sure was dangerous.

The next day I was sitting alone in the cabin reading a week-old newspaper. Naomi had gone up the ravine to hunt for some herbs among the rocks; and Luke had started off after breakfast to his 'cradle' to wash for gold. Suddenly the door of the cabin burst open and Luke dashed in. 'For God's sake, cousin—he always called me cousin—get on my nag and ride for Doctor Bell at Parson's City. Naomi has fallen over a crag up yonder. I'm afraid her back is broken. She can't be moved, and I must get back to her right away.'

Horried as I was, and anxious to go to her, there was no need for Luke to press me into the service. In two minutes I was mounted and listened to Luke's final instructions. 'Take the path you came by till you strike the coach-road,' he said; 'then along the road till you come to the City. Any one will tell you where the Doc lives; bring him back at all risks, and ride like thunder.'

The sure-footed horse—a large raw-boned chestnut—carried me safely up the rocky sides of the ravine. Once on the top, I dug my heels into his sides and made him gallop his best. The ground, though level, had a broken surface; but with Naomi lying there injured, perhaps fatally, what cared I for the risk of a broken neck. We flew along regardless of stones and the frequent burrows of prairie-dogs. I had reached a spot three miles from the coach-road when I thought I heard a shout. Looking round, I saw some twenty or thirty mounted men following in my tracks. They were galloping their hardest, and some of the best mounted were overhauling me. For a moment I wondered what it meant; but Naomi's peril started off the whole of Golden Falls in search of a doctor. That had nothing to do with me; I had promised to go to Parson's City; and whether I arrived there first or last, thither I would go. I sent my horse along with a will.

But there were faster-footed than the chestnut behind me. As we entered the coach-road, three of my pursuers dashed alongside, and, before I could realize what they were doing, pointed their pistols at my head. 'Halt! you durned horse-thief, or we'll down you,' cried one of the miners.

I pulled up to explain. Before I could open my mouth, they had me off the horse. Two of them held me fast while the remainder of the party came straggling up.

'For heaven's sake,' I said, 'what-ever blunder you are making over me, let one of you ride on for the doctor. It may be too late else.'

'It's uncommon little good a doctor will do you in this job, my lad,' said one of my captors.—'Here, Luke,' he added, Naomi's soi-disant brother rode up on a borrowed steed, 'we've took him, you see.'

Luke came up to where I stood. 'What does this mean?' I asked. 'You told me Naomi was hurt, and asked me to ride for the doctor.'

'That be hanged for a yarn; you had better tell that to the Court. You stole the horse, you dirty Tender-foot,' replied Luke, letting his pent-up hatred loose at last. I saw that I was trapped, but I rejoiced that Naomi's supposed fall was but part of Luke's device.

'Come, boys; form the Court,' said one of the older men; 'there's a handy tree on yonder bluff ready for the Britisher.'

Thus it was that I found myself on trial for my life—for horse-stealing, a hanging business in Dakota,—before the dreaded Judge Lynch. Luke's perjured evidence was fatal. He swore that my story of having been sent for the doctor was false, that I had arrived at Golden Falls a mere penniless loafer, and that I had required his charity by robbing him of his horse. I looked round on the rugged faces of my captors, and saw that there was no hope for mercy. I was absolutely without proof of my innocence.

It was all over in five minutes. The Court pronounced me 'Guilty,' and I was told to say my prayers. But just as the sentence was uttered there came the clatter and rattle of wheels, and round Blackman's Corner came the Parson's City mail-coach—the self-same vehicle in which I had been victimized by the road-agents.

The driver pulled up as he came abreast the crowd. I saw that my old acquaintance the one-eyed guard was in charge. He got down and strolled over to where the miner who had overtaken me was still holding the chestnut horse. 'Going to hang him, boys?' he asked after a moment's scrutiny.

'That's so,' was the reply. 'Where is the ens?' asked the guard. 'That's him,' said one of the men, pointing to where I stood with my hands bound behind me.

The guard recognized me with a start. 'Fah!' he said, 'you're foolin'. That Britisher was along with us, a passenger, when the agents stuck us up. He couldn't have stole the horse, or the dust either, for the matter of that.'

'What do you mean?' asked the miner who had acted as judge; 'no one's talking about dust.'

'I am, though,' said the guard shortly. 'I tell you that that is the horse the road-agents lifted, and it stands to reason that the man as lifted the horse lifted your dust, don't it?'

There was a murmur of wrath among the miners. All eyes were turned on Luke. He began to move towards the edge of the crowd; but rough hands restrained him, and the leader said very quietly: 'You will have to show where you got that horse, Luke, before you make tracks.'

'It ain't a matter of showin' where he got the horse, I reckon,' said the guard; 'leastways, not altogether. See? he's a button short in the centre of his shirt. Guess I can find the missing shiner to match,' and he pulled out of his pocket a bright fancy button, engraved with a phoenix—the exact counterpart of the showy fastenings Luke wore in his hunting shirt.

'Go on. What of that?' shouted the crowd.

'I picked up that button on the ground where we were robbed,' said the guard, right here by the corner. It got hitched off as the galoot cut the traces of that bald-faced chestnut. I saw it drop. I guess that ought to be enough for you.'

It was. 'What say you, boys, shall we hang him?' asked the judge; and amid a storm of 'Ayes,' Luke was dragged, pale and trembling, to the tree. As the fatal spot was reached, he braced himself up with an effort, and pointed to me. I was still bound between two of the men. 'Boys,' he said, 'if I tell you where the dust is hid, will you hang that cursed Englishman alongside me?'

'No! By gun, we wouldn't hang a dog on your evidence, you traitor, that sold your pals!' said the judge.—'Up with him, lads.'

It was not till a year later that, safe in the security of our English home, Naomi told me quite all there was to tell about Luke. She had reason to believe that in the interval between hearing of her father's death and my arrival, he had twice attempted her life—once by means of a reputed 'accident' with his revolver; and again by persuading her to cross the mountain torrent at a dangerous spot. In all probability my rash trip out West was the means of preserving the life as well as the fortune of the Heiress of Golden Falls. But I am more than repaid.

My character was fully re-established among the miners on our return to camp. The boy, Indian Joe, had overheard Luke pressing me to take the horse to ride for the doctor. Needless to say, Naomi's fall from the crag was a fiction designed to send me to a merciless death.

Names of Chinese War Ships.

To the Chinese there is no confusion in the names of their cruisers and gunboats, and if Ting-Yuen and King-Yuen get mixed by the time they arrive in New York it will not seriously effect the fortunes of war in the China Sea. In colloquial Chinese the distinction is preserved by the difference of tone. In the Chinese characters, or ideographs, the possibilities of confusion is absolutely nil, for Ching Yuen and Chin-Yuen no more resemble each other than do New York and Minneapolis, or than Bunker Hill monument resembles the state house, Ting-Yuen signifies future security; Chen-Yuen, guarding the future. The characters on the other vessels are as distinct in sound, appearance and meaning as these two.

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On and after Monday the 1st October, 1894, the trains of this Railway will run daily (Sunday excepted) as follows:

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Express for St. John..... 13.43  
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Express for Halifax..... 18.11  
Express for Moncton, Quebec, Montreal..... 18.02  
Accommodation for St. John..... 20.35

All trains are run by Eastern Standard Time.  
D. POTTINGER, General Manager  
Railway Office, Moncton, N. B., 4th, October, 1894.

Salisbury and Harvey

Railway Company.

TIME TABLE NO. 31.

In effect Monday, Oct. 15th, 1894. Trains will run daily (Sunday excepted) by Eastern Standard Time.

Leave Harvey..... 4.00  
Leave Albert..... 4.15  
Leave Hillsboro..... 4.30  
Arrive Salisbury..... 7.20

Leave Salisbury..... 10.00  
Leave Hillsboro..... 12.00  
Leave Albert..... 13.20  
Arrive Harvey..... 13.35

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