

SOON WILL COME THE SNOW.

White are the daisies, white as milk; The stately corn is hung with silk; The roses are in bloom.

Up from the meadow sodges fall; Flats musical the lack's clear call; Scarlet the lilies grow.

An islet in a shoreless sea, This moment is for you and me, And bliss that lovers know.

JIM DUFFY'S WIFE.

The growth of Dead Man's Gulch had been sure and steady. It never had a boom, but instead a constant stream of incoming miners who stayed.

"He was as purty a corp as iver I see," said Miss Dumont. It was a sunny April afternoon; a pleasant breath of spring filled the gulch.

"Oh, indeed?" snorted Miss Dumont. "No offense; I knowed you was from'nly. I seen him give yer the three hum'ed Duffy."

"Was me, his chum," said Tom, tilting back against the wall. "Nights we'd git talkin', lym' on over the ground, lookin' up inter them solemn stars fur above the high, black mountains along the gulch."

"That he warn't," added Strong. "But she's the cause; I tuk ter licker, wimmen (Tom looked uncomfortably at Miss Dumont), and gamblin'."

"Whatever he's his dead," said the cap'n; "a boss thief's entitled ter consid'ration when he's some fect under ground."

"Wal," said Tom, "Duffy 'ud plead with me not ter let that wife of his git his claim if emmythin' 'ud happen ter him; he didn't low he was goin' ter work fur her."

"That claim by rights b'longs ter me," snapped Miss Dumont; "you had no right ter nail that cabin up neither. I b'lave yer tryin' ter git it fur yerself."

"I'd like ter scratch yer eyes out," said Miss Dumont, much flushed. "You couldn't reach," laughed Tom.

"Hullo! what's that?" he said suddenly. Descending the rough mountain trail at the head of the gulch was a white covered emigrant wagon drawn by a yoke of red oxen.

"She's come herself," said Tom lugubriously. "Served yer right, sendin' that fool notis and them other tricks," snarled Miss Dumont.

"I'm blanked if I don't," said Tom, carelessly, and strolled down the gulch. They watched him go up to the cabin door, saw it open a crack and some papers handed out.

"When I knocked," he said, "some'n opened the door, slid out a marriage stificate and a paper signed by Lawyer Thomas, of Elizabeth, that Mis' Duffy hed a right ter the prop'ty, and that was all."

"Somehow seems as if I could see the home-sickness of them critters from here," said Tom, pitifully; "them honest farm-raised steers a comin' in this wild region an' Bill Bush a proddin' of 'em on as they was wild Texans, and them wonderin' what in h— it all means."

The next day the female in calico took possession of Duffy's claim, his pan and belongings. She wore long rubber boots, a short skirt and the sunbunnet—a hideous figure.

"I don't blame Duffy fer runnin' off from that," said the cap'n; "I call it a dime museum freak."

"Why don't that man what come with yer yesterday wurk here? This ain't no job fur wimmen."

"G'it out," said a singularly coarse voice, and Tom retreated. Week after week went on, and the calico figure and sunbunnet was at its post, getting more skillful every day.

"She's a nigger," the cap'n announced triumphantly, one day; "her hands is coal black."

"They ain't," said Tom, shortly; "them's rubber gloves, but she's wuss'n a nigger; I see her the other day."

"Did ye now?" said the cap'n, respectfully. A feeling of deep interest crept over the crowd and hushed all to a deathlike silence.

"I oughter give the old gal a thousand or so," he said, in the flush of his prosperity. "She drove me away from my claim; the old witch hoodooed me."

The drunken yells were loudest. After supper Tom flung himself upon a bunk in the barkeeper's room. He was worn out with excitement and long nights of work.

"What's all this fur?" said Tom, coolly; he was rather pale, and panted a little. He left one hand in his pocket resting on a Colt's six-shooter.

"We don't want no characters like her in this camp," said the cap'n with maudlin slowness; "ain't only that she's druv off a promisin' citi—citizen outer the gulch, but she was the prime—prime (primeval was too much, so he dropped the effort)—the prime case of Duffy's death."

"What yer goin' to do, all helpless great men, 'ginst that one mighty powerful woman?" said Tom, his firm lips curling in scorn.

"G'it outer the way peaceable," said Si Strong, thickly, steady himself against the wall of the hut; "ef ye ain't no interest in the morals o' this camp the rest on us has; tain't fair, pard."

"Move off!" cried the crowd; "we're goin' ter set Duffy's wife outsider the gulch; that's all we want."

A confusion, angry murmur followed. "I hain't no frien' ter the woman; I'm willin' to a compromise," said Tom.

"I hain't no frien' ter the woman; I'm willin' to a compromise," said Tom. "I'm in favor of her leavin' camp. You all know I was Duffy's chum, but I hain't goin' to have it git round all you men turned on one helpless woman or hag, whatever she is."

The rotten door yielded at one push from his massive shoulder. The miners crowded the doorway, and some broke the window glass, tearing the green paper curtains away.

The hut only had one room. Its walls and ceilings were logs; a blackened fireplace held a few battered old cooking utensils, and boxes were the only seats.

She went back to the old man. Very quiet and cool she was, but her small hand on the old man's head trembled slightly.

"Madam," said the cap'n, stepping into the room, his hat in his hand, "we ask your pardon; we believe yer. This is the meanest job this er camp was ever guilty of."

"The cap'n wiped his forehead after this fine point. He looked very meek, as well as a fat man in shabby clothes and blue flannel coat.

"We've come, miss—missus," said Tom slowly, "to tell ye the camp has decided you ain't fit fur to live in the place—yer influence is damagin'."

"No shootin', missus," said Tom, gently; "I ain't afeerd of ye—wimmen ain't much of shot, as a general rule, and ye



"A BIG OFFER."

might hit the old one or him in the bed there. Gimme the gun gentle-like. They shan't harm ye, but ef ye wounded the wust cuss 'mongst 'em I couldn't answer fur yer life or the old one's neither."

"It's no use," she said in a trembling voice; "it's all against me. You're not men, you're cowardly brutes, you're drunkards and gamblers. Those women there are so low I would not touch them nor take bread from their sinful hands if I were starving."

"Crowd there and look at me," she cried in the dignity of her insulted womanhood, her noble, beautiful face scolding them in every expression, in every glance of her beautiful eyes.

"Don't git mad with me," he pleaded, much distressed. "I meant it well; don't hate me," coming nearer; "don't cry, poor little thing; don't cry, Dolly."

"I've loved you from the first, Tom, and I can't, can't, help giving in, to saddle you with us all—father—"

"Jest finished it," said Si Strong, with a sigh of relief. He and the cap'n had apparently been wallowing in ink. Tom read the paper carefully.

"Jest this, 'The pologies of Dead Man's Gulch is offered unanimously by all concerned to Jim—' There that's it. Scratch out and write this in place of it, 'is offered to Misses Tom O'Connor, not Duffy's wife.'"

"Character as Indicated by the Features. Memory of Events.—This is shown by a wide, full forehead in the center.

"Reasoning Power.—A high, long and well-defined nose and a broad face exhibits this faculty.

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"Firmness.—The presence of this faculty, when very large, is indicated by a long, broad chin. Firmness is synonymous with willfulness, perseverance and stability.

"Two of a Kind Wanted. Elsie—Bob, I wish you would tell me how a handkerchief flirtation is worked.

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