Burning Daylight

By

Jack London

BURNING DAYLIGHT

PART I

CHAPTER I

It was a quiet night in the Shovel. At the bar, which ranged along one side of the large chinked-log room, leaned half a dozen men, two of whom were discussing the relative merits of spruce-tea and lime-juice as remedies for scurvy. They argued with an air of depression and with intervals of morose silence. The other men scarcely heeded them. In a row, against the opposite wall, were the gambling games. The crap-table was deserted. One lone man was playing at the faro-table. The roulette-ball was not even spinning, and the gamekeeper stood by the roaring, red-hot stove, talking with the young, dark-eyed woman, comely of face and figure, who was known from Juneau to Fort Yukon as the Virgin. Three men sat in at stud-poker, but they played with small chips and without enthusiasm, while there were no onlookers. On the floor of the dancing-room, which opened out at the rear, three couples were waltzing drearily to the strains of a violin and a piano.

Circle City was not deserted, nor was money tight. The miners were in

from Moseyed Creek and the other diggings to the west, the summer washing had been good, and the men's pouches were heavy with dust and nuggets. The Klondike had not yet been discovered, nor had the miners of the Yukon learned the possibilities of deep digging and wood-firing. No work was done in the winter, and they made a practice of hibernating in the large camps like Circle City during the long Arctic night. Time was heavy on their hands, their pouches were well filled, and the only social diversion to be found was in the saloons. Yet the Shovel was practically deserted, and the Virgin, standing by the stove, yawned with uncovered mouth and said to Charley Bates:--

"If something don't happen soon, I'm gin' to bed. What's the matter with the camp, anyway? Everybody dead?"

Bates did not even trouble to reply, but went on moodily rolling a cigarette. Dan MacDonald, pioneer saloonman and gambler on the upper Yukon, owner and proprietor of the Tivoli and all its games, wandered forlornly across the great vacant space of floor and joined the two at the stove.

"Anybody dead?" the Virgin asked him.

"Looks like it," was the answer.

"Then it must be the whole camp," she said with an air of finality and with another yawn.

MacDonald grinned and nodded, and opened his mouth to speak, when the front door swung wide and a man appeared in the light. A rush of frost, turned to vapor by the heat of the room, swirled about him to his knees and poured on across the floor, growing thinner and thinner, and perishing a dozen feet from the stove. Taking the wisp broom from its nail inside the door, the newcomer brushed the snow from his moccasins and high German socks. He would have appeared a large man had not a huge French-Canadian stepped up to him from the bar and gripped his hand.

"Hello, Daylight!" was his greeting. "By Gar, you good for sore eyes!"

"Hello, Louis, when did you-all blow in?" returned the newcomer. "Come up and have a drink and tell us all about Bone Creek. Why, dog-gone you-all, shake again. Where's that pardner of yours? I'm looking for him."

Another huge man detached himself from the bar to shake hands. Olaf Henderson and French Louis, partners together on Bone Creek, were the two largest men in the country, and though they were but half a head taller than the newcomer, between them he was dwarfed completely.

"Hello, Olaf, you're my meat, savvee that," said the one called Daylight. "To-morrow's my birthday, and I'm going to put you-all on your back--savvee? And you, too, Louis. I can put you-all on your

back on my birthday--savvee? Come up and drink, Olaf, and I'll tell you-all about it."

The arrival of the newcomer seemed to send a flood of warmth through the place. "It's Burning Daylight," the Virgin cried, the first to recognize him as he came into the light. Charley Bates' tight features relaxed at the sight, and MacDonald went over and joined the three at the bar. With the advent of Burning Daylight the whole place became suddenly brighter and cheerier. The barkeepers were active. Voices were raised. Somebody laughed. And when the fiddler, peering into the front room, remarked to the pianist, "It's Burning Daylight," the waltz-time perceptibly quickened, and the dancers, catching the contagion, began to whirl about as if they really enjoyed it. It was known to them of old time that nothing languished when Burning Daylight was around.

He turned from the bar and saw the woman by the stove and the eager look of welcome she extended him.

"Hello, Virgin, old girl," he called. "Hello, Charley. What's the matter with you-all? Why wear faces like that when coffins cost only three ounces? Come up, you-all, and drink. Come up, you unburied dead, and name your poison. Come up, everybody. This is my night, and I'm going to ride it. To-morrow I'm thirty, and then I'll be an old man. It's the last fling of youth. Are you-all with me? Surge along, then. Surge along.

"Hold on there, Davis," he called to the faro-dealer, who had shoved his chair back from the table. "I'm going you one flutter to see whether you-all drink with me or we-all drink with you."

Pulling a heavy sack of gold-dust from his coat pocket, he dropped it on the HIGH CARD.

"Fifty," he said.

The faro-dealer slipped two cards. The high card won. He scribbled the amount on a pad, and the weigher at the bar balanced fifty dollars' worth of dust in the gold-scales and poured it into Burning Daylight's sack. The waltz in the back room being finished, the three couples, followed by the fiddler and the pianist and heading for the bar, caught Daylight's eye.

"Surge along, you-all" he cried. "Surge along and name it. This is my night, and it ain't a night that comes frequent. Surge up, you Siwashes and Salmon-eaters. It's my night, I tell you-all--"

"A blame mangy night," Charley Bates interpolated.

"You're right, my son," Burning Daylight went on gaily.

"A mangy night, but it's MY night, you see. I'm the mangy old he-wolf.

Listen to me howl."

And howl he did, like a lone gray timber wolf, till the Virgin thrust her pretty fingers in her ears and shivered. A minute later she was whirled away in his arms to the dancing-floor, where, along with the other three women and their partners, a rollicking Virginia reel was soon in progress. Men and women danced in moccasins, and the place was soon a-roar, Burning Daylight the centre of it and the animating spark, with quip and jest and rough merriment rousing them out of the slough of despond in which he had found them.

The atmosphere of the place changed with his coming. He seemed to fill it with his tremendous vitality. Men who entered from the street felt it immediately, and in response to their queries the barkeepers nodded at the back room, and said comprehensively, "Burning Daylight's on the tear." And the men who entered remained, and kept the barkeepers busy. The gamblers took heart of life, and soon the tables were filled, the click of chips and whir of the roulette-ball rising monotonously and imperiously above the hoarse rumble of men's voices and their oaths and heavy laughs.

Few men knew Elam Harnish by any other name than Burning Daylight, the name which had been given him in the early days in the land because of his habit of routing his comrades out of their blankets with the complaint that daylight was burning. Of the pioneers in that far Arctic wilderness, where all men were pioneers, he was reckoned among

the oldest. Men like Al Mayo and Jack McQuestion antedated him; but they had entered the land by crossing the Rockies from the Hudson Bay country to the east. He, however, had been the pioneer over the Chilcoot and Chilcat passes. In the spring of 1883, twelve years before, a stripling of eighteen, he had crossed over the Chilcoot with five comrades.

In the fall he had crossed back with one. Four had perished by mischance in the bleak, uncharted vastness. And for twelve years Elam Harnish had continued to grope for gold among the shadows of the Circle.

And no man had groped so obstinately nor so enduringly. He had grown up with the land. He knew no other land. Civilization was a dream of some previous life. Camps like Forty Mile and Circle City were to him metropolises. And not alone had he grown up with the land, for, raw as it was, he had helped to make it. He had made history and geography, and those that followed wrote of his traverses and charted the trails his feet had broken.

Heroes are seldom given to hero-worship, but among those of that young land, young as he was, he was accounted an elder hero. In point of time he was before them. In point of deed he was beyond them. In point of endurance it was acknowledged that he could kill the hardiest of them. Furthermore, he was accounted a nervy man, a square man, and a white man.

In all lands where life is a hazard lightly played with and lightly flung aside, men turn, almost automatically, to gambling for diversion and relaxation. In the Yukon men gambled their lives for gold, and those that won gold from the ground gambled for it with one another. Nor was Elam Harnish an exception. He was a man's man primarily, and the instinct in him to play the game of life was strong. Environment had determined what form that game should take. He was born on an Iowa farm, and his father had emigrated to eastern Oregon, in which mining country Elam's boyhood was lived. He had known nothing but hard knocks for big stakes. Pluck and endurance counted in the game, but the great god Chance dealt the cards. Honest work for sure but meagre returns did not count. A man played big. He risked everything for everything, and anything less than everything meant that he was a loser. So for twelve Yukon years, Elam Harnish had been a loser. True, on Moosehide Creek the past summer he had taken out twenty thousand dollars, and what was left in the ground was twenty thousand more. But, as he himself proclaimed, that was no more than getting his ante back. He had ante'd his life for a dozen years, and forty thousand was a small pot for such a stake--the price of a drink and a dance at the Tivoli, of a winter's flutter at Circle City, and a grubstake for the year to come.

The men of the Yukon reversed the old maxim till it read: hard come, easy go. At the end of the reel, Elam Harnish called the house up to drink again. Drinks were a dollar apiece, gold rated at sixteen dollars an ounce; there were thirty in the house that accepted his

invitation, and between every dance the house was Elam's guest. This was his night, and nobody was to be allowed to pay for anything.

Not that Elam Harnish was a drinking man. Whiskey meant little to him. He was too vital and robust, too untroubled in mind and body, to incline to the slavery of alcohol. He spent months at a time on trail and river when he drank nothing stronger than coffee, while he had gone a year at a time without even coffee. But he was gregarious, and since the sole social expression of the Yukon was the saloon, he expressed himself that way. When he was a lad in the mining camps of the West, men had always done that. To him it was the proper way for a man to express himself socially. He knew no other way.

He was a striking figure of a man, despite his garb being similar to that of all the men in the Tivoli. Soft-tanned moccasins of moose-hide, beaded in Indian designs, covered his feet. His trousers were ordinary overalls, his coat was made from a blanket. Long-gauntleted leather mittens, lined with wool, hung by his side. They were connected in the Yukon fashion, by a leather thong passed around the neck and across the shoulders. On his head was a fur cap, the ear-flaps raised and the tying-cords dangling. His face, lean and slightly long, with the suggestion of hollows under the cheek-bones, seemed almost Indian. The burnt skin and keen dark eyes contributed to this effect, though the bronze of the skin and the eyes themselves were essentially those of a white man. He looked older than thirty, and yet, smooth-shaven and without wrinkles, he was almost boyish. This

impression of age was based on no tangible evidence. It came from the abstracter facts of the man, from what he had endured and survived, which was far beyond that of ordinary men. He had lived life naked and tensely, and something of all this smouldered in his eyes, vibrated in his voice, and seemed forever a-whisper on his lips.

The lips themselves were thin, and prone to close tightly over the even, white teeth. But their harshness was retrieved by the upward curl at the corners of his mouth. This curl gave to him sweetness, as the minute puckers at the corners of the eyes gave him laughter. These necessary graces saved him from a nature that was essentially savage and that otherwise would have been cruel and bitter. The nose was lean, full-nostrilled, and delicate, and of a size to fit the face; while the high forehead, as if to atone for its narrowness, was splendidly domed and symmetrical. In line with the Indian effect was his hair, very straight and very black, with a gloss to it that only health could give.

"Burning Daylight's burning candlelight," laughed Dan MacDonald, as an outburst of exclamations and merriment came from the dancers.

"An' he is der boy to do it, eh, Louis?" said Olaf Henderson.

"Yes, by Gar! you bet on dat," said French Louis. "Dat boy is all gold--"

"And when God Almighty washes Daylight's soul out on the last big slucin' day," MacDonald interrupted, "why, God Almighty'll have to shovel gravel along with him into the sluice-boxes."

"Dot iss goot," Olaf Henderson muttered, regarding the gambler with profound admiration.

"Ver' good," affirmed French Louis. "I t'ink we take a drink on dat one time, eh?"

CHAPTER II

It was two in the morning when the dancers, bent on getting something to eat, adjourned the dancing for half an hour. And it was at this moment that Jack Kearns suggested poker. Jack Kearns was a big, bluff-featured man, who, along with Bettles, had made the disastrous attempt to found a post on the head-reaches of the Koyokuk, far inside the Arctic Circle. After that, Kearns had fallen back on his posts at Forty Mile and Sixty Mile and changed the direction of his ventures by sending out to the States for a small sawmill and a river steamer. The former was even then being sledded across Chilcoot Pass by Indians and dogs, and would come down the Yukon in the early summer after the ice-run. Later in the summer, when Bering Sea and the mouth of the Yukon cleared of ice, the steamer, put together at St. Michaels, was to be expected up the river loaded to the guards with supplies.

Jack Kearns suggested poker. French Louis, Dan MacDonald, and Hal Campbell (who had make a strike on Moosehide), all three of whom were not dancing because there were not girls enough to go around, inclined to the suggestion. They were looking for a fifth man when Burning Daylight emerged from the rear room, the Virgin on his arm, the train of dancers in his wake. In response to the hail of the poker-players, he came over to their table in the corner.

"Want you to sit in," said Campbell. "How's your luck?"

"I sure got it to-night," Burning Daylight answered with enthusiasm, and at the same time felt the Virgin press his arm warningly. She wanted him for the dancing. "I sure got my luck with me, but I'd sooner dance. I ain't hankerin' to take the money away from you-all."

Nobody urged. They took his refusal as final, and the Virgin was pressing his arm to turn him away in pursuit of the supper-seekers, when he experienced a change of heart. It was not that he did not want to dance, nor that he wanted to hurt her; but that insistent pressure on his arm put his free man-nature in revolt. The thought in his mind was that he did not want any woman running him. Himself a favorite with women, nevertheless they did not bulk big with him. They were toys, playthings, part of the relaxation from the bigger game of life. He met women along with the whiskey and gambling, and from observation he had found that it was far easier to break away from the drink and the cards than from a woman once the man was properly entangled.

He was a slave to himself, which was natural in one with a healthy ego, but he rebelled in ways either murderous or panicky at being a slave to anybody else. Love's sweet servitude was a thing of which he had no comprehension. Men he had seen in love impressed him as lunatics, and lunacy was a thing he had never considered worth analyzing. But comradeship with men was different from love with women. There was no servitude in comradeship. It was a business proposition, a square deal between men who did not pursue each other, but who shared the risks of trail and river and mountain in the pursuit of life and treasure. Men

and women pursued each other, and one must needs bend the other to his will or hers. Comradeship was different. There was no slavery about it; and though he, a strong man beyond strength's seeming, gave far more than he received, he gave not something due but in royal largess, his gifts of toil or heroic effort falling generously from his hands. To pack for days over the gale-swept passes or across the mosquito-ridden marshes, and to pack double the weight his comrade packed, did not involve unfairness or compulsion. Each did his best. That was the business essence of it. Some men were stronger than others--true; but so long as each man did his best it was fair exchange, the business spirit was observed, and the square deal obtained.

But with women--no. Women gave little and wanted all. Women had apron-strings and were prone to tie them about any man who looked twice in their direction. There was the Virgin, yawning her head off when he came in and mightily pleased that he asked her to dance. One dance was all very well, but because he danced twice and thrice with her and several times more, she squeezed his arm when they asked him to sit in at poker. It was the obnoxious apron-string, the first of the many compulsions she would exert upon him if he gave in. Not that she was not a nice bit of a woman, healthy and strapping and good to look upon, also a very excellent dancer, but that she was a woman with all a woman's desire to rope him with her apron-strings and tie him hand and foot for the branding. Better poker. Besides, he liked poker as well as he did dancing.

He resisted the pull on his arm by the mere negative mass of him, and said:--

"I sort of feel a hankering to give you-all a flutter."

Again came the pull on his arm. She was trying to pass the apron-string around him. For the fraction of an instant he was a savage, dominated by the wave of fear and murder that rose up in him. For that infinitesimal space of time he was to all purposes a frightened tiger filled with rage and terror at the apprehension of the trap. Had he been no more than a savage, he would have leapt wildly from the place or else sprung upon her and destroyed her. But in that same instant there stirred in him the generations of discipline by which man had become an inadequate social animal. Tact and sympathy strove with him, and he smiled with his eyes into the Virgin's eyes as he said:--

"You-all go and get some grub. I ain't hungry. And we'll dance some more by and by. The night's young yet. Go to it, old girl."

He released his arm and thrust her playfully on the shoulder, at the same time turning to the poker-players.

"Take off the limit and I'll go you-all."

"Limit's the roof," said Jack Kearns.

"Take off the roof."

The players glanced at one another, and Kearns announced, "The roof's off."

Elam Harnish dropped into the waiting chair, started to pull out his gold-sack, and changed his mind. The Virgin pouted a moment, then followed in the wake of the other dancers.

"I'll bring you a sandwich, Daylight," she called back over her shoulder.

He nodded. She was smiling her forgiveness. He had escaped the apron-string, and without hurting her feelings too severely.

"Let's play markers," he suggested. "Chips do everlastingly clutter up the table....If it's agreeable to you-all?"

"I'm willing," answered Hal Campbell. "Let mine run at five hundred."

"Mine, too," answered Harnish, while the others stated the values they put on their own markers, French Louis, the most modest, issuing his at a hundred dollars each.

In Alaska, at that time, there were no rascals and no tin-horn gamblers. Games were conducted honestly, and men trusted one another. A man's word was as good as his gold in the blower. A marker was a flat, oblong composition chip worth, perhaps, a cent. But when a man betted a marker in a game and said it was worth five hundred dollars, it was accepted as worth five hundred dollars. Whoever won it knew that the man who issued it would redeem it with five hundred dollars' worth of dust weighed out on the scales. The markers being of different colors, there was no difficulty in identifying the owners. Also, in that early Yukon day, no one dreamed of playing table-stakes. A man was good in a game for all that he possessed, no matter where his possessions were or what was their nature.

Harnish cut and got the deal. At this good augury, and while shuffling the deck, he called to the barkeepers to set up the drinks for the house. As he dealt the first card to Dan MacDonald, on his left, he called out:

"Get down to the ground, you-all, Malemutes, huskies, and Siwash purps! Get down and dig in! Tighten up them traces! Put your weight into the harness and bust the breast-bands! Whoop-la! Yow! We're off and bound for Helen Breakfast! And I tell you-all clear and plain there's goin' to be stiff grades and fast goin' to-night before we win to that same lady. And somebody's goin' to bump...hard."

Once started, it was a quiet game, with little or no conversation,

though all about the players the place was a-roar. Elam Harnish had ignited the spark. More and more miners dropped in to the Tivoli and remained. When Burning Daylight went on the tear, no man cared to miss it. The dancing-floor was full. Owing to the shortage of women, many of the men tied bandanna handkerchiefs around their arms in token of femininity and danced with other men. All the games were crowded, and the voices of the men talking at the long bar and grouped about the stove were accompanied by the steady click of chips and the sharp whir, rising and falling, of the roulette-ball. All the materials of a proper Yukon night were at hand and mixing.

The luck at the table varied monotonously, no big hands being out. As a result, high play went on with small hands though no play lasted long. A filled straight belonging to French Louis gave him a pot of five thousand against two sets of threes held by Campbell and Kearns. One pot of eight hundred dollars was won by a pair of treys on a showdown. And once Harnish called Kearns for two thousand dollars on a cold steal. When Kearns laid down his hand it showed a bobtail flush, while Harnish's hand proved that he had had the nerve to call on a pair of tens.

But at three in the morning the big combination of hands arrived.

It was the moment of moments that men wait weeks for in a poker game. The news of it tingled over the Tivoli. The onlookers became quiet. The men farther away ceased talking and moved over to the table. The

players deserted the other games, and the dancing-floor was forsaken, so that all stood at last, fivescore and more, in a compact and silent group, around the poker-table. The high betting had begun before the draw, and still the high betting went on, with the draw not in sight. Kearns had dealt, and French Louis had opened the pot with one marker--in his case one hundred dollars. Campbell had merely "seen" it, but Elam Harnish, corning next, had tossed in five hundred dollars, with the remark to MacDonald that he was letting him in easy.

MacDonald, glancing again at his hand, put in a thousand in markers. Kearns, debating a long time over his hand, finally "saw." It then cost French Louis nine hundred to remain in the game, which he contributed after a similar debate. It cost Campbell likewise nine hundred to remain and draw cards, but to the surprise of all he saw the nine hundred and raised another thousand.

"You-all are on the grade at last," Harnish remarked, as he saw the fifteen hundred and raised a thousand in turn. "Helen Breakfast's sure on top this divide, and you-all had best look out for bustin' harness."

"Me for that same lady," accompanied MacDonald's markers for two thousand and for an additional thousand-dollar raise.

It was at this stage that the players sat up and knew beyond peradventure that big hands were out. Though their features showed nothing, each man was beginning unconsciously to tense. Each man strove

to appear his natural self, and each natural self was different. Hal Campbell affected his customary cautiousness.

French Louis betrayed interest. MacDonald retained his whole-souled benevolence, though it seemed to take on a slightly exaggerated tone. Kearns was coolly dispassionate and noncommittal, while Elam Harnish appeared as quizzical and jocular as ever. Eleven thousand dollars were already in the pot, and the markers were heaped in a confused pile in the centre of the table.

"I ain't go no more markers," Kearns remarked plaintively. "We'd best begin I.O.U.'s."

"Glad you're going to stay," was MacDonald's cordial response.

"I ain't stayed yet. I've got a thousand in already. How's it stand now?"

"It'll cost you three thousand for a look in, but nobody will stop you from raising."

"Raise--hell. You must think I got a pat like yourself." Kearns looked at his hand. "But I'll tell you what I'll do, Mac.

"I've got a hunch, and I'll just see that three thousand."

He wrote the sum on a slip of paper, signed his name, and consigned it to the centre of the table.

French Louis became the focus of all eyes. He fingered his cards nervously for a space. Then, with a "By Gar! Ah got not one leetle beet hunch," he regretfully tossed his hand into the discards.

The next moment the hundred and odd pairs of eyes shifted to Campbell.

"I won't hump you, Jack," he said, contenting himself with calling the requisite two thousand.

The eyes shifted to Harnish, who scribbled on a piece of paper and shoved it forward.

"I'll just let you-all know this ain't no Sunday-school society of philanthropy," he said. "I see you, Jack, and I raise you a thousand. Here's where you-all get action on your pat, Mac."

"Action's what I fatten on, and I lift another thousand," was MacDonald's rejoinder. "Still got that hunch, Jack?"

"I still got the hunch." Kearns fingered his cards a long time. "And I'll play it, but you've got to know how I stand. There's my steamer, the Bella--worth twenty thousand if she's worth an ounce. There's Sixty Mile with five thousand in stock on the shelves. And you know I

got a sawmill coming in. It's at Linderman now, and the scow is building. Am I good?"

"Dig in; you're sure good," was Daylight's answer. "And while we're about it, I may mention casual that I got twenty thousand in Mac's safe, there, and there's twenty thousand more in the ground on Moosehide. You know the ground, Campbell. Is they that-all in the dirt?"

"There sure is, Daylight."

"How much does it cost now?" Kearns asked.

"Two thousand to see."

"We'll sure hump you if you-all come in," Daylight warned him.

"It's an almighty good hunch," Kearns said, adding his slip for two thousand to the growing heap. "I can feel her crawlin' up and down my back."

"I ain't got a hunch, but I got a tolerable likeable hand," Campbell announced, as he slid in his slip; "but it's not a raising hand."

"Mine is," Daylight paused and wrote. "I see that thousand and raise her the same old thousand."

The Virgin, standing behind him, then did what a man's best friend was not privileged to do. Reaching over Daylight's shoulder, she picked up his hand and read it, at the same time shielding the faces of the five cards close to his chest. What she saw were three queens and a pair of eights, but nobody guessed what she saw. Every player's eyes were on her face as she scanned the cards, but no sign did she give. Her features might have been carved from ice, for her expression was precisely the same before, during, and after. Not a muscle quivered; nor was there the slightest dilation of a nostril, nor the slightest increase of light in the eyes. She laid the hand face down again on the table, and slowly the lingering eyes withdrew from her, having learned nothing.

MacDonald smiled benevolently. "I see you, Daylight, and I hump this time for two thousand. How's that hunch, Jack?"

"Still a-crawling, Mac. You got me now, but that hunch is a rip-snorter persuadin' sort of a critter, and it's my plain duty to ride it. I call for three thousand. And I got another hunch: Daylight's going to call, too."

"He sure is," Daylight agreed, after Campbell had thrown up his hand. "He knows when he's up against it, and he plays accordin'. I see that two thousand, and then I'll see the draw."

In a dead silence, save for the low voices of the three players, the draw was made. Thirty-four thousand dollars were already in the pot, and the play possibly not half over. To the Virgin's amazement, Daylight held up his three queens, discarding his eights and calling for two cards. And this time not even she dared look at what he had drawn. She knew her limit of control. Nor did he look. The two new cards lay face down on the table where they had been dealt to him.

"Cards?" Kearns asked of MacDonald.

"Got enough," was the reply.

"You can draw if you want to, you know," Kearns warned him.

"Nope; this'll do me."

Kearns himself drew two cards, but did not look at them.

Still Harnish let his cards lie.

"I never bet in the teeth of a pat hand," he said slowly, looking at the saloon-keeper. "You-all start her rolling, Mac."

MacDonald counted his cards carefully, to make double sure it was not a foul hand, wrote a sum on a paper slip, and slid it into the pot, with the simple utterance:--

"Five thousand."

Kearns, with every eye upon him, looked at his two-card draw, counted the other three to dispel any doubt of holding more than five cards, and wrote on a betting slip.

"I see you, Mac," he said, "and I raise her a little thousand just so as not to keep Daylight out."

The concentrated gaze shifted to Daylight. He likewise examined his draw and counted his five cards.

"I see that six thousand, and I raise her five thousand...just to try and keep you out, Jack."

"And I raise you five thousand just to lend a hand at keeping Jack out," MacDonald said, in turn.

His voice was slightly husky and strained, and a nervous twitch in the corner of his mouth followed speech.

Kearns was pale, and those who looked on noted that his hand trembled as he wrote his slip. But his voice was unchanged.

"I lift her along for five thousand," he said.

Daylight was now the centre. The kerosene lamps above flung high lights from the rash of sweat on his forehead. The bronze of his cheeks was darkened by the accession of blood. His black eyes glittered, and his nostrils were distended and eager. They were large nostrils, tokening his descent from savage ancestors who had survived by virtue of deep lungs and generous air-passages. Yet, unlike MacDonald, his voice was firm and customary, and, unlike Kearns, his hand did not tremble when he wrote.

"I call, for ten thousand," he said. "Not that I'm afraid of you-all, Mac. It's that hunch of Jack's."

"I hump his hunch for five thousand just the same," said MacDonald. "I had the best hand before the draw, and I still guess I got it."

"Mebbe this is a case where a hunch after the draw is better'n the hunch before," Kearns remarked; "wherefore duty says, 'Lift her, Jack, lift her,' and so I lift her another five thousand."

Daylight leaned back in his chair and gazed up at the kerosene lamps while he computed aloud.

"I was in nine thousand before the draw, and I saw and raised eleven thousand--that makes thirty. I'm only good for ten more."

He leaned forward and looked at Kearns. "So I call that ten thousand."

"You can raise if you want," Kearns answered. "Your dogs are good for five thousand in this game."

"Nary dawg. You-all can win my dust and dirt, but nary one of my dawgs. I just call."

MacDonald considered for a long time. No one moved or whispered.

Not a muscle was relaxed on the part of the onlookers. Not the weight of a body shifted from one leg to the other. It was a sacred silence. Only could be heard the roaring draft of the huge stove, and from without, muffled by the log-walls, the howling of dogs. It was not every night that high stakes were played on the Yukon, and for that matter, this was the highest in the history of the country. The saloon-keeper finally spoke.

"If anybody else wins, they'll have to take a mortgage on the Tivoli."

The two other players nodded.

"So I call, too." MacDonald added his slip for five thousand.

Not one of them claimed the pot, and not one of them called the size of his hand. Simultaneously and in silence they faced their cards on the

table, while a general tiptoeing and craning of necks took place among the onlookers. Daylight showed four queens and an ace; MacDonald four jacks and an ace; and Kearns four kings and a trey. Kearns reached forward with an encircling movement of his arm and drew the pot in to him, his arm shaking as he did so.

Daylight picked the ace from his hand and tossed it over alongside MacDonald's ace, saying:--

"That's what cheered me along, Mac. I knowed it was only kings that could beat me, and he had them.

"What did you-all have?" he asked, all interest, turning to Campbell.

"Straight flush of four, open at both ends--a good drawing hand."

"You bet! You could a' made a straight, a straight flush, or a flush out of it."

"That's what I thought," Campbell said sadly. "It cost me six thousand before I quit."

"I wisht you-all'd drawn," Daylight laughed. "Then I wouldn't a' caught that fourth queen. Now I've got to take Billy Rawlins' mail contract and mush for Dyea. What's the size of the killing, Jack?"

Kearns attempted to count the pot, but was too excited. Daylight drew it across to him, with firm fingers separating and stacking the markers and I.O.U.'s and with clear brain adding the sum.

"One hundred and twenty-seven thousand," he announced. "You-all can sell out now, Jack, and head for home."

The winner smiled and nodded, but seemed incapable of speech.

"I'd shout the drinks," MacDonald said, "only the house don't belong to me any more."

"Yes, it does," Kearns replied, first wetting his lips with his tongue. "Your note's good for any length of time. But the drinks are on me."

"Name your snake-juice, you-all--the winner pays!" Daylight called out loudly to all about him, at the same time rising from his chair and catching the Virgin by the arm. "Come on for a reel, you-all dancers. The night's young yet, and it's Helen Breakfast and the mail contract for me in the morning. Here, you-all Rawlins, you--I hereby do take over that same contract, and I start for salt water at nine A.M.--savvee? Come on, you-all! Where's that fiddler?"

CHAPTER III

It was Daylight's night. He was the centre and the head of the revel, unquenchably joyous, a contagion of fun. He multiplied himself, and in so doing multiplied the excitement. No prank he suggested was too wild for his followers, and all followed save those that developed into singing imbeciles and fell warbling by the wayside. Yet never did trouble intrude. It was known on the Yukon that when Burning Daylight made a night of it, wrath and evil were forbidden. On his nights men dared not quarrel. In the younger days such things had happened, and then men had known what real wrath was, and been man-handled as only Burning Daylight could man-handle. On his nights men must laugh and be happy or go home. Daylight was inexhaustible. In between dances he paid over to Kearns the twenty thousand in dust and transferred to him his Moosehide claim. Likewise he arranged the taking over of Billy Rawlins' mail contract, and made his preparations for the start. He despatched a messenger to rout out Kama, his dog-driver--a Tananaw Indian, far-wandered from his tribal home in the service of the invading whites. Kama entered the Tivoli, tall, lean, muscular, and fur-clad, the pick of his barbaric race and barbaric still, unshaken and unabashed by the revellers that rioted about him while Daylight gave his orders. "Um," said Kama, tabling his instructions on his fingers. "Get um letters from Rawlins. Load um on sled. Grub for Selkirk--you think um plenty dog-grub stop Selkirk?"

"Plenty dog-grub, Kama."

"Um, bring sled this place nine um clock. Bring um snowshoes. No bring um tent. Mebbe bring um fly? um little fly?"

"No fly," Daylight answered decisively.

"Um much cold."

"We travel light--savvee? We carry plenty letters out, plenty letters back. You are strong man. Plenty cold, plenty travel, all right."

"Sure all right," Kama muttered, with resignation.

"Much cold, no care a damn. Um ready nine um clock."

He turned on his moccasined heel and walked out, imperturbable, sphinx-like, neither giving nor receiving greetings nor looking to right or left. The Virgin led Daylight away into a corner.

"Look here, Daylight," she said, in a low voice, "you're busted."

"Higher'n a kite."

"I've eight thousand in Mac's safe--" she began.

But Daylight interrupted. The apron-string loomed near and he shied

like an unbroken colt.

"It don't matter," he said. "Busted I came into the world, busted I go out, and I've been busted most of the time since I arrived. Come on; let's waltz."

"But listen," she urged. "My money's doing nothing. I could lend it to you--a grub-stake," she added hurriedly, at sight of the alarm in his face.

"Nobody grub-stakes me," was the answer. "I stake myself, and when I make a killing it's sure all mine. No thank you, old girl. Much obliged. I'll get my stake by running the mail out and in."

"Daylight," she murmured, in tender protest.

But with a sudden well-assumed ebullition of spirits he drew her toward the dancing-floor, and as they swung around and around in a waltz she pondered on the iron heart of the man who held her in his arms and resisted all her wiles.

At six the next morning, scorching with whiskey, yet ever himself, he stood at the bar putting every man's hand down. The way of it was that two men faced each other across a corner, their right elbows resting on the bar, their right hands gripped together, while each strove to press the other's hand down. Man after man came against him, but no man put

his hand down, even Olaf Henderson and French Louis failing despite their hugeness. When they contended it was a trick, a trained muscular knack, he challenged them to another test.

"Look here, you-all" he cried. "I'm going to do two things: first, weigh my sack; and second, bet it that after you-all have lifted clean from the floor all the sacks of flour you-all are able, I'll put on two more sacks and lift the whole caboodle clean."

"By Gar! Ah take dat!" French Louis rumbled above the cheers.

"Hold on!" Olaf Henderson cried. "I ban yust as good as you, Louis. I yump half that bet."

Put on the scales, Daylight's sack was found to balance an even four hundred dollars, and Louis and Olaf divided the bet between them. Fifty-pound sacks of flour were brought in from MacDonald's cache. Other men tested their strength first. They straddled on two chairs, the flour sacks beneath them on the floor and held together by rope-lashings. Many of the men were able, in this manner, to lift four or five hundred pounds, while some succeeded with as high as six hundred. Then the two giants took a hand, tying at seven hundred. French Louis then added another sack, and swung seven hundred and fifty clear. Olaf duplicated the performance, whereupon both failed to clear eight hundred. Again and again they strove, their foreheads beaded with sweat, their frames crackling with the effort. Both were able to

shift the weight and to bump it, but clear the floor with it they could not.

"By Gar! Daylight, dis tam you mek one beeg meestake," French Louis said, straightening up and stepping down from the chairs. "Only one damn iron man can do dat. One hundred pun' more--my frien', not ten poun' more." The sacks were unlashed, but when two sacks were added, Kearns interfered. "Only one sack more."

"Two!" some one cried. "Two was the bet."

"They didn't lift that last sack," Kearns protested.

"They only lifted seven hundred and fifty."

But Daylight grandly brushed aside the confusion.

"What's the good of you-all botherin' around that way? What's one more sack? If I can't lift three more, I sure can't lift two. Put 'em in."

He stood upon the chairs, squatted, and bent his shoulders down till his hands closed on the rope. He shifted his feet slightly, tautened his muscles with a tentative pull, then relaxed again, questing for a perfect adjustment of all the levers of his body.

French Louis, looking on sceptically, cried out,

"Pool lak hell, Daylight! Pool lak hell!"

Daylight's muscles tautened a second time, and this time in earnest, until steadily all the energy of his splendid body was applied, and quite imperceptibly, without jerk or strain, the bulky nine hundred pounds rose from the door and swung back and forth, pendulum like, between his legs.

Olaf Henderson sighed a vast audible sigh. The Virgin, who had tensed unconsciously till her muscles hurt her, relaxed. While French Louis murmured reverently:--

"M'sieu Daylight, salut! Ay am one beeg baby. You are one beeg man."

Daylight dropped his burden, leaped to the floor, and headed for the bar.

"Weigh in!" he cried, tossing his sack to the weigher, who transferred to it four hundred dollars from the sacks of the two losers.

"Surge up, everybody!" Daylight went on. "Name your snake-juice! The winner pays!"

"This is my night!" he was shouting, ten minutes later. "I'm the lone he-wolf, and I've seen thirty winters. This is my birthday, my one day

in the year, and I can put any man on his back. Come on, you-all! I'm going to put you-all in the snow. Come on, you chechaquos [1] and sourdoughs[2], and get your baptism!"

The rout streamed out of doors, all save the barkeepers and the singing Bacchuses. Some fleeting thought of saving his own dignity entered MacDonald's head, for he approached Daylight with outstretched hand.

"What? You first?" Daylight laughed, clasping the other's hand as if in greeting.

"No, no," the other hurriedly disclaimed. "Just congratulations on your birthday. Of course you can put me in the snow. What chance have I against a man that lifts nine hundred pounds?"

MacDonald weighed one hundred and eighty pounds, and Daylight had him gripped solely by his hand; yet, by a sheer abrupt jerk, he took the saloon-keeper off his feet and flung him face downward in the snow. In quick succession, seizing the men nearest him, he threw half a dozen more. Resistance was useless. They flew helter-skelter out of his grips, landing in all manner of attitudes, grotesquely and harmlessly, in the soft snow. It soon became difficult, in the dim starlight, to distinguish between those thrown and those waiting their turn, and he began feeling their backs and shoulders, determining their status by whether or not he found them powdered with snow.

"Baptized yet?" became his stereotyped question, as he reached out his terrible hands.

Several score lay down in the snow in a long row, while many others knelt in mock humility, scooping snow upon their heads and claiming the rite accomplished. But a group of five stood upright, backwoodsmen and frontiersmen, they, eager to contest any man's birthday.

Graduates of the hardest of man-handling schools, veterans of multitudes of rough-and-tumble battles, men of blood and sweat and endurance, they nevertheless lacked one thing that Daylight possessed in high degree--namely, an almost perfect brain and muscular coordination. It was simple, in its way, and no virtue of his. He had been born with this endowment. His nerves carried messages more quickly than theirs; his mental processes, culminating in acts of will, were quicker than theirs; his muscles themselves, by some immediacy of chemistry, obeyed the messages of his will quicker than theirs. He was so made, his muscles were high-power explosives. The levers of his body snapped into play like the jaws of steel traps. And in addition to all this, his was that super-strength that is the dower of but one human in millions--a strength depending not on size but on degree, a supreme organic excellence residing in the stuff of the muscles themselves. Thus, so swiftly could he apply a stress, that, before an opponent could become aware and resist, the aim of the stress had been accomplished. In turn, so swiftly did he become aware of a stress applied to him, that he saved himself by resistance or by delivering a

lightning counter-stress.

"It ain't no use you-all standing there," Daylight addressed the waiting group. "You-all might as well get right down and take your baptizing. You-all might down me any other day in the year, but on my birthday I want you-all to know I'm the best man. Is that Pat Hanrahan's mug looking hungry and willing? Come on, Pat." Pat Hanrahan, ex-bare-knuckle-prize fighter and roughhouse-expert, stepped forth. The two men came against each other in grips, and almost before he had exerted himself the Irishman found himself in the merciless vise of a half-Nelson that buried him head and shoulders in the snow. Joe Hines, ex-lumber-jack, came down with an impact equal to a fall from a two-story building--his overthrow accomplished by a cross-buttock, delivered, he claimed, before he was ready.

There was nothing exhausting in all this to Daylight. He did not heave and strain through long minutes. No time, practically, was occupied. His body exploded abruptly and terrifically in one instant, and on the next instant was relaxed. Thus, Doc Watson, the gray-bearded, iron bodied man without a past, a fighting terror himself, was overthrown in the fraction of a second preceding his own onslaught. As he was in the act of gathering himself for a spring, Daylight was upon him, and with such fearful suddenness as to crush him backward and down. Olaf Henderson, receiving his cue from this, attempted to take Daylight unaware, rushing upon him from one side as he stooped with extended hand to help Doc Watson up. Daylight dropped on his hands and knees,

receiving in his side Olaf's knees. Olaf's momentum carried him clear over the obstruction in a long, flying fall. Before he could rise, Daylight had whirled him over on his back and was rubbing his face and ears with snow and shoving handfuls down his neck. "Ay ban yust as good a man as you ban, Daylight," Olaf spluttered, as he pulled himself to his feet; "but by Yupiter, I ban navver see a grip like that."
French Louis was the last of the five, and he had seen enough to make him cautious. He circled and baffled for a full minute before coming to grips; and for another full minute they strained and reeled without either winning the advantage. And then, just as the contest was becoming interesting, Daylight effected one of his lightning shifts, changing all stresses and leverages and at the same time delivering one of his muscular explosions. French Louis resisted till his huge frame crackled, and then, slowly, was forced over and under and downward.

"The winner pays!" Daylight cried; as he sprang to his feet and led the way back into the Tivoli. "Surge along you-all! This way to the snake-room!"

They lined up against the long bar, in places two or three deep, stamping the frost from their moccasined feet, for outside the temperature was sixty below. Bettles, himself one of the gamest of the old-timers in deeds and daring ceased from his drunken lay of the "Sassafras Root," and titubated over to congratulate Daylight. But in the midst of it he felt impelled to make a speech, and raised his voice oratorically.

"I tell you fellers I'm plum proud to call Daylight my friend. We've hit the trail together afore now, and he's eighteen carat from his moccasins up, damn his mangy old hide, anyway. He was a shaver when he first hit this country. When you fellers was his age, you wa'n't dry behind the ears yet. He never was no kid. He was born a full-grown man. An' I tell you a man had to be a man in them days. This wa'n't no effete civilization like it's come to be now." Bettles paused long enough to put his arm in a proper bear-hug around Daylight's neck. "When you an' me mushed into the Yukon in the good ole days, it didn't rain soup and they wa'n't no free-lunch joints. Our camp fires was lit where we killed our game, and most of the time we lived on salmon-tracks and rabbit-bellies--ain't I right?"

But at the roar of laughter that greeted his inversion, Bettles released the bear-hug and turned fiercely on them. "Laugh, you mangy short-horns, laugh! But I tell you plain and simple, the best of you ain't knee-high fit to tie Daylight's moccasin strings.

"Ain't I right, Campbell? Ain't I right, Mac? Daylight's one of the old guard, one of the real sour-doughs. And in them days they wa'n't ary a steamboat or ary a trading-post, and we cusses had to live offen salmon-bellies and rabbit-tracks."

He gazed triumphantly around, and in the applause that followed arose cries for a speech from Daylight. He signified his consent. A chair

was brought, and he was helped to stand upon it. He was no more sober than the crowd above which he now towered--a wild crowd, uncouthly garmented, every foot moccasined or muc-lucked[3], with mittens dangling from necks and with furry ear-flaps raised so that they took on the seeming of the winged helmets of the Norsemen. Daylight's black eyes were flashing, and the flush of strong drink flooded darkly under the bronze of his cheeks. He was greeted with round on round of affectionate cheers, which brought a suspicious moisture to his eyes, albeit many of the voices were inarticulate and inebriate. And yet, men have so behaved since the world began, feasting, fighting, and carousing, whether in the dark cave-mouth or by the fire of the squatting-place, in the palaces of imperial Rome and the rock strongholds of robber barons, or in the sky-aspiring hotels of modern times and in the boozing-kens of sailor-town. Just so were these men, empire-builders in the Arctic Light, boastful and drunken and clamorous, winning surcease for a few wild moments from the grim reality of their heroic toil. Modern heroes they, and in nowise different from the heroes of old time. "Well, fellows, I don't know what to say to you-all," Daylight began lamely, striving still to control his whirling brain. "I think I'll tell you-all a story. I had a pardner wunst, down in Juneau. He come from North Caroliney, and he used to tell this same story to me. It was down in the mountains in his country, and it was a wedding. There they was, the family and all the friends. The parson was just puttin' on the last touches, and he says, 'They as the Lord have joined let no man put asunder.'

"'Parson,' says the bridegroom, 'I rises to question your grammar in that there sentence. I want this weddin' done right.'

"When the smoke clears away, the bride she looks around and sees a dead parson, a dead bridegroom, a dead brother, two dead uncles, and five dead wedding-guests.

"So she heaves a mighty strong sigh and says, 'Them new-fangled, self-cocking revolvers sure has played hell with my prospects.'

"And so I say to you-all," Daylight added, as the roar of laughter died down, "that them four kings of Jack Kearns sure has played hell with my prospects. I'm busted higher'n a kite, and I'm hittin' the trail for Dyea--"

"Goin' out?" some one called. A spasm of anger wrought on his face for a flashing instant, but in the next his good-humor was back again.

"I know you-all are only pokin' fun asking such a question," he said, with a smile. "Of course I ain't going out."

"Take the oath again, Daylight," the same voice cried.

"I sure will. I first come over Chilcoot in '83. I went out over the Pass in a fall blizzard, with a rag of a shirt and a cup of raw flour. I got my grub-stake in Juneau that winter, and in the spring I went

over the Pass once more. And once more the famine drew me out. Next spring I went in again, and I swore then that I'd never come out till I made my stake. Well, I ain't made it, and here I am. And I ain't going out now. I get the mail and I come right back. I won't stop the night at Dyea. I'll hit up Chilcoot soon as I change the dogs and get the mail and grub. And so I swear once more, by the mill-tails of hell and the head of John the Baptist, I'll never hit for the Outside till I make my pile. And I tell you-all, here and now, it's got to be an almighty big pile."

"How much might you call a pile?" Bettles demanded from beneath, his arms clutched lovingly around Daylight's legs.

"Yes, how much? What do you call a pile?" others cried.

Daylight steadied himself for a moment and debated. "Four or five millions," he said slowly, and held up his hand for silence as his statement was received with derisive yells. "I'll be real conservative, and put the bottom notch at a million. And for not an ounce less'n that will I go out of the country."

Again his statement was received with an outburst of derision. Not only had the total gold output of the Yukon up to date been below five millions, but no man had ever made a strike of a hundred thousand, much less of a million.

"You-all listen to me. You seen Jack Kearns get a hunch to-night. We had him sure beat before the draw. His ornery three kings was no good. But he just knew there was another king coming--that was his hunch--and he got it. And I tell you-all I got a hunch. There's a big strike coming on the Yukon, and it's just about due. I don't mean no ornery Moosehide, Birch-Creek kind of a strike. I mean a real rip-snorter hair-raiser. I tell you-all she's in the air and hell-bent for election. Nothing can stop her, and she'll come up river. There's where you-all track my moccasins in the near future if you-all want to find me--somewhere in the country around Stewart River, Indian River, and Klondike River. When I get back with the mail, I'll head that way so fast you-all won't see my trail for smoke. She's a-coming, fellows, gold from the grass roots down, a hundred dollars to the pan, and a stampede in from the Outside fifty thousand strong. You-all'll think all hell's busted loose when that strike is made."

He raised his glass to his lips. "Here's kindness, and hoping you-all will be in on it."

He drank and stepped down from the chair, falling into another one of Bettles' bear-hugs.

"If I was you, Daylight, I wouldn't mush to-day," Joe Hines counselled, coming in from consulting the spirit thermometer outside the door. "We're in for a good cold snap. It's sixty-two below now, and still goin' down. Better wait till she breaks."

Daylight laughed, and the old sour-doughs around him laughed.

"Just like you short-horns," Bettles cried, "afeard of a little frost. And blamed little you know Daylight, if you think frost kin stop 'm."

"Freeze his lungs if he travels in it," was the reply.

"Freeze pap and lollypop! Look here, Hines, you only ben in this here country three years. You ain't seasoned yet. I've seen Daylight do fifty miles up on the Koyokuk on a day when the thermometer busted at seventy-two."

Hines shook his head dolefully.

"Them's the kind that does freeze their lungs," he lamented. "If Daylight pulls out before this snap breaks, he'll never get through--an' him travelin' without tent or fly."

"It's a thousand miles to Dyea," Bettles announced, climbing on the chair and supporting his swaying body by an arm passed around Daylight's neck. "It's a thousand miles, I'm sayin' an' most of the trail unbroke, but I bet any chechaquo--anything he wants--that Daylight makes Dyea in thirty days."

"That's an average of over thirty-three miles a day," Doc Watson

warned, "and I've travelled some myself. A blizzard on Chilcoot would tie him up for a week."

"Yep," Bettles retorted, "an' Daylight'll do the second thousand back again on end in thirty days more, and I got five hundred dollars that says so, and damn the blizzards."

To emphasize his remarks, he pulled out a gold-sack the size of a bologna sausage and thumped it down on the bar. Doc Watson thumped his own sack alongside.

"Hold on!" Daylight cried. "Bettles's right, and I want in on this. I bet five hundred that sixty days from now I pull up at the Tivoli door with the Dyea mail."

A sceptical roar went up, and a dozen men pulled out their sacks.

Jack Kearns crowded in close and caught Daylight's attention.

"I take you, Daylight," he cried. "Two to one you don't--not in seventy-five days."

"No charity, Jack," was the reply. "The bettin's even, and the time is sixty days."

"Seventy-five days, and two to one you don't," Kearns insisted. "Fifty

Mile'll be wide open and the rim-ice rotten."

"What you win from me is yours," Daylight went on. "And, by thunder, Jack, you can't give it back that way. I won't bet with you. You're trying to give me money. But I tell you-all one thing, Jack, I got another hunch. I'm goin' to win it back some one of these days. You-all just wait till the big strike up river. Then you and me'll take the roof off and sit in a game that'll be full man's size. Is it a go?"

They shook hands.

"Of course he'll make it," Kearns whispered in Bettles' ear. "And there's five hundred Daylight's back in sixty days," he added aloud.

Billy Rawlins closed with the wager, and Bettles hugged Kearns ecstatically.

"By Yupiter, I ban take that bet," Olaf Henderson said, dragging Daylight away from Bettles and Kearns.

"Winner pays!" Daylight shouted, closing the wager.

"And I'm sure going to win, and sixty days is a long time between drinks, so I pay now. Name your brand, you hoochinoos! Name your brand!"

Bettles, a glass of whiskey in hand, climbed back on his chair, and swaying back and forth, sang the one song he knew:--

"O, it's Henry Ward Beecher
And Sunday-school teachers
All sing of the sassafras-root;
But you bet all the same,
If it had its right name
It's the juice of the forbidden fruit."

The crowd roared out the chorus:--

"But you bet all the same
If it had its right name
It's the juice of the forbidden fruit."

Somebody opened the outer door. A vague gray light filtered in.

"Burning daylight, burning daylight," some one called warningly.

Daylight paused for nothing, heading for the door and pulling down his ear-flaps. Kama stood outside by the sled, a long, narrow affair, sixteen inches wide and seven and a half feet in length, its slatted bottom raised six inches above the steel-shod runners. On it, lashed with thongs of moose-hide, were the light canvas bags that contained

the mail, and the food and gear for dogs and men. In front of it, in a single line, lay curled five frost-rimed dogs. They were huskies, matched in size and color, all unusually large and all gray. From their cruel jaws to their bushy tails they were as like as peas in their likeness to timber-wolves. Wolves they were, domesticated, it was true, but wolves in appearance and in all their characteristics. On top the sled load, thrust under the lashings and ready for immediate use, were two pairs of snowshoes.

Bettles pointed to a robe of Arctic hare skins, the end of which showed in the mouth of a bag.

"That's his bed," he said. "Six pounds of rabbit skins. Warmest thing he ever slept under, but I'm damned if it could keep me warm, and I can go some myself. Daylight's a hell-fire furnace, that's what he is."

"I'd hate to be that Indian," Doc Watson remarked.

"He'll kill'm, he'll kill'm sure," Bettles chanted exultantly. "I know. I've ben with Daylight on trail. That man ain't never ben tired in his life. Don't know what it means. I seen him travel all day with wet socks at forty-five below. There ain't another man living can do that."

While this talk went on, Daylight was saying good-by to those that clustered around him. The Virgin wanted to kiss him, and, fuddled slightly though he was with the whiskey, he saw his way out without

compromising with the apron-string. He kissed the Virgin, but he kissed the other three women with equal partiality. He pulled on his long mittens, roused the dogs to their feet, and took his Place at the gee-pole.[4]

"Mush, you beauties!" he cried.

The animals threw their weights against their breastbands on the instant, crouching low to the snow, and digging in their claws. They whined eagerly, and before the sled had gone half a dozen lengths both Daylight and Kama (in the rear) were running to keep up. And so, running, man and dogs dipped over the bank and down to the frozen bed of the Yukon, and in the gray light were gone.

[1] Tenderfeet.

[2] Old-timers.

[3] Muc-luc: a water-tight, Eskimo boot, made from walrus-hide and trimmed with fur.

[4] A gee-pole: stout pole projecting forward from one side of the front end of the sled, by which the sled is steered.

CHAPTER IV

On the river, where was a packed trail and where snowshoes were unnecessary, the dogs averaged six miles an hour. To keep up with them, the two men were compelled to run. Daylight and Kama relieved each other regularly at the gee-pole, for here was the hard work of steering the flying sled and of keeping in advance of it. The man relieved dropped behind the sled, occasionally leaping upon it and resting.

It was severe work, but of the sort that was exhilarating.

They were flying, getting over the ground, making the most of the packed trail. Later on they would come to the unbroken trail, where three miles an hour would constitute good going. Then there would be no riding and resting, and no running. Then the gee-pole would be the easier task, and a man would come back to it to rest after having completed his spell to the fore, breaking trail with the snowshoes for the dogs. Such work was far from exhilarating also, they must expect places where for miles at a time they must toil over chaotic ice-jams, where they would be fortunate if they made two miles an hour. And there would be the inevitable bad jams, short ones, it was true, but so bad that a mile an hour would require terrific effort. Kama and Daylight did not talk. In the nature of the work they could not, nor in their own natures were they given to talking while they worked. At rare intervals, when necessary, they addressed each other in

monosyllables, Kama, for the most part, contenting himself with grunts. Occasionally a dog whined or snarled, but in the main the team kept silent. Only could be heard the sharp, jarring grate of the steel runners over the hard surface and the creak of the straining sled.

As if through a wall, Daylight had passed from the hum and roar of the Tivoli into another world--a world of silence and immobility. Nothing stirred. The Yukon slept under a coat of ice three feet thick. No breath of wind blew. Nor did the sap move in the hearts of the spruce trees that forested the river banks on either hand. The trees, burdened with the last infinitesimal pennyweight of snow their branches could hold, stood in absolute petrifaction. The slightest tremor would have dislodged the snow, and no snow was dislodged. The sled was the one point of life and motion in the midst of the solemn quietude, and the harsh churn of its runners but emphasized the silence through which it moved.

It was a dead world, and furthermore, a gray world. The weather was sharp and clear; there was no moisture in the atmosphere, no fog nor haze; yet the sky was a gray pall. The reason for this was that, though there was no cloud in the sky to dim the brightness of day, there was no sun to give brightness. Far to the south the sun climbed steadily to meridian, but between it and the frozen Yukon intervened the bulge of the earth. The Yukon lay in a night shadow, and the day itself was in reality a long twilight-light. At a quarter before twelve, where a wide bend of the river gave a long vista south, the sun

showed its upper rim above the sky-line. But it did not rise perpendicularly. Instead, it rose on a slant, so that by high noon it had barely lifted its lower rim clear of the horizon. It was a dim, wan sun. There was no heat to its rays, and a man could gaze squarely into the full orb of it without hurt to his eyes. No sooner had it reached meridian than it began its slant back beneath the horizon, and at quarter past twelve the earth threw its shadow again over the land.

The men and dogs raced on. Daylight and Kama were both savages so far as their stomachs were concerned. They could eat irregularly in time and quantity, gorging hugely on occasion, and on occasion going long stretches without eating at all. As for the dogs, they ate but once a day, and then rarely did they receive more than a pound each of dried fish. They were ravenously hungry and at the same time splendidly in condition. Like the wolves, their forebears, their nutritive processes were rigidly economical and perfect. There was no waste. The last least particle of what they consumed was transformed into energy.

And Kama and Daylight were like them. Descended themselves from the generations that had endured, they, too, endured. Theirs was the simple, elemental economy. A little food equipped them with prodigious energy. Nothing was lost. A man of soft civilization, sitting at a desk, would have grown lean and woe-begone on the fare that kept Kama and Daylight at the top-notch of physical efficiency. They knew, as the man at the desk never knows, what it is to be normally hungry all the time, so that they could eat any time. Their appetites were always

with them and on edge, so that they bit voraciously into whatever offered and with an entire innocence of indigestion.

By three in the afternoon the long twilight faded into night. The stars came out, very near and sharp and bright, and by their light dogs and men still kept the trail. They were indefatigable. And this was no record run of a single day, but the first day of sixty such days. Though Daylight had passed a night without sleep, a night of dancing and carouse, it seemed to have left no effect. For this there were two explanations first, his remarkable vitality; and next, the fact that such nights were rare in his experience. Again enters the man at the desk, whose physical efficiency would be more hurt by a cup of coffee at bedtime than could Daylight's by a whole night long of strong drink and excitement.

Daylight travelled without a watch, feeling the passage of time and largely estimating it by subconscious processes. By what he considered must be six o'clock, he began looking for a camping-place. The trail, at a bend, plunged out across the river. Not having found a likely spot, they held on for the opposite bank a mile away. But midway they encountered an ice-jam which took an hour of heavy work to cross. At last Daylight glimpsed what he was looking for, a dead tree close by the bank. The sled was run in and up. Kama grunted with satisfaction, and the work of making camp was begun.

The division of labor was excellent. Each knew what he must do. With

one ax Daylight chopped down the dead pine. Kama, with a snowshoe and the other ax, cleared away the two feet of snow above the Yukon ice and chopped a supply of ice for cooking purposes. A piece of dry birch bark started the fire, and Daylight went ahead with the cooking while the Indian unloaded the sled and fed the dogs their ration of dried fish. The food sacks he slung high in the trees beyond leaping-reach of the huskies. Next, he chopped down a young spruce tree and trimmed off the boughs. Close to the fire he trampled down the soft snow and covered the packed space with the boughs. On this flooring he tossed his own and Daylight's gear-bags, containing dry socks and underwear and their sleeping-robes. Kama, however, had two robes of rabbit skin to Daylight's one.

They worked on steadily, without speaking, losing no time. Each did whatever was needed, without thought of leaving to the other the least task that presented itself to hand. Thus, Kama saw when more ice was needed and went and got it, while a snowshoe, pushed over by the lunge of a dog, was stuck on end again by Daylight. While coffee was boiling, bacon frying, and flapjacks were being mixed, Daylight found time to put on a big pot of beans. Kama came back, sat down on the edge of the spruce boughs, and in the interval of waiting, mended harness.

"I t'ink dat Skookum and Booga make um plenty fight maybe," Kama remarked, as they sat down to eat.

"Keep an eye on them," was Daylight's answer.

And this was their sole conversation throughout the meal. Once, with a muttered imprecation, Kama leaped away, a stick of firewood in hand, and clubbed apart a tangle of fighting dogs. Daylight, between mouthfuls, fed chunks of ice into the tin pot, where it thawed into water. The meal finished, Kama replenished the fire, cut more wood for the morning, and returned to the spruce bough bed and his harness-mending. Daylight cut up generous chunks of bacon and dropped them in the pot of bubbling beans. The moccasins of both men were wet, and this in spite of the intense cold; so when there was no further need for them to leave the oasis of spruce boughs, they took off their moccasins and hung them on short sticks to dry before the fire, turning them about from time to time. When the beans were finally cooked, Daylight ran part of them into a bag of flour-sacking a foot and a half long and three inches in diameter. This he then laid on the snow to freeze. The remainder of the beans were left in the pot for breakfast.

It was past nine o'clock, and they were ready for bed. The squabbling and bickering among the dogs had long since died down, and the weary animals were curled in the snow, each with his feet and nose bunched together and covered by his wolf's brush of a tail. Kama spread his sleeping-furs and lighted his pipe. Daylight rolled a brown-paper cigarette, and the second conversation of the evening took place.

"I think we come near sixty miles," said Daylight.

"Um, I t'ink so," said Kama.

They rolled into their robes, all-standing, each with a woolen Mackinaw jacket on in place of the parkas[5] they had worn all day. Swiftly, almost on the instant they closed their eyes, they were asleep. The stars leaped and danced in the frosty air, and overhead the colored bars of the aurora borealis were shooting like great searchlights.

In the darkness Daylight awoke and roused Kama. Though the aurora still flamed, another day had begun. Warmed-over flapjacks, warmed-over beans, fried bacon, and coffee composed the breakfast. The dogs got nothing, though they watched with wistful mien from a distance, sitting up in the snow, their tails curled around their paws. Occasionally they lifted one fore paw or the other, with a restless movement, as if the frost tingled in their feet. It was bitter cold, at least sixty-five below zero, and when Kama harnessed the dogs with naked hands he was compelled several times to go over to the fire and warm the numbing finger-tips. Together the two men loaded and lashed the sled. They warmed their hands for the last time, pulled on their mittens, and mushed the dogs over the bank and down to the river-trail. According to Daylight's estimate, it was around seven o'clock; but the stars danced just as brilliantly, and faint, luminous streaks of greenish aurora still pulsed overhead.

Two hours later it became suddenly dark--so dark that they kept to the

trail largely by instinct; and Daylight knew that his time-estimate had been right. It was the darkness before dawn, never anywhere more conspicuous than on the Alaskan winter-trail.

Slowly the gray light came stealing through the gloom, imperceptibly at first, so that it was almost with surprise that they noticed the vague loom of the trail underfoot. Next, they were able to see the wheel-dog, and then the whole string of running dogs and snow-stretches on either side. Then the near bank loomed for a moment and was gone, loomed a second time and remained. In a few minutes the far bank, a mile away, unobtrusively came into view, and ahead and behind, the whole frozen river could be seen, with off to the left a wide-extending range of sharp-cut, snow-covered mountains. And that was all. No sun arose. The gray light remained gray.

Once, during the day, a lynx leaped lightly across the trail, under the very nose of the lead-dog, and vanished in the white woods. The dogs' wild impulses roused. They raised the hunting-cry of the pack, surged against their collars, and swerved aside in pursuit. Daylight, yelling "Whoa!" struggled with the gee-pole and managed to overturn the sled into the soft snow. The dogs gave up, the sled was righted, and five minutes later they were flying along the hard-packed trail again. The lynx was the only sign of life they had seen in two days, and it, leaping velvet-footed and vanishing, had been more like an apparition.

At twelve o'clock, when the sun peeped over the earth-bulge, they

stopped and built a small fire on the ice. Daylight, with the ax, chopped chunks off the frozen sausage of beans. These, thawed and warmed in the frying-pan, constituted their meal. They had no coffee. He did not believe in the burning of daylight for such a luxury. The dogs stopped wrangling with one another, and looked on wistfully. Only at night did they get their pound of fish. In the meantime they worked.

The cold snap continued. Only men of iron kept the trail at such low temperatures, and Kama and Daylight were picked men of their races. But Kama knew the other was the better man, and thus, at the start, he was himself foredoomed to defeat. Not that he slackened his effort or willingness by the slightest conscious degree, but that he was beaten by the burden he carried in his mind. His attitude toward Daylight was worshipful. Stoical, taciturn, proud of his physical prowess, he found all these qualities incarnated in his white companion. Here was one that excelled in the things worth excelling in, a man-god ready to hand, and Kama could not but worship--withal he gave no signs of it. No wonder the race of white men conquered, was his thought, when it bred men like this man. What chance had the Indian against such a dogged, enduring breed? Even the Indians did not travel at such low temperatures, and theirs was the wisdom of thousands of generations; yet here was this Daylight, from the soft Southland, harder than they, laughing at their fears, and swinging along the trail ten and twelve hours a day. And this Daylight thought that he could keep up a day's pace of thirty-three miles for sixty days! Wait till a fresh fall of snow came down, or they struck the unbroken trail or the rotten rim-ice

that fringed open water.

In the meantime Kama kept the pace, never grumbling, never shirking. Sixty-five degrees below zero is very cold. Since water freezes at thirty-two above, sixty-five below meant ninety-seven degrees below freezing-point. Some idea of the significance of this may be gained by conceiving of an equal difference of temperature in the opposite direction. One hundred and twenty-nine on the thermometer constitutes a very hot day, yet such a temperature is but ninety-seven degrees above freezing. Double this difference, and possibly some slight conception may be gained of the cold through which Kama and Daylight travelled between dark and dark and through the dark.

Kama froze the skin on his cheek-bones, despite frequent rubbings, and the flesh turned black and sore. Also he slightly froze the edges of his lung-tissues--a dangerous thing, and the basic reason why a man should not unduly exert himself in the open at sixty-five below. But Kama never complained, and Daylight was a furnace of heat, sleeping as warmly under his six pounds of rabbit skins as the other did under twelve pounds.

On the second night, fifty more miles to the good, they camped in the vicinity of the boundary between Alaska and the Northwest Territory. The rest of the journey, save the last short stretch to Dyea, would be travelled on Canadian territory. With the hard trail, and in the absence of fresh snow, Daylight planned to make the camp of Forty Mile

on the fourth night. He told Kama as much, but on the third day the temperature began to rise, and they knew snow was not far off; for on the Yukon it must get warm in order to snow. Also, on this day, they encountered ten miles of chaotic ice-jams, where, a thousand times, they lifted the loaded sled over the huge cakes by the strength of their arms and lowered it down again. Here the dogs were well-nigh useless, and both they and the men were tried excessively by the roughness of the way. An hour's extra running that night caught up only part of the lost time.

In the morning they awoke to find ten inches of snow on their robes. The dogs were buried under it and were loath to leave their comfortable nests. This new snow meant hard going. The sled runners would not slide over it so well, while one of the men must go in advance of the dogs and pack it down with snowshoes so that they should not wallow. Quite different was it from the ordinary snow known to those of the Southland. It was hard, and fine, and dry. It was more like sugar. Kick it, and it flew with a hissing noise like sand. There was no cohesion among the particles, and it could not be moulded into snowballs. It was not composed of flakes, but of crystals--tiny, geometrical frost-crystals. In truth, it was not snow, but frost.

The weather was warm, as well, barely twenty below zero, and the two men, with raised ear-flaps and dangling mittens, sweated as they toiled. They failed to make Forty Mile that night, and when they passed that camp next day Daylight paused only long enough to get the

mail and additional grub. On the afternoon of the following day they camped at the mouth of the Klondike River. Not a soul had they encountered since Forty Mile, and they had made their own trail. As yet, that winter, no one had travelled the river south of Forty Mile, and, for that matter, the whole winter through they might be the only ones to travel it. In that day the Yukon was a lonely land. Between the Klondike River and Salt Water at Dyea intervened six hundred miles of snow-covered wilderness, and in all that distance there were but two places where Daylight might look forward to meeting men. Both were isolated trading-posts, Sixty Mile and Fort Selkirk. In the summer-time Indians might be met with at the mouths of the Stewart and White rivers, at the Big and Little Salmons, and on Lake Le Barge; but in the winter, as he well knew, they would be on the trail of the moose-herds, following them back into the mountains.

That night, camped at the mouth of the Klondike, Daylight did not turn in when the evening's work was done. Had a white man been present, Daylight would have remarked that he felt his "hunch" working. As it was, he tied on his snowshoes, left the dogs curled in the snow and Kama breathing heavily under his rabbit skins, and climbed up to the big flat above the high earth-bank. But the spruce trees were too thick for an outlook, and he threaded his way across the flat and up the first steep slopes of the mountain at the back. Here, flowing in from the east at right angles, he could see the Klondike, and, bending grandly from the south, the Yukon. To the left, and downstream, toward Moosehide Mountain, the huge splash of white, from which it took its

name, showing clearly in the starlight. Lieutenant Schwatka had given it its name, but he, Daylight, had first seen it long before that intrepid explorer had crossed the Chilcoot and rafted down the Yukon.

But the mountain received only passing notice. Daylight's interest was centered in the big flat itself, with deep water all along its edge for steamboat landings.

"A sure enough likely town site," he muttered. "Room for a camp of forty thousand men. All that's needed is the gold-strike." He meditated for a space. "Ten dollars to the pan'll do it, and it'd be the all-firedest stampede Alaska ever seen. And if it don't come here, it'll come somewhere hereabouts. It's a sure good idea to keep an eye out for town sites all the way up."

He stood a while longer, gazing out over the lonely flat and visioning with constructive imagination the scene if the stampede did come. In fancy, he placed the sawmills, the big trading stores, the saloons, and dance-halls, and the long streets of miners' cabins. And along those streets he saw thousands of men passing up and down, while before the stores were the heavy freighting-sleds, with long strings of dogs attached. Also he saw the heavy freighters pulling down the main street and heading up the frozen Klondike toward the imagined somewhere where the diggings must be located.

He laughed and shook the vision from his eyes, descended to the level,

and crossed the flat to camp. Five minutes after he had rolled up in his robe, he opened his eyes and sat up, amazed that he was not already asleep. He glanced at the Indian sleeping beside him, at the embers of the dying fire, at the five dogs beyond, with their wolf's brushes curled over their noses, and at the four snowshoes standing upright in the snow.

"It's sure hell the way that hunch works on me" he murmured. His mind reverted to the poker game. "Four kings!" He grinned reminiscently. "That WAS a hunch!"

He lay down again, pulled the edge of the robe around his neck and over his ear-flaps, closed his eyes, and this time fell asleep.

[5] Parka: a light, hooded, smock-like garment made of cotton drill.

CHAPTER V

At Sixty Mile they restocked provisions, added a few pounds of letters to their load, and held steadily on. From Forty Mile they had had unbroken trail, and they could look forward only to unbroken trail clear to Dyea. Daylight stood it magnificently, but the killing pace was beginning to tell on Kama. His pride kept his mouth shut, but the result of the chilling of his lungs in the cold snap could not be concealed. Microscopically small had been the edges of the lung-tissue touched by the frost, but they now began to slough off, giving rise to a dry, hacking cough. Any unusually severe exertion precipitated spells of coughing, during which he was almost like a man in a fit. The blood congested in his eyes till they bulged, while the tears ran down his cheeks. A whiff of the smoke from frying bacon would start him off for a half-hour's paroxysm, and he kept carefully to windward when Daylight was cooking.

They plodded days upon days and without end over the soft, unpacked snow. It was hard, monotonous work, with none of the joy and blood-stir that went with flying over hard surface. Now one man to the fore in the snowshoes, and now the other, it was a case of stubborn, unmitigated plod. A yard of powdery snow had to be pressed down, and the wide-webbed shoe, under a man's weight, sank a full dozen inches into the soft surface. Snowshoe work, under such conditions, called for the use of muscles other than those used in ordinary walking. From step to step the rising foot could not come up and forward on a slant.

It had to be raised perpendicularly. When the snowshoe was pressed into the snow, its nose was confronted by a vertical wall of snow twelve inches high. If the foot, in rising, slanted forward the slightest bit, the nose of the shoe penetrated the obstructing wall and tipped downward till the heel of the shoe struck the man's leg behind. Thus up, straight up, twelve inches, each foot must be raised every time and all the time, ere the forward swing from the knee could begin.

On this partially packed surface followed the dogs, the man at the gee-pole, and the sled. At the best, toiling as only picked men could toil, they made no more than three miles an hour. This meant longer hours of travel, and Daylight, for good measure and for a margin against accidents, hit the trail for twelve hours a day. Since three hours were consumed by making camp at night and cooking beans, by getting breakfast in the morning and breaking camp, and by thawing beans at the midday halt, nine hours were left for sleep and recuperation, and neither men nor dogs wasted many minutes of those nine hours.

At Selkirk, the trading post near Pelly River, Daylight suggested that Kama lay over, rejoining him on the back trip from Dyea. A strayed Indian from Lake Le Barge was willing to take his place; but Kama was obdurate. He grunted with a slight intonation of resentment, and that was all. The dogs, however, Daylight changed, leaving his own exhausted team to rest up against his return, while he went on with six fresh dogs.

They travelled till ten o'clock the night they reached Selkirk, and at six next morning they plunged ahead into the next stretch of wilderness of nearly five hundred miles that lay between Selkirk and Dyea. A second cold snap came on, but cold or warm it was all the same, an unbroken trail. When the thermometer went down to fifty below, it was even harder to travel, for at that low temperature the hard frost-crystals were more like sand-grains in the resistance they offered to the sled runners. The dogs had to pull harder than over the same snow at twenty or thirty below zero. Daylight increased the day's travel to thirteen hours. He jealously guarded the margin he had gained, for he knew there were difficult stretches to come.

It was not yet quite midwinter, and the turbulent Fifty Mile River vindicated his judgment. In many places it ran wide open, with precarious rim-ice fringing it on either side. In numerous places, where the water dashed against the steep-sided bluffs, rim-ice was unable to form. They turned and twisted, now crossing the river, now

coming back again, sometimes making half a dozen attempts before they found a way over a particularly bad stretch. It was slow work. The ice-bridges had to be tested, and either Daylight or Kama went in advance, snowshoes on their feet, and long poles carried crosswise in their hands. Thus, if they broke through, they could cling to the pole that bridged the hole made by their bodies. Several such accidents were the share of each. At fifty below zero, a man wet to the waist

cannot travel without freezing; so each ducking meant delay. As soon as rescued, the wet man ran up and down to keep up his circulation, while his dry companion built a fire. Thus protected, a change of garments could be made and the wet ones dried against the next misadventure.

To make matters worse, this dangerous river travel could not be done in the dark, and their working day was reduced to the six hours of twilight. Every moment was precious, and they strove never to lose one. Thus, before the first hint of the coming of gray day, camp was broken, sled loaded, dogs harnessed, and the two men crouched waiting over the fire. Nor did they make the midday halt to eat. As it was, they were running far behind their schedule, each day eating into the margin they had run up. There were days when they made fifteen miles, and days when they made a dozen. And there was one bad stretch where in two days they covered nine miles, being compelled to turn their backs three times on the river and to portage sled and outfit over the mountains.

At last they cleared the dread Fifty Mile River and came out on Lake Le Barge. Here was no open water nor jammed ice. For thirty miles or more the snow lay level as a table; withal it lay three feet deep and was soft as flour. Three miles an hour was the best they could make, but Daylight celebrated the passing of the Fifty Mile by traveling late. At eleven in the morning they emerged at the foot of the lake. At three in the afternoon, as the Arctic night closed down, he caught

his first sight of the head of the lake, and with the first stars took his bearings. At eight in the evening they left the lake behind and entered the mouth of the Lewes River. Here a halt of half an hour was made, while chunks of frozen boiled beans were thawed and the dogs were given an extra ration of fish. Then they pulled on up the river till one in the morning, when they made their regular camp.

They had hit the trail sixteen hours on end that day, the dogs had come in too tired to fight among themselves or even snarl, and Kama had perceptibly limped the last several miles; yet Daylight was on trail next morning at six o'clock. By eleven he was at the foot of White Horse, and that night saw him camped beyond the Box Canon, the last bad river-stretch behind him, the string of lakes before him.

There was no let up in his pace. Twelve hours a day, six in the twilight, and six in the dark, they toiled on the trail. Three hours were consumed in cooking, repairing harnesses, and making and breaking camp, and the remaining nine hours dogs and men slept as if dead. The iron strength of Kama broke. Day by day the terrific toil sapped him. Day by day he consumed more of his reserves of strength. He became slower of movement, the resiliency went out of his muscles, and his limp became permanent. Yet he labored stoically on, never shirking, never grunting a hint of complaint. Daylight was thin-faced and tired.

He looked tired; yet somehow, with that marvelous mechanism of a body that was his, he drove on, ever on, remorselessly on. Never was he

more a god in Kama's mind than in the last days of the south-bound traverse, as the failing Indian watched him, ever to the fore, pressing onward with urgency of endurance such as Kama had never seen nor dreamed could thrive in human form.

The time came when Kama was unable to go in the lead and break trail, and it was a proof that he was far gone when he permitted Daylight to toil all day at the heavy snowshoe work. Lake by lake they crossed the string of lakes from Marsh to Linderman, and began the ascent of Chilcoot. By all rights, Daylight should have camped below the last pitch of the pass at the dim end of day; but he kept on and over and down to Sheep Camp, while behind him raged a snow-storm that would have delayed him twenty-four hours.

This last excessive strain broke Kama completely. In the morning he could not travel. At five, when called, he sat up after a struggle, groaned, and sank back again. Daylight did the camp work of both, harnessed the dogs, and, when ready for the start, rolled the helpless Indian in all three sleeping robes and lashed him on top of the sled. The going was good; they were on the last lap; and he raced the dogs down through Dyea Canon and along the hard-packed trail that led to Dyea Post. And running still, Kama groaning on top the load, and Daylight leaping at the gee-pole to avoid going under the runners of the flying sled, they arrived at Dyea by the sea.

True to his promise, Daylight did not stop. An hour's time saw the

sled loaded with the ingoing mail and grub, fresh dogs harnessed, and a fresh Indian engaged. Kama never spoke from the time of his arrival till the moment Daylight, ready to depart, stood beside him to say good-by. They shook hands.

"You kill um dat damn Indian," Kama said. "Sawee, Daylight? You kill um."

"He'll sure last as far as Pelly," Daylight grinned.

Kama shook his head doubtfully, and rolled over on his side, turning his back in token of farewell.

Daylight won across Chilcoot that same day, dropping down five hundred feet in the darkness and the flurrying snow to Crater Lake, where he camped. It was a 'cold' camp, far above the timber-line, and he had not burdened his sled with firewood. That night three feet of snow covered them, and in the black morning, when they dug themselves out, the Indian tried to desert. He had had enough of traveling with what he considered a madman. But Daylight persuaded him in grim ways to stay by the outfit, and they pulled on across Deep Lake and Long Lake and dropped down to the level-going of Lake Linderman. It was the same killing pace going in as coming out, and the Indian did not stand it as well as Kama. He, too, never complained. Nor did he try again to desert. He toiled on and did his best, while he renewed his resolve to steer clear of Daylight in the future. The days slipped into days,

nights and twilight's alternating, cold snaps gave way to snow-falls, and cold snaps came on again, and all the while, through the long hours, the miles piled up behind them.

But on the Fifty Mile accident befell them. Crossing an ice-bridge, the dogs broke through and were swept under the down-stream ice. The traces that connected the team with the wheel-dog parted, and the team was never seen again. Only the one wheel-dog remained, and Daylight harnessed the Indian and himself to the sled. But a man cannot take the place of a dog at such work, and the two men were attempting to do the work of five dogs. At the end of the first hour, Daylight lightened up. Dog-food, extra gear, and the spare ax were thrown away. Under the extraordinary exertion the dog snapped a tendon the following day, and was hopelessly disabled. Daylight shot it, and abandoned the sled. On his back he took one hundred and sixty pounds of mail and grub, and on the Indian's put one hundred and twenty-five pounds. The stripping of gear was remorseless. The Indian was appalled when he saw every pound of worthless mail matter retained, while beans, cups, pails, plates, and extra clothing were thrown by the board. One robe each was kept, one ax, one tin pail, and a scant supply of bacon and flour. Bacon could be eaten raw on a pinch, and flour, stirred in hot water, could keep men going. Even the rifle and the score of rounds of ammunition were left behind.

And in this fashion they covered the two hundred miles to Selkirk. Daylight travelled late and early, the hours formerly used by

camp-making and dog-tending being now devoted to the trail. At night they crouched over a small fire, wrapped in their robes, drinking flour broth and thawing bacon on the ends of sticks; and in the morning darkness, without a word, they arose, slipped on their packs, adjusted head-straps, and hit the trail. The last miles into Selkirk, Daylight drove the Indian before him, a hollow-cheeked, gaunt-eyed wraith of a man who else would have lain down and slept or abandoned his burden of mail.

At Selkirk, the old team of dogs, fresh and in condition, were harnessed, and the same day saw Daylight plodding on, alternating places at the gee-pole, as a matter of course, with the Le Barge Indian who had volunteered on the way out. Daylight was two days behind his schedule, and falling snow and unpacked trail kept him two days behind all the way to Forty Mile. And here the weather favored. It was time for a big cold snap, and he gambled on it, cutting down the weight of grub for dogs and men. The men of Forty Mile shook their heads ominously, and demanded to know what he would do if the snow still fell.

"That cold snap's sure got to come," he laughed, and mushed out on the trail.

A number of sleds had passed back and forth already that winter between Forty Mile and Circle City, and the trail was well packed. And the cold snap came and remained, and Circle City was only two hundred miles away. The Le Barge Indian was a young man, unlearned yet in his own

limitations, and filled with pride.

He took Daylight's pace with joy, and even dreamed, at first, that he would play the white man out. The first hundred miles he looked for signs of weakening, and marveled that he saw them not.

Throughout the second hundred miles he observed signs in himself, and gritted his teeth and kept up. And ever Daylight flew on and on, running at the gee-pole or resting his spell on top the flying sled. The last day, clearer and colder than ever, gave perfect going, and they covered seventy miles. It was ten at night when they pulled up the earth-bank and flew along the main street of Circle City; and the young Indian, though it was his spell to ride, leaped off and ran behind the sled. It was honorable braggadocio, and despite the fact that he had found his limitations and was pressing desperately against them, he ran gamely on.

CHAPTER VI

A crowd filled the Tivoli--the old crowd that had seen Daylight depart two months before; for this was the night of the sixtieth day, and opinion was divided as ever as to whether or not he would compass the achievement. At ten o'clock bets were still being made, though the odds rose, bet by bet, against his success. Down in her heart the Virgin believed he had failed, yet she made a bet of twenty ounces with Charley Bates, against forty ounces, that Daylight would arrive before midnight.

She it was who heard the first yelps of the dogs.

"Listen!" she cried. "It's Daylight!"

There was a general stampede for the door; but where the double storm-doors were thrown wide open, the crowd fell back. They heard the eager whining of dogs, the snap of a dog-whip, and the voice of Daylight crying encouragement as the weary animals capped all they had done by dragging the sled in over the wooden floor. They came in with a rush, and with them rushed in the frost, a visible vapor of smoking white, through which their heads and backs showed, as they strained in the harness, till they had all the seeming of swimming in a river. Behind them, at the gee-pole, came Daylight, hidden to the knees by the swirling frost through which he appeared to wade.

He was the same old Daylight, withal lean and tired-looking, and his black eyes were sparkling and flashing brighter than ever. His parka of cotton drill hooded him like a monk, and fell in straight lines to his knees. Grimed and scorched by camp-smoke and fire, the garment in itself told the story of his trip. A two-months' beard covered his face; and the beard, in turn, was matted with the ice of his breathing through the long seventy-mile run.

His entry was spectacular, melodramatic; and he knew it. It was his life, and he was living it at the top of his bent. Among his fellows he was a great man, an Arctic hero. He was proud of the fact, and it was a high moment for him, fresh from two thousand miles of trail, to come surging into that bar-room, dogs, sled, mail, Indian, paraphernalia, and all. He had performed one more exploit that would make the Yukon ring with his name--he, Burning Daylight, the king of travelers and dog-mushers.

He experienced a thrill of surprise as the roar of welcome went up and as every familiar detail of the Tivoli greeted his vision--the long bar and the array of bottles, the gambling games, the big stove, the weigher at the gold-scales, the musicians, the men and women, the Virgin, Celia, and Nellie, Dan MacDonald, Bettles, Billy Rawlins, Olaf Henderson, Doc Watson,--all of them.

It was just as he had left it, and in all seeming it might well be the very day he had left. The sixty days of incessant travel through the

white wilderness suddenly telescoped, and had no existence in time. They were a moment, an incident. He had plunged out and into them through the wall of silence, and back through the wall of silence he had plunged, apparently the next instant, and into the roar and turmoil of the Tivoli.

A glance down at the sled with its canvas mail-bags was necessary to reassure him of the reality of those sixty days and the two thousand miles over the ice. As in a dream, he shook the hands that were thrust out to him. He felt a vast exaltation. Life was magnificent. He loved it all. A great sense of humanness and comradeship swept over him. These were all his, his own kind. It was immense, tremendous. He felt melting in the heart of him, and he would have liked to shake hands with them all at once, to gather them to his breast in one mighty embrace.

He drew a deep breath and cried: "The winner pays, and I'm the winner, ain't I? Surge up, you-all Malemutes and Siwashes, and name your poison! There's your Dyea mail, straight from Salt Water, and no hornswogglin about it! Cast the lashings adrift, you-all, and wade into it!"

A dozen pairs of hands were at the sled-lashings, when the young Le Barge Indian, bending at the same task, suddenly and limply straightened up. In his eyes was a great surprise. He stared about him wildly, for the thing he was undergoing was new to him.

He was profoundly struck by an unguessed limitation. He shook as with a palsy, and he gave at the knees, slowly sinking down to fall suddenly across the sled and to know the smashing blow of darkness across his consciousness.

"Exhaustion," said Daylight. "Take him off and put him to bed, some of you-all. He's sure a good Indian."

"Daylight's right," was Doc Watson's verdict, a moment later. "The man's plumb tuckered out."

The mail was taken charge of, the dogs driven away to quarters and fed, and Bettles struck up the paean of the sassafras root as they lined up against the long bar to drink and talk and collect their debts.

A few minutes later, Daylight was whirling around the dance-floor, waltzing with the Virgin. He had replaced his parka with his fur cap and blanket-cloth coat, kicked off his frozen moccasins, and was dancing in his stocking feet. After wetting himself to the knees late that afternoon, he had run on without changing his foot-gear, and to the knees his long German socks were matted with ice. In the warmth of the room it began to thaw and to break apart in clinging chunks. These chunks rattled together as his legs flew around, and every little while they fell clattering to the floor and were slipped upon by the other dancers. But everybody forgave Daylight. He, who was one of the few

that made the Law in that far land, who set the ethical pace, and by conduct gave the standard of right and wrong, was nevertheless above the Law. He was one of those rare and favored mortals who can do no wrong. What he did had to be right, whether others were permitted or not to do the same things. Of course, such mortals are so favored by virtue of the fact that they almost always do the right and do it in finer and higher ways than other men. So Daylight, an elder hero in that young land and at the same time younger than most of them, moved as a creature apart, as a man above men, as a man who was greatly man and all man. And small wonder it was that the Virgin yielded herself to his arms, as they danced dance after dance, and was sick at heart at the knowledge that he found nothing in her more than a good friend and an excellent dancer. Small consolation it was to know that he had never loved any woman. She was sick with love of him, and he danced with her as he would dance with any woman, as he would dance with a man who was a good dancer and upon whose arm was tied a handkerchief to conventionalize him into a woman.

One such man Daylight danced with that night. Among frontiersmen it has always been a test of endurance for one man to whirl another down; and when Ben Davis, the faro-dealer, a gaudy bandanna on his arm, got Daylight in a Virginia reel, the fun began. The reel broke up and all fell back to watch. Around and around the two men whirled, always in the one direction. Word was passed on into the big bar-room, and bar and gambling tables were deserted. Everybody wanted to see, and they packed and jammed the dance-room. The musicians played on and on, and

on and on the two men whirled. Davis was skilled at the trick, and on the Yukon he had put many a strong man on his back. But after a few minutes it was clear that he, and not Daylight, was going.

For a while longer they spun around, and then Daylight suddenly stood still, released his partner, and stepped back, reeling himself, and fluttering his hands aimlessly, as if to support himself against the air. But Davis, a giddy smile of consternation on his face, gave sideways, turned in an attempt to recover balance, and pitched headlong to the floor. Still reeling and staggering and clutching at the air with his hands, Daylight caught the nearest girl and started on in a waltz. Again he had done the big thing. Weary from two thousand miles over the ice and a run that day of seventy miles, he had whirled a fresh man down, and that man Ben Davis.

Daylight loved the high places, and though few high places there were in his narrow experience, he had made a point of sitting in the highest he had ever glimpsed. The great world had never heard his name, but it was known far and wide in the vast silent North, by whites and Indians and Eskimos, from Bering Sea to the Passes, from the head reaches of remotest rivers to the tundra shore of Point Barrow. Desire for mastery was strong in him, and it was all one whether wrestling with the elements themselves, with men, or with luck in a gambling game. It was all a game, life and its affairs. And he was a gambler to the core. Risk and chance were meat and drink. True, it was not altogether blind, for he applied wit and skill and strength; but behind

it all was the everlasting Luck, the thing that at times turned on its votaries and crushed the wise while it blessed the fools--Luck, the thing all men sought and dreamed to conquer. And so he. Deep in his life-processes Life itself sang the siren song of its own majesty, ever a-whisper and urgent, counseling him that he could achieve more than other men, win out where they failed, ride to success where they perished. It was the urge of Life healthy and strong, unaware of frailty and decay, drunken with sublime complacence, ego-mad, enchanted by its own mighty optimism.

And ever in vaguest whisperings and clearest trumpet-calls came the message that sometime, somewhere, somehow, he would run Luck down, make himself the master of Luck, and tie it and brand it as his own. When he played poker, the whisper was of four aces and royal flushes. When he prospected, it was of gold in the grass-roots, gold on bed-rock, and gold all the way down. At the sharpest hazards of trail and river and famine, the message was that other men might die, but that he would pull through triumphant. It was the old, old lie of Life fooling itself, believing itself--immortal and indestructible, bound to achieve over other lives and win to its heart's desire.

And so, reversing at times, Daylight waltzed off his dizziness and led the way to the bar. But a united protest went up. His theory that the winner paid was no longer to be tolerated. It was contrary to custom and common sense, and while it emphasized good-fellowship, nevertheless, in the name of good-fellowship it must cease. The drinks

were rightfully on Ben Davis, and Ben Davis must buy them. Furthermore, all drinks and general treats that Daylight was guilty of ought to be paid by the house, for Daylight brought much custom to it whenever he made a night. Bettles was the spokesman, and his argument, tersely and offensively vernacular, was unanimously applauded.

Daylight grinned, stepped aside to the roulette-table, and bought a stack of yellow chips. At the end of ten minutes he weighed in at the scales, and two thousand dollars in gold-dust was poured into his own and an extra sack. Luck, a mere flutter of luck, but it was his. Elation was added to elation. He was living, and the night was his. He turned upon his well-wishing critics.

"Now the winner sure does pay," he said.

And they surrendered. There was no withstanding Daylight when he vaulted on the back of life, and rode it bitted and spurred.

At one in the morning he saw Elijah Davis herding Henry Finn and Joe Hines, the lumber-jack, toward the door. Daylight interfered.

"Where are you-all going?" he demanded, attempting to draw them to the bar.

"Bed," Elijah Davis answered.

He was a lean tobacco-chewing New Englander, the one daring spirit in his family that had heard and answered the call of the West shouting through the Mount Desert back odd-lots. "Got to," Joe Hines added apologetically. "We're mushing out in the mornin'."

Daylight still detained them. "Where to? What's the excitement?"

"No excitement," Elijah explained. "We're just a-goin' to play your hunch, an' tackle the Upper Country. Don't you want to come along?"

"I sure do," Daylight affirmed.

But the question had been put in fun, and Elijah ignored the acceptance.

"We're tacklin' the Stewart," he went on. "Al Mayo told me he seen some likely lookin' bars first time he come down the Stewart, and we're goin' to sample 'em while the river's froze. You listen, Daylight, an' mark my words, the time's comin' when winter diggin's'll be all the go. There'll be men in them days that'll laugh at our summer stratchin' an' ground-wallerin'."

At that time, winter mining was undreamed of on the Yukon. From the moss and grass the land was frozen to bed-rock, and frozen gravel, hard as granite, defied pick and shovel. In the summer the men stripped the earth down as fast as the sun thawed it. Then was the time they did their mining. During the winter they freighted their provisions, went

moose-hunting, got all ready for the summer's work, and then loafed the bleak, dark months through in the big central camps such as Circle City and Forty Mile.

"Winter diggin's sure comin'," Daylight agreed. "Wait till that big strike is made up river. Then you-all'll see a new kind of mining. What's to prevent wood-burning and sinking shafts and drifting along bed-rock? Won't need to timber. That frozen muck and gravel'll stand till hell is froze and its mill-tails is turned to ice-cream. Why, they'll be working pay-streaks a hundred feet deep in them days that's comin'. I'm sure going along with you-all, Elijah."

Elijah laughed, gathered his two partners up, and was making a second attempt to reach the door.

"Hold on," Daylight called. "I sure mean it."

The three men turned back suddenly upon him, in their faces surprise, delight, and incredulity.

"G'wan, you're foolin'," said Finn, the other lumberjack, a quiet, steady, Wisconsin man.

"There's my dawgs and sled," Daylight answered. "That'll make two teams and halve the loads--though we-all'll have to travel easy for a spell, for them dawgs is sure tired."

The three men were overjoyed, but still a trifle incredulous.

"Now look here," Joe Hines blurted out, "none of your foolin, Daylight. We mean business. Will you come?"

Daylight extended his hand and shook.

"Then you'd best be gettin' to bed," Elijah advised. "We're mushin' out at six, and four hours' sleep is none so long."

"Mebbe we ought to lay over a day and let him rest up," Finn suggested.

Daylight's pride was touched.

"No you don't," he cried. "We all start at six. What time do you-all want to be called? Five? All right, I'll rouse you-all out."

"You oughter have some sleep," Elijah counselled gravely. "You can't go on forever."

Daylight was tired, profoundly tired. Even his iron body acknowledged weariness. Every muscle was clamoring for bed and rest, was appalled at continuance of exertion and at thought of the trail again. All this physical protest welled up into his brain in a wave of revolt. But deeper down, scornful and defiant, was Life itself, the essential fire

of it, whispering that all Daylight's fellows were looking on, that now was the time to pile deed upon deed, to flaunt his strength in the face of strength. It was merely Life, whispering its ancient lies. And in league with it was whiskey, with all its consummate effrontery and vain-glory.

"Mebbe you-all think I ain't weaned yet?" Daylight demanded. "Why, I ain't had a drink, or a dance, or seen a soul in two months. You-all get to bed. I'll call you-all at five."

And for the rest of the night he danced on in his stocking feet, and at five in the morning, rapping thunderously on the door of his new partners' cabin, he could be heard singing the song that had given him his name:--

"Burning daylight, you-all Stewart River hunchers! Burning daylight! Burning daylight! Burning daylight!"

CHAPTER VII

This time the trail was easier. It was better packed, and they were not carrying mail against time. The day's run was shorter, and likewise the hours on trail. On his mail run Daylight had played out three Indians; but his present partners knew that they must not be played out when they arrived at the Stewart bars, so they set the slower pace. And under this milder toil, where his companions nevertheless grew weary, Daylight recuperated and rested up. At Forty Mile they laid over two days for the sake of the dogs, and at Sixty Mile Daylight's team was left with the trader. Unlike Daylight, after the terrible run from Selkirk to Circle City, they had been unable to recuperate on the back trail. So the four men pulled on from Sixty Mile with a fresh team of dogs on Daylight's sled.

The following night they camped in the cluster of islands at the mouth of the Stewart. Daylight talked town sites, and, though the others laughed at him, he staked the whole maze of high, wooded islands.

"Just supposing the big strike does come on the Stewart," he argued. "Mebbe you-all'll be in on it, and then again mebbe you-all won't. But I sure will. You-all'd better reconsider and go in with me on it."

But they were stubborn.

"You're as bad as Harper and Joe Ladue," said Joe Hines. "They're

always at that game. You know that big flat jest below the Klondike and under Moosehide Mountain? Well, the recorder at Forty Mile was tellin' me they staked that not a month ago--The Harper & Ladue Town Site. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Elijah and Finn joined him in his laughter; but Daylight was gravely in earnest.

"There she is!" he cried. "The hunch is working! It's in the air, I tell you-all! What'd they-all stake the big flat for if they-all didn't get the hunch? Wish I'd staked it."

The regret in his voice was provocative of a second burst of laughter.

"Laugh, you-all, laugh! That's what's the trouble with you-all. You-all think gold-hunting is the only way to make a stake. But let me tell you-all that when the big strike sure does come, you-all'll do a little surface-scratchin' and muck-raking, but danged little you-all'll have to show for it. You-all laugh at quicksilver in the riffles and think flour gold was manufactured by God Almighty for the express purpose of fooling suckers and chechaquos. Nothing but coarse gold for you-all, that's your way, not getting half of it out of the ground and losing into the tailings half of what you-all do get.

"But the men that land big will be them that stake the town sites, organize the tradin' companies, start the banks--"

Here the explosion of mirth drowned him out. Banks in Alaska! The idea of it was excruciating.

"Yep, and start the stock exchanges--"

Again they were convulsed. Joe Hines rolled over on his sleeping-robe, holding his sides.

"And after them will come the big mining sharks that buy whole creeks where you-all have been scratching like a lot of picayune hens, and they-all will go to hydraulicking in summer and steam-thawing in winter--"

Steam-thawing! That was the limit. Daylight was certainly exceeding himself in his consummate fun-making. Steam-thawing--when even wood-burning was an untried experiment, a dream in the air!

"Laugh, dang you, laugh! Why your eyes ain't open yet. You-all are a bunch of little mewing kittens. I tell you-all if that strike comes on Klondike, Harper and Ladue will be millionaires. And if it comes on Stewart, you-all watch the Elam Harnish town site boom. In them days, when you-all come around makin' poor mouths..." He heaved a sigh of resignation. "Well, I suppose I'll have to give you-all a grub-stake or soup, or something or other."

Daylight had vision. His scope had been rigidly limited, yet whatever he saw, he saw big. His mind was orderly, his imagination practical, and he never dreamed idly. When he superimposed a feverish metropolis on a waste of timbered, snow-covered flat, he predicated first the gold-strike that made the city possible, and next he had an eye for steamboat landings, sawmill and warehouse locations, and all the needs of a far-northern mining city. But this, in turn, was the mere setting for something bigger, namely, the play of temperament. Opportunities swarmed in the streets and buildings and human and economic relations of the city of his dream. It was a larger table for gambling. The limit was the sky, with the Southland on one side and the aurora borealis on the other. The play would be big, bigger than any Yukoner had ever imagined, and he, Burning Daylight, would see that he got in on that play.

In the meantime there was naught to show for it but the hunch. But it was coming. As he would stake his last ounce on a good poker hand, so he staked his life and effort on the hunch that the future held in store a big strike on the Upper River. So he and his three companions, with dogs, and sleds, and snowshoes, toiled up the frozen breast of the Stewart, toiled on and on through the white wilderness where the unending stillness was never broken by the voices of men, the stroke of an ax, or the distant crack of a rifle. They alone moved through the vast and frozen quiet, little mites of earth-men, crawling their score of miles a day, melting the ice that they might have water to drink, camping in the snow at night, their wolf-dogs curled in frost-rimed,

hairy bunches, their eight snowshoes stuck on end in the snow beside the sleds.

No signs of other men did they see, though once they passed a rude poling-boat, cached on a platform by the river bank. Whoever had cached it had never come back for it; and they wondered and mushed on. Another time they chanced upon the site of an Indian village, but the Indians had disappeared; undoubtedly they were on the higher reaches of the Stewart in pursuit of the moose-herds. Two hundred miles up from the Yukon, they came upon what Elijah decided were the bars mentioned by Al Mayo. A permanent camp was made, their outfit of food cached on a high platform to keep it from the dogs, and they started work on the bars, cutting their way down to gravel through the rim of ice.

It was a hard and simple life. Breakfast over, and they were at work by the first gray light; and when night descended, they did their cooking and camp-chores, smoked and yarned for a while, then rolled up in their sleeping-robes, and slept while the aurora borealis flamed overhead and the stars leaped and danced in the great cold. Their fare was monotonous: sour-dough bread, bacon, beans, and an occasional dish of rice cooked along with a handful of prunes. Fresh meat they failed to obtain. There was an unwonted absence of animal life. At rare intervals they chanced upon the trail of a snowshoe rabbit or an ermine; but in the main it seemed that all life had fled the land. It was a condition not unknown to them, for in all their experience, at one time or another, they had travelled one year through a region

teeming with game, where, a year or two or three years later, no game at all would be found.

Gold they found on the bars, but not in paying quantities. Elijah, while on a hunt for moose fifty miles away, had panned the surface gravel of a large creek and found good colors. They harnessed their dogs, and with light outfits sledded to the place. Here, and possibly for the first time in the history of the Yukon, wood-burning, in sinking a shaft, was tried. It was Daylight's initiative. After clearing away the moss and grass, a fire of dry spruce was built. Six hours of burning thawed eight inches of muck. Their picks drove full depth into it, and, when they had shoveled out, another fire was started. They worked early and late, excited over the success of the experiment. Six feet of frozen muck brought them to gravel, likewise frozen. Here progress was slower. But they learned to handle their fires better, and were soon able to thaw five and six inches at a burning. Flour gold was in this gravel, and after two feet it gave away again to muck. At seventeen feet they struck a thin streak of gravel, and in it coarse gold, testpans running as high as six and eight dollars. Unfortunately, this streak of gravel was not more than an inch thick. Beneath it was more muck, tangled with the trunks of ancient trees and containing fossil bones of forgotten monsters. But gold they had found--coarse gold; and what more likely than that the big deposit would be found on bed-rock? Down to bed-rock they would go, if it were forty feet away. They divided into two shifts, working day and night, on two shafts, and the smoke of their burning rose

continually.

It was at this time that they ran short of beans and that Elijah was despatched to the main camp to bring up more grub. Elijah was one of the hard-bitten old-time travelers himself. The round trip was a hundred miles, but he promised to be back on the third day, one day going light, two days returning heavy. Instead, he arrived on the night of the second day. They had just gone to bed when they heard him coming.

"What in hell's the matter now?" Henry Finn demanded, as the empty sled came into the circle of firelight and as he noted that Elijah's long, serious face was longer and even more serious.

Joe Hines threw wood on the fire, and the three men, wrapped in their robes, huddled up close to the warmth. Elijah's whiskered face was matted with ice, as were his eyebrows, so that, what of his fur garb, he looked like a New England caricature of Father Christmas.

"You recollect that big spruce that held up the corner of the cache next to the river?" Elijah began.

The disaster was quickly told. The big tree, with all the seeming of hardihood, promising to stand for centuries to come, had suffered from a hidden decay. In some way its rooted grip on the earth had weakened. The added burden of the cache and the winter snow had been too much for

it; the balance it had so long maintained with the forces of its environment had been overthrown; it had toppled and crashed to the ground, wrecking the cache and, in turn, overthrowing the balance with environment that the four men and eleven dogs had been maintaining. Their supply of grub was gone. The wolverines had got into the wrecked cache, and what they had not eaten they had destroyed.

"They plumb e't all the bacon and prunes and sugar and dog-food," Elijah reported, "and gosh darn my buttons, if they didn't gnaw open the sacks and scatter the flour and beans and rice from Dan to Beersheba. I found empty sacks where they'd dragged them a quarter of a mile away."

Nobody spoke for a long minute. It was nothing less than a catastrophe, in the dead of an Arctic winter and in a game-abandoned land, to lose their grub. They were not panic-stricken, but they were busy looking the situation squarely in the face and considering. Joe Hines was the first to speak.

"We can pan the snow for the beans and rice... though there wa'n't more'n eight or ten pounds of rice left."

"And somebody will have to take a team and pull for Sixty Mile," Daylight said next.

"I'll go," said Finn.

They considered a while longer.

"But how are we going to feed the other team and three men till he gets back?" Hines demanded.

"Only one thing to it," was Elijah's contribution. "You'll have to take the other team, Joe, and pull up the Stewart till you find them Indians. Then you come back with a load of meat. You'll get here long before Henry can make it from Sixty Mile, and while you're gone there'll only be Daylight and me to feed, and we'll feed good and small."

"And in the morning we-all'll pull for the cache and pan snow to find what grub we've got." Daylight lay back, as he spoke, and rolled in his robe to sleep, then added: "Better turn in for an early start. Two of you can take the dogs down. Elijah and me'll skin out on both sides and see if we-all can scare up a moose on the way down."

CHAPTER VIII

No time was lost. Hines and Finn, with the dogs, already on short rations, were two days in pulling down. At noon of the third day Elijah arrived, reporting no moose sign. That night Daylight came in with a similar report. As fast as they arrived, the men had started careful panning of the snow all around the cache. It was a large task, for they found stray beans fully a hundred yards from the cache. One more day all the men toiled. The result was pitiful, and the four showed their caliber in the division of the few pounds of food that had been recovered. Little as it was, the lion's share was left with Daylight and Elijah. The men who pulled on with the dogs, one up the Stewart and one down, would come more quickly to grub. The two who remained would have to last out till the others returned. Furthermore, while the dogs, on several ounces each of beans a day, would travel slowly, nevertheless, the men who travelled with them, on a pinch, would have the dogs themselves to eat. But the men who remained, when the pinch came, would have no dogs. It was for this reason that Daylight and Elijah took the more desperate chance. They could not do less, nor did they care to do less. The days passed, and the winter began merging imperceptibly into the Northland spring that comes like a thunderbolt of suddenness. It was the spring of 1896 that was preparing. Each day the sun rose farther east of south, remained longer in the sky, and set farther to the west. March ended and April began, and Daylight and Elijah, lean and hungry, wondered what had become of their two comrades. Granting every delay, and throwing in

generous margins for good measure, the time was long since passed when they should have returned. Without doubt they had met with disaster. The party had considered the possibility of disaster for one man, and that had been the principal reason for despatching the two in different directions. But that disaster should have come to both of them was the final blow.

In the meantime, hoping against hope, Daylight and Elija eked out a meagre existence. The thaw had not yet begun, so they were able to gather the snow about the ruined cache and melt it in pots and pails and gold pans. Allowed to stand for a while, when poured off, a thin deposit of slime was found on the bottoms of the vessels. This was the flour, the infinitesimal trace of it scattered through thousands of cubic yards of snow. Also, in this slime occurred at intervals a water-soaked tea-leaf or coffee-ground, and there were in it fragments of earth and litter. But the farther they worked away from the site of the cache, the thinner became the trace of flour, the smaller the deposit of slime.

Elijah was the older man, and he weakened first, so that he came to lie up most of the time in his furs. An occasional tree-squirrel kept them alive. The hunting fell upon Daylight, and it was hard work. With but thirty rounds of ammunition, he dared not risk a miss; and, since his rifle was a 45-90, he was compelled to shoot the small creatures through the head. There were very few of them, and days went by without seeing one. When he did see one, he took infinite precautions.

He would stalk it for hours. A score of times, with arms that shook from weakness, he would draw a sight on the animal and refrain from pulling the trigger. His inhibition was a thing of iron. He was the master. Not til absolute certitude was his did he shoot. No matter how sharp the pangs of hunger and desire for that palpitating morsel of chattering life, he refused to take the slightest risk of a miss. He, born gambler, was gambling in the bigger way. His life was the stake, his cards were the cartridges, and he played as only a big gambler could play, with infinite precaution, with infinite consideration. Each shot meant a squirrel, and though days elapsed between shots, it never changed his method of play.

Of the squirrels, nothing was lost. Even the skins were boiled to make broth, the bones pounded into fragments that could be chewed and swallowed. Daylight prospected through the snow, and found occasional patches of mossberries. At the best, mossberries were composed practically of seeds and water, with a tough rind of skin about them; but the berries he found were of the preceding year, dry and shrivelled, and the nourishment they contained verged on the minus quality. Scarcely better was the bark of young saplings, stewed for an hour and swallowed after prodigious chewing.

April drew toward its close, and spring smote the land. The days stretched out their length. Under the heat of the sun, the snow began to melt, while from down under the snow arose the trickling of tiny streams. For twenty-four hours the Chinook wind blew, and in that

twenty-four hours the snow was diminished fully a foot in depth. In the late afternoons the melting snow froze again, so that its surface became ice capable of supporting a man's weight. Tiny white snow-birds appeared from the south, lingered a day, and resumed their journey into the north. Once, high in the air, looking for open water and ahead of the season, a wedged squadron of wild geese honked northwards. And down by the river bank a clump of dwarf willows burst into bud. These young buds, stewed, seemed to posess an encouraging nutrition. Elijah took heart of hope, though he was cast down again when Daylight failed to find another clump of willows.

The sap was rising in the trees, and daily the trickle of unseen streamlets became louder as the frozen land came back to life. But the river held in its bonds of frost. Winter had been long months in riveting them, and not in a day were they to be broken, not even by the thunderbolt of spring. May came, and stray last-year's mosquitoes, full-grown but harmless, crawled out of rock crevices and rotten logs. Crickets began to chirp, and more geese and ducks flew overhead. And still the river held. By May tenth, the ice of the Stewart, with a great rending and snapping, tore loose from the banks and rose three feet. But it did not go down-stream. The lower Yukon, up to where the Stewart flowed into it, must first break and move on. Until then the ice of the Stewart could only rise higher and higher on the increasing flood beneath. When the Yukon would break was problematical. Two thousand miles away it flowed into Bering Sea, and it was the ice conditions of Bering Sea that would determine when the Yukon could rid

itself of the millions of tons of ice that cluttered its breast.

On the twelfth of May, carrying their sleeping-robes, a pail, an ax, and the precious rifle, the two men started down the river on the ice. Their plan was to gain to the cached poling-boat they had seen, so that at the first open water they could launch it and drift with the stream to Sixty Mile. In their weak condition, without food, the going was slow and difficult. Elijah developed a habit of falling down and being unable to rise. Daylight gave of his own strength to lift him to his feet, whereupon the older man would stagger automatically on until he stumbled and fell again.

On the day they should have reached the boat, Elijah collapsed utterly. When Daylight raised him, he fell again. Daylight essayed to walk with him, supporting him, but such was Daylight's own weakness that they fell together.

Dragging Elijah to the bank, a rude camp was made, and Daylight started out in search of squirrels. It was at this time that he likewise developed the falling habit. In the evening he found his first squirrel, but darkness came on without his getting a certain shot. With primitive patience he waited till next day, and then, within the hour, the squirrel was his.

The major portion he fed to Elijah, reserving for himself the tougher parts and the bones. But such is the chemistry of life, that this

small creature, this trifle of meat that moved, by being eaten, transmuted to the meat of the men the same power to move. No longer did the squirrel run up spruce trees, leap from branch to branch, or cling chattering to giddy perches. Instead, the same energy that had done these things flowed into the wasted muscles and reeling wills of the men, making them move--nay, moving them--till they tottered the several intervening miles to the cached boat, underneath which they fell together and lay motionless a long time.

Light as the task would have been for a strong man to lower the small boat to the ground, it took Daylight hours. And many hours more, day by day, he dragged himself around it, lying on his side to calk the gaping seams with moss. Yet, when this was done, the river still held. Its ice had risen many feet, but would not start down-stream. And one more task waited, the launching of the boat when the river ran water to receive it. Vainly Daylight staggered and stumbled and fell and crept through the snow that was wet with thaw, or across it when the night's frost still crusted it beyond the weight of a man, searching for one more squirrel, striving to achieve one more transmutation of furry leap and scolding chatter into the lifts and tugs of a man's body that would hoist the boat over the rim of shore-ice and slide it down into the stream.

Not till the twentieth of May did the river break. The down-stream movement began at five in the morning, and already were the days so long that Daylight sat up and watched the ice-run. Elijah was too far

gone to be interested in the spectacle. Though vaguely conscious, he lay without movement while the ice tore by, great cakes of it caroming against the bank, uprooting trees, and gouging out earth by hundreds of tons.

All about them the land shook and reeled from the shock of these tremendous collisions. At the end of an hour the run stopped. Somewhere below it was blocked by a jam. Then the river began to rise, lifting the ice on its breast till it was higher than the bank. From behind ever more water bore down, and ever more millions of tons of ice added their weight to the congestion. The pressures and stresses became terrific. Huge cakes of ice were squeezed out till they popped into the air like melon seeds squeezed from between the thumb and forefinger of a child, while all along the banks a wall of ice was forced up. When the jam broke, the noise of grinding and smashing redoubled. For another hour the run continued. The river fell rapidly. But the wall of ice on top the bank, and extending down into the falling water, remained.

The tail of the ice-run passed, and for the first time in six months Daylight saw open water. He knew that the ice had not yet passed out from the upper reaches of the Stewart, that it lay in packs and jams in those upper reaches, and that it might break loose and come down in a second run any time; but the need was too desperate for him to linger. Elijah was so far gone that he might pass at any moment. As for himself, he was not sure that enough strength remained in his wasted

muscles to launch the boat. It was all a gamble. If he waited for the second ice-run, Elijah would surely die, and most probably himself. If he succeeded in launching the boat, if he kept ahead of the second ice-run, if he did not get caught by some of the runs from the upper Yukon; if luck favored in all these essential particulars, as well as in a score of minor ones, they would reach Sixty Mile and be saved, if--and again the if--he had strength enough to land the boat at Sixty Mile and not go by.

He set to work. The wall of ice was five feet above the ground on which the boat rested. First prospecting for the best launching-place, he found where a huge cake of ice shelved upward from the river that ran fifteen feet below to the top of the wall. This was a score of feet away, and at the end of an hour he had managed to get the boat that far. He was sick with nausea from his exertions, and at times it seemed that blindness smote him, for he could not see, his eyes vexed with spots and points of light that were as excruciating as diamond-dust, his heart pounding up in his throat and suffocating him. Elijah betrayed no interest, did not move nor open his eyes; and Daylight fought out his battle alone. At last, falling on his knees from the shock of exertion, he got the boat poised on a secure balance on top the wall. Crawling on hands and knees, he placed in the boat his rabbit-skin robe, the rifle, and the pail. He did not bother with the ax. It meant an additional crawl of twenty feet and back, and if the need for it should arise he well knew he would be past all need.

Elijah proved a bigger task than he had anticipated. A few inches at a time, resting in between, he dragged him over the ground and up a broken rubble of ice to the side of the boat. But into the boat he could not get him. Elijah's limp body was far more difficult to lift and handle than an equal weight of like dimensions but rigid. Daylight failed to hoist him, for the body collapsed at the middle like a part-empty sack of corn. Getting into the boat, Daylight tried vainly to drag his comrade in after him. The best he could do was to get Elijah's head and shoulders on top the gunwale. When he released his hold, to heave from farther down the body, Elijah promptly gave at the middle and came down on the ice.

In despair, Daylight changed his tactics. He struck the other in the face.

"God Almighty, ain't you-all a man?" he cried. "There! damn you-all! there!"

At each curse he struck him on the cheeks, the nose, the mouth, striving, by the shock of the hurt, to bring back the sinking soul and far-wandering will of the man. The eyes fluttered open.

"Now listen!" he shouted hoarsely. "When I get your head to the gunwale, hang on! Hear me? Hang on! Bite into it with your teeth, but HANG ON!"

The eyes fluttered down, but Daylight knew the message had been received. Again he got the helpless man's head and shoulders on the gunwale.

"Hang on, damn you! Bite in!" he shouted, as he shifted his grip lower down.

One weak hand slipped off the gunwale, the fingers of the other hand relaxed, but Elijah obeyed, and his teeth held on. When the lift came, his face ground forward, and the splintery wood tore and crushed the skin from nose, lips, and chin; and, face downward, he slipped on and down to the bottom of the boat till his limp middle collapsed across the gunwale and his legs hung down outside. But they were only his legs, and Daylight shoved them in; after him. Breathing heavily, he turned Elijah over on his back, and covered him with his robes.

The final task remained--the launching of the boat. This, of necessity, was the severest of all, for he had been compelled to load his comrade in aft of the balance. It meant a supreme effort at lifting. Daylight steeled himself and began. Something must have snapped, for, though he was unaware of it, the next he knew he was lying doubled on his stomach across the sharp stern of the boat. Evidently, and for the first time in his life, he had fainted. Furthermore, it seemed to him that he was finished, that he had not one more movement left in him, and that, strangest of all, he did not care. Visions came to him, clear-cut and real, and concepts sharp as steel

cutting-edges. He, who all his days had looked on naked Life, had never seen so much of Life's nakedness before. For the first time he experienced a doubt of his own glorious personality. For the moment Life faltered and forgot to lie. After all, he was a little earth-maggot, just like all the other earth-maggots, like the squirrel he had eaten, like the other men he had seen fail and die, like Joe Hines and Henry Finn, who had already failed and were surely dead, like Elijah lying there uncaring, with his skinned face, in the bottom of the boat. Daylight's position was such that from where he lay he could look up river to the bend, around which, sooner or later, the next ice-run would come. And as he looked he seemed to see back through the past to a time when neither white man nor Indian was in the land, and ever he saw the same Stewart River, winter upon winter, breasted with ice, and spring upon spring bursting that ice asunder and running free. And he saw also into an illimitable future, when the last generations of men were gone from off the face of Alaska, when he, too, would be gone, and he saw, ever remaining, that river, freezing and fresheting, and running on and on.

Life was a liar and a cheat. It fooled all creatures. It had fooled him, Burning Daylight, one of its chiefest and most joyous exponents. He was nothing--a mere bunch of flesh and nerves and sensitiveness that crawled in the muck for gold, that dreamed and aspired and gambled, and that passed and was gone. Only the dead things remained, the things that were not flesh and nerves and sensitiveness, the sand and muck and gravel, the stretching flats, the mountains, the river itself, freezing

and breaking, year by year, down all the years. When all was said and done, it was a scurvy game. The dice were loaded. Those that died did not win, and all died. Who won? Not even Life, the stool-pigeon, the arch-capper for the game--Life, the ever flourishing graveyard, the everlasting funeral procession.

He drifted back to the immediate present for a moment and noted that the river still ran wide open, and that a moose-bird, perched on the bow of the boat, was surveying him impudently. Then he drifted dreamily back to his meditations.

There was no escaping the end of the game. He was doomed surely to be out of it all. And what of it? He pondered that question again and again.

Conventional religion had passed Daylight by. He had lived a sort of religion in his square dealing and right playing with other men, and he had not indulged in vain metaphysics about future life. Death ended all. He had always believed that, and been unafraid. And at this moment, the boat fifteen feet above the water and immovable, himself fainting with weakness and without a particle of strength left in him, he still believed that death ended all, and he was still unafraid. His views were too simply and solidly based to be overthrown by the first squirm, or the last, of death-fearing life.

He had seen men and animals die, and into the field of his vision, by

scores, came such deaths. He saw them over again, just as he had seen them at the time, and they did not shake him.

What of it? They were dead, and dead long since. They weren't bothering about it. They weren't lying on their bellies across a boat and waiting to die. Death was easy--easier than he had ever imagined; and, now that it was near, the thought of it made him glad.

A new vision came to him. He saw the feverish city of his dream--the gold metropolis of the North, perched above the Yukon on a high earth-bank and far-spreading across the flat. He saw the river steamers tied to the bank and lined against it three deep; he saw the sawmills working and the long dog-teams, with double sleds behind, freighting supplies to the diggings. And he saw, further, the gambling-houses, banks, stock-exchanges, and all the gear and chips and markers, the chances and opportunities, of a vastly bigger gambling game than any he had ever seen. It was sure hell, he thought, with the hunch a-working and that big strike coming, to be out of it all. Life thrilled and stirred at the thought and once more began uttering his ancient lies.

Daylight rolled over and off the boat, leaning against it as he sat on the ice. He wanted to be in on that strike. And why shouldn't he? Somewhere in all those wasted muscles of his was enough strength, if he could gather it all at once, to up-end the boat and launch it. Quite irrelevantly the idea suggested itself of buying a share in the

Klondike town site from Harper and Joe Ladue. They would surely sell a third interest cheap. Then, if the strike came on the Stewart, he would be well in on it with the Elam Harnish town site; if on the Klondike, he would not be quite out of it.

In the meantime, he would gather strength. He stretched out on the ice full length, face downward, and for half an hour he lay and rested. Then he arose, shook the flashing blindness from his eyes, and took hold of the boat. He knew his condition accurately. If the first effort failed, the following efforts were doomed to fail. He must pull all his rallied strength into the one effort, and so thoroughly must he put all of it in that there would be none left for other attempts.

He lifted, and he lifted with the soul of him as well as with the body, consuming himself, body and spirit, in the effort. The boat rose. He thought he was going to faint, but he continued to lift. He felt the boat give, as it started on its downward slide. With the last shred of his strength he precipitated himself into it, landing in a sick heap on Elijah's legs. He was beyond attempting to rise, and as he lay he heard and felt the boat take the water. By watching the tree-tops he knew it was whirling. A smashing shock and flying fragments of ice told him that it had struck the bank. A dozen times it whirled and struck, and then it floated easily and free.

Daylight came to, and decided he had been asleep. The sun denoted that several hours had passed. It was early afternoon. He dragged himself

into the stern and sat up. The boat was in the middle of the stream. The wooded banks, with their base-lines of flashing ice, were slipping by. Near him floated a huge, uprooted pine. A freak of the current brought the boat against it. Crawling forward, he fastened the painter to a root.

The tree, deeper in the water, was travelling faster, and the painter tautened as the boat took the tow. Then, with a last giddy look around, wherein he saw the banks tilting and swaying and the sun swinging in pendulum-sweep across the sky, Daylight wrapped himself in his rabbit-skin robe, lay down in the bottom, and fell asleep.

When he awoke, it was dark night. He was lying on his back, and he could see the stars shining. A subdued murmur of swollen waters could be heard. A sharp jerk informed him that the boat, swerving slack into the painter, had been straightened out by the swifter-moving pine tree. A piece of stray drift-ice thumped against the boat and grated along its side. Well, the following jam hadn't caught him yet, was his thought, as he closed his eyes and slept again.

It was bright day when next he opened his eyes. The sun showed it to be midday. A glance around at the far-away banks, and he knew that he was on the mighty Yukon. Sixty Mile could not be far away. He was abominably weak. His movements were slow, fumbling, and inaccurate, accompanied by panting and head-swimming, as he dragged himself into a sitting-up position in the stern, his rifle beside him. He looked a

long time at Elijah, but could not see whether he breathed or not, and he was too immeasurably far away to make an investigation.

He fell to dreaming and meditating again, dreams and thoughts being often broken by sketches of blankness, wherein he neither slept, nor was unconscious, nor was aware of anything. It seemed to him more like cogs slipping in his brain. And in this intermittent way he reviewed the situation. He was still alive, and most likely would be saved, but how came it that he was not lying dead across the boat on top the ice-rim? Then he recollected the great final effort he had made. But why had he made it? he asked himself. It had not been fear of death. He had not been afraid, that was sure. Then he remembered the hunch and the big strike he believed was coming, and he knew that the spur had been his desire to sit in for a hand at that big game. And again why? What if he made his million? He would die, just the same as those that never won more than grub-stakes. Then again why? But the blank stretches in his thinking process began to come more frequently, and he surrendered to the delightful lassitude that was creeping over him.

He roused with a start. Something had whispered in him that he must awake. Abruptly he saw Sixty Mile, not a hundred feet away.

The current had brought him to the very door. But the same current was now sweeping him past and on into the down-river wilderness. No one was in sight. The place might have been deserted, save for the smoke

he saw rising from the kitchen chimney. He tried to call, but found he had no voice left. An unearthly guttural hiss alternately rattled and wheezed in his throat. He fumbled for the rifle, got it to his shoulder, and pulled the trigger. The recoil of the discharge tore through his frame, racking it with a thousand agonies. The rifle had fallen across his knees, and an attempt to lift it to his shoulder failed. He knew he must be quick, and felt that he was fainting, so he pulled the trigger of the gun where it lay. This time it kicked off and overboard. But just before darkness rushed over him, he saw the kitchen door open, and a woman look out of the big log house that was dancing a monstrous jig among the trees.

CHAPTER IX

Ten days later, Harper and Joe Ladue arrived at Sixty Mile, and Daylight, still a trifle weak, but strong enough to obey the hunch that had come to him, traded a third interest in his Stewart town site for a third interest in theirs on the Klondike.

They had faith in the Upper Country, and Harper left down-stream, with a raft-load of supplies, to start a small post at the mouth of the Klondike.

"Why don't you tackle Indian River, Daylight?" Harper advised, at parting. "There's whole slathers of creeks and draws draining in up there, and somewhere gold just crying to be found. That's my hunch. There's a big strike coming, and Indian River ain't going to be a million miles away."

"And the place is swarming with moose," Joe Ladue added. "Bob Henderson's up there somewhere, been there three years now, swearing something big is going to happen, living off'n straight moose and prospecting around like a crazy man."

Daylight decided to go Indian River a flutter, as he expressed it; but Elijah could not be persuaded into accompanying him. Elijah's soul had been seared by famine, and he was obsessed by fear of repeating the experience.

"I jest can't bear to separate from grub," he explained. "I know it's downright foolishness, but I jest can't help it. It's all I can do to tear myself away from the table when I know I'm full to bustin' and ain't got storage for another bite. I'm going back to Circle to camp by a cache until I get cured."

Daylight lingered a few days longer, gathering strength and arranging his meagre outfit. He planned to go in light, carrying a pack of seventy-five pounds and making his five dogs pack as well, Indian fashion, loading them with thirty pounds each. Depending on the report of Ladue, he intended to follow Bob Henderson's example and live practically on straight meat. When Jack Kearns' scow, laden with the sawmill from Lake Linderman, tied up at Sixty Mile, Daylight bundled his outfit and dogs on board, turned his town-site application over to Elijah to be filed, and the same day was landed at the mouth of Indian River.

Forty miles up the river, at what had been described to him as Quartz Creek, he came upon signs of Bob Henderson's work, and also at Australia Creek, thirty miles farther on. The weeks came and went, but Daylight never encountered the other man. However, he found moose plentiful, and he and his dogs prospered on the meat diet. He found "pay" that was no more than "wages" on a dozen surface bars, and from the generous spread of flour gold in the muck and gravel of a score of creeks, he was more confident than ever that coarse gold in quantity

was waiting to be unearthed. Often he turned his eyes to the northward ridge of hills, and pondered if the gold came from them. In the end, he ascended Dominion Creek to its head, crossed the divide, and came down on the tributary to the Klondike that was later to be called Hunker Creek. While on the divide, had he kept the big dome on his right, he would have come down on the Gold Bottom, so named by Bob Henderson, whom he would have found at work on it, taking out the first pay-gold ever panned on the Klondike. Instead, Daylight continued down Hunker to the Klondike, and on to the summer fishing camp of the Indians on the Yukon.

Here for a day he camped with Carmack, a squaw-man, and his Indian brother-in-law, Skookum Jim, bought a boat, and, with his dogs on board, drifted down the Yukon to Forty Mile. August was drawing to a close, the days were growing shorter, and winter was coming on. Still with unbounded faith in his hunch that a strike was coming in the Upper Country, his plan was to get together a party of four or five, and, if that was impossible, at least a partner, and to pole back up the river before the freeze-up to do winter prospecting. But the men of Forty Mile were without faith. The diggings to the westward were good enough for them.

Then it was that Carmack, his brother-in-law, Skookum Jim, and Cultus Charlie, another Indian, arrived in a canoe at Forty Mile, went straight to the gold commissioner, and recorded three claims and a discovery claim on Bonanza Creek. After that, in the Sourdough Saloon,

that night, they exhibited coarse gold to the sceptical crowd. Men grinned and shook their heads. They had seen the motions of a gold strike gone through before. This was too patently a scheme of Harper's and Joe Ladue's, trying to entice prospecting in the vicinity of their town site and trading post. And who was Carmack? A squaw-man. And who ever heard of a squaw-man striking anything? And what was Bonanza Creek? Merely a moose pasture, entering the Klondike just above its mouth, and known to old-timers as Rabbit Creek. Now if Daylight or Bob Henderson had recorded claims and shown coarse gold, they'd known there was something in it. But Carmack, the squaw-man! And Skookum Jim! And Cultus Charlie! No, no; that was asking too much.

Daylight, too, was sceptical, and this despite his faith in the Upper Country. Had he not, only a few days before, seen Carmack loafing with his Indians and with never a thought of prospecting?

But at eleven that night, sitting on the edge of his bunk and unlacing his moccasins, a thought came to him. He put on his coat and hat and went back to the Sourdough. Carmack was still there, flashing his coarse gold in the eyes of an unbelieving generation. Daylight ranged alongside of him and emptied Carmack's sack into a blower. This he studied for a long time. Then, from his own sack, into another blower, he emptied several ounces of Circle City and Forty Mile gold. Again, for a long time, he studied and compared. Finally, he pocketed his own gold, returned Carmack's, and held up his hand for silence.

"Boys, I want to tell you-all something," he said. "She's sure come--the up-river strike. And I tell you-all, clear and forcible, this is it. There ain't never been gold like that in a blower in this country before. It's new gold. It's got more silver in it. You-all can see it by the color. Carmack's sure made a strike. Who-all's got faith to come along with me?"

There were no volunteers. Instead, laughter and jeers went up.

"Mebbe you got a town site up there," some one suggested.

"I sure have," was the retort, "and a third interest in Harper and Ladue's. And I can see my corner lots selling out for more than your hen-scratching ever turned up on Birch Creek."

"That's all right, Daylight," one Curly Parson interposed soothingly. "You've got a reputation, and we know you're dead sure on the square. But you're as likely as any to be mistook on a flimflam game, such as these loafers is putting up. I ask you straight: When did Carmack do this here prospecting? You said yourself he was lying in camp, fishing salmon along with his Siwash relations, and that was only the other day."

"And Daylight told the truth," Carmack interrupted excitedly. "And I'm telling the truth, the gospel truth. I wasn't prospecting. Hadn't no idea of it. But when Daylight pulls out, the very same day, who drifts

in, down river, on a raft-load of supplies, but Bob Henderson. He'd come out to Sixty Mile, planning to go back up Indian River and portage the grub across the divide between Quartz Creek and Gold Bottom--"

"Where in hell's Gold Bottom?" Curly Parsons demanded.

"Over beyond Bonanza that was Rabbit Creek," the squaw-man went on. "It's a draw of a big creek that runs into the Klondike. That's the way I went up, but I come back by crossing the divide, keeping along the crest several miles, and dropping down into Bonanza. 'Come along with me, Carmack, and get staked,' says Bob Henderson to me. 'I've hit it this time, on Gold Bottom. I've took out forty-five ounces already.' And I went along, Skookum Jim and Cultus Charlie, too. And we all staked on Gold Bottom. I come back by Bonanza on the chance of finding a moose. Along down Bonanza we stopped and cooked grub. I went to sleep, and what does Skookum Jim do but try his hand at prospecting. He'd been watching Henderson, you see. He goes right slap up to the foot of a birch tree, first pan, fills it with dirt, and washes out more'n a dollar coarse gold. Then he wakes me up, and I goes at it. I got two and a half the first lick. Then I named the creek 'Bonanza,' staked Discovery, and we come here and recorded."

He looked about him anxiously for signs of belief, but found himself in a circle of incredulous faces--all save Daylight, who had studied his countenance while he told his story.

"How much is Harper and Ladue givin' you for manufacturing a stampede?" some one asked.

"They don't know nothing about it," Carmack answered. "I tell you it's the God Almighty's truth. I washed out three ounces in an hour."

"And there's the gold," Daylight said. "I tell you-all boys they ain't never been gold like that in the blower before. Look at the color of it."

"A trifle darker," Curly Parson said. "Most likely Carmack's been carrying a couple of silver dollars along in the same sack. And what's more, if there's anything in it, why ain't Bob Henderson smoking along to record?"

"He's up on Gold Bottom," Carmack explained. "We made the strike coming back."

A burst of laughter was his reward.

"Who-all'll go pardners with me and pull out in a poling-boat to-morrow for this here Bonanza?" Daylight asked.

No one volunteered.

"Then who-all'll take a job from me, cash wages in advance, to pole up

a thousand pounds of grub?"

Curly Parsons and another, Pat Monahan, accepted, and, with his customary speed, Daylight paid them their wages in advance and arranged the purchase of the supplies, though he emptied his sack in doing so. He was leaving the Sourdough, when he suddenly turned back to the bar from the door.

"Got another hunch?" was the query.

"I sure have," he answered. "Flour's sure going to be worth what a man will pay for it this winter up on the Klondike. Who'll lend me some money?"

On the instant a score of the men who had declined to accompany him on the wild-goose chase were crowding about him with proffered gold-sacks.

"How much flour do you want?" asked the Alaska Commercial Company's storekeeper.

"About two ton."

The proffered gold-sacks were not withdrawn, though their owners were guilty of an outrageous burst of merriment.

"What are you going to do with two tons?" the store-keeper demanded.

"Son," Daylight made reply, "you-all ain't been in this country long enough to know all its curves. I'm going to start a sauerkraut factory and combined dandruff remedy."

He borrowed money right and left, engaging and paying six other men to bring up the flour in half as many more poling-boats. Again his sack was empty, and he was heavily in debt.

Curly Parsons bowed his head on the bar with a gesture of despair.

"What gets me," he moaned, "is what you're going to do with it all."

"I'll tell you-all in simple A, B, C and one, two, three." Daylight held up one finger and began checking off. "Hunch number one: a big strike coming in Upper Country. Hunch number two: Carmack's made it. Hunch number three: ain't no hunch at all. It's a cinch. If one and two is right, then flour just has to go sky-high. If I'm riding hunches one and two, I just got to ride this cinch, which is number three. If I'm right, flour'll balance gold on the scales this winter. I tell you-all boys, when you-all got a hunch, play it for all it's worth. What's luck good for, if you-all ain't to ride it? And when you-all ride it, ride like hell. I've been years in this country, just waiting for the right hunch to come along. And here she is. Well, I'm going to play her, that's all. Good night, you-all; good night."

CHAPTER X

Still men were without faith in the strike. When Daylight, with his heavy outfit of flour, arrived at the mouth of the Klondike, he found the big flat as desolate and tenantless as ever. Down close by the river, Chief Isaac and his Indians were camped beside the frames on which they were drying salmon. Several old-timers were also in camp there. Having finished their summer work on Ten Mile Creek, they had come down the Yukon, bound for Circle City. But at Sixty Mile they had learned of the strike, and stopped off to look over the ground. They had just returned to their boat when Daylight landed his flour, and their report was pessimistic.

"Damned moose-pasture," quoth one, Long Jim Harney, pausing to blow into his tin mug of tea. "Don't you have nothin' to do with it, Daylight. It's a blamed rotten sell. They're just going through the motions of a strike. Harper and Ladue's behind it, and Carmack's the stool-pigeon. Whoever heard of mining a moose-pasture half a mile between rim-rock and God alone knows how far to bed-rock!"

Daylight nodded sympathetically, and considered for a space.

"Did you-all pan any?" he asked finally.

"Pan hell!" was the indignant answer. "Think I was born yesterday! Only a chechaquo'd fool around that pasture long enough to fill a pan

of dirt. You don't catch me at any such foolishness. One look was enough for me. We're pulling on in the morning for Circle City. I ain't never had faith in this Upper Country. Head-reaches of the Tanana is good enough for me from now on, and mark my words, when the big strike comes, she'll come down river. Johnny, here, staked a couple of miles below Discovery, but he don't know no better." Johnny looked shamefaced.

"I just did it for fun," he explained. "I'd give my chance in the creek for a pound of Star plug."

"I'll go you," Daylight said promptly. "But don't you-all come squealing if I take twenty or thirty thousand out of it."

Johnny grinned cheerfully.

"Gimme the tobacco," he said.

"Wish I'd staked alongside," Long Jim murmured plaintively.

"It ain't too late," Daylight replied.

"But it's a twenty-mile walk there and back."

"I'll stake it for you to-morrow when I go up," Daylight offered.

"Then you do the same as Johnny. Get the fees from Tim Logan. He's tending bar in the Sourdough, and he'll lend it to me. Then fill in your own name, transfer to me, and turn the papers over to Tim."

"Me, too," chimed in the third old-timer.

And for three pounds of Star plug chewing tobacco, Daylight bought outright three five-hundred-foot claims on Bonanza. He could still stake another claim in his own name, the others being merely transfers.

"Must say you're almighty brash with your chewin' tobacco," Long Jim grinned. "Got a factory somewheres?"

"Nope, but I got a hunch," was the retort, "and I tell you-all it's cheaper than dirt to ride her at the rate of three plugs for three claims."

But an hour later, at his own camp, Joe Ladue strode in, fresh from Bonanza Creek. At first, non-committal over Carmack's strike, then, later, dubious, he finally offered Daylight a hundred dollars for his share in the town site.

"Cash?" Daylight queried.

"Sure. There she is."

So saying, Ladue pulled out his gold-sack. Daylight hefted it absent-mindedly, and, still absent-mindedly, untied the strings and ran some of the gold-dust out on his palm. It showed darker than any dust he had ever seen, with the exception of Carmack's. He ran the gold back tied the mouth of the sack, and returned it to Ladue.

"I guess you-all need it more'n I do," was Daylight's comment.

"Nope; got plenty more," the other assured him.

"Where that come from?"

Daylight was all innocence as he asked the question, and Ladue received the question as stolidly as an Indian. Yet for a swift instant they looked into each other's eyes, and in that instant an intangible something seemed to flash out from all the body and spirit of Joe Ladue. And it seemed to Daylight that he had caught this flash, sensed a secret something in the knowledge and plans behind the other's eyes.

"You-all know the creek better'n me," Daylight went on. "And if my share in the town site's worth a hundred to you-all with what you-all know, it's worth a hundred to me whether I know it or not."

"I'll give you three hundred," Ladue offered desperately.

"Still the same reasoning. No matter what I don't know, it's worth to

me whatever you-all are willing to pay for it."

Then it was that Joe Ladue shamelessly gave over. He led Daylight away from the camp and men and told him things in confidence.

"She's sure there," he said in conclusion. "I didn't sluice it, or cradle it. I panned it, all in that sack, yesterday, on the rim-rock. I tell you, you can shake it out of the grassroots. And what's on bed-rock down in the bottom of the creek they ain't no way of tellin'. But she's big, I tell you, big. Keep it quiet, and locate all you can. It's in spots, but I wouldn't be none surprised if some of them claims yielded as high as fifty thousand. The only trouble is that it's spotted."

* * *

A month passed by, and Bonanza Creek remained quiet. A sprinkling of men had staked; but most of them, after staking, had gone on down to Forty Mile and Circle City. The few that possessed sufficient faith to remain were busy building log cabins against the coming of winter. Carmack and his Indian relatives were occupied in building a sluice box and getting a head of water. The work was slow, for they had to saw their lumber by hand from the standing forest. But farther down Bonanza were four men who had drifted in from up river, Dan McGilvary, Dave McKay, Dave Edwards, and Harry Waugh. They were a quiet party, neither asking nor giving confidences, and they herded by themselves.

But Daylight, who had panned the spotted rim of Carmack's claim and shaken coarse gold from the grass-roots, and who had panned the rim at a hundred other places up and down the length of the creek and found nothing, was curious to know what lay on bed-rock. He had noted the four quiet men sinking a shaft close by the stream, and he had heard their whip-saw going as they made lumber for the sluice boxes. He did not wait for an invitation, but he was present the first day they sluiced. And at the end of five hours' shovelling for one man, he saw them take out thirteen ounces and a half of gold.

It was coarse gold, running from pinheads to a twelve-dollar nugget, and it had come from off bed-rock. The first fall snow was flying that day, and the Arctic winter was closing down; but Daylight had no eyes for the bleak-gray sadness of the dying, short-lived summer. He saw his vision coming true, and on the big flat was upreared anew his golden city of the snows. Gold had been found on bed-rock. That was the big thing. Carmack's strike was assured. Daylight staked a claim in his own name adjoining the three he had purchased with his plug tobacco. This gave him a block of property two thousand feet long and extending in width from rim-rock to rim-rock.

Returning that night to his camp at the mouth of Klondike, he found in it Kama, the Indian he had left at Dyea. Kama was travelling by canoe, bringing in the last mail of the year. In his possession was some two hundred dollars in gold-dust, which Daylight immediately borrowed. In return, he arranged to stake a claim for him, which he was to record

when he passed through Forty Mile. When Kama departed next morning, he carried a number of letters for Daylight, addressed to all the old-timers down river, in which they were urged to come up immediately and stake.

Also Kama carried letters of similar import, given him by the other men on Bonanza.

"It will sure be the gosh-dangdest stampede that ever was," Daylight chuckled, as he tried to vision the excited populations of Forty Mile and Circle City tumbling into poling-boats and racing the hundreds of miles up the Yukon; for he knew that his word would be unquestioningly accepted.

With the arrival of the first stampeders, Bonanza Creek woke up, and thereupon began a long-distance race between unveracity and truth, wherein, lie no matter how fast, men were continually overtaken and passed by truth. When men who doubted Carmack's report of two and a half to the pan, themselves panned two and a half, they lied and said that they were getting an ounce. And long ere the lie was fairly on its way, they were getting not one ounce but five ounces. This they claimed was ten ounces; but when they filled a pan of dirt to prove the lie, they washed out twelve ounces. And so it went. They continued valiantly to lie, but the truth continued to outrun them.

One day in December Daylight filled a pan from bed rock on his own

claim and carried it into his cabin. Here a fire burned and enabled him to keep water unfrozen in a canvas tank. He squatted over the tank and began to wash. Earth and gravel seemed to fill the pan. As he imparted to it a circular movement, the lighter, coarser particles washed out over the edge. At times he combed the surface with his fingers, raking out handfuls of gravel. The contents of the pan diminished. As it drew near to the bottom, for the purpose of fleeting and tentative examination, he gave the pan a sudden sloshing movement, emptying it of water. And the whole bottom showed as if covered with butter. Thus the yellow gold flashed up as the muddy water was flirted away. It was gold--gold-dust, coarse gold, nuggets, large nuggets. He was all alone. He set the pan down for a moment and thought long thoughts. Then he finished the washing, and weighed the result in his scales. At the rate of sixteen dollars to the ounce, the pan had contained seven hundred and odd dollars. It was beyond anything that even he had dreamed. His fondest anticipation's had gone no farther than twenty or thirty thousand dollars to a claim; but here were claims worth half a million each at the least, even if they were spotted.

He did not go back to work in the shaft that day, nor the next, nor the next. Instead, capped and mittened, a light stampeding outfit, including his rabbit skin robe, strapped on his back, he was out and away on a many-days' tramp over creeks and divides, inspecting the whole neighboring territory. On each creek he was entitled to locate one claim, but he was chary in thus surrendering up his chances. On Hunker Creek only did he stake a claim. Bonanza Creek he found staked

from mouth to source, while every little draw and pup and gulch that drained into it was like-wise staked. Little faith was had in these side-streams. They had been staked by the hundreds of men who had failed to get in on Bonanza. The most popular of these creeks was Adams. The one least fancied was Eldorado, which flowed into Bonanza, just above Karmack's Discovery claim. Even Daylight disliked the looks of Eldorado; but, still riding his hunch, he bought a half share in one claim on it for half a sack of flour. A month later he paid eight hundred dollars for the adjoining claim. Three months later, enlarging this block of property, he paid forty thousand for a third claim; and, though it was concealed in the future, he was destined, not long after, to pay one hundred and fifty thousand for a fourth claim on the creek that had been the least liked of all the creeks.

In the meantime, and from the day he washed seven hundred dollars from a single pan and squatted over it and thought a long thought, he never again touched hand to pick and shovel. As he said to Joe Ladue the night of that wonderful washing:--

"Joe, I ain't never going to work hard again. Here's where I begin to use my brains. I'm going to farm gold. Gold will grow gold if you-all have the savvee and can get hold of some for seed. When I seen them seven hundred dollars in the bottom of the pan, I knew I had the seed at last."

"Where are you going to plant it?" Joe Ladue had asked.

And Daylight, with a wave of his hand, definitely indicated the whole landscape and the creeks that lay beyond the divides.

"There she is," he said, "and you-all just watch my smoke. There's millions here for the man who can see them. And I seen all them millions this afternoon when them seven hundred dollars peeped up at me from the bottom of the pan and chirruped, 'Well, if here ain't Burning Daylight come at last.'"

CHAPTER XI

The hero of the Yukon in the younger days before the Carmack strike, Burning Daylight now became the hero of the strike. The story of his hunch and how he rode it was told up and down the land. Certainly he had ridden it far and away beyond the boldest, for no five of the luckiest held the value in claims that he held. And, furthermore, he was still riding the hunch, and with no diminution of daring. The wise ones shook their heads and prophesied that he would lose every ounce he had won. He was speculating, they contended, as if the whole country was made of gold, and no man could win who played a placer strike in that fashion.

On the other hand, his holdings were reckoned as worth millions, and there were men so sanguine that they held the man a fool who coppered[6] any bet Daylight laid. Behind his magnificent free-handedness and careless disregard for money were hard, practical judgment, imagination and vision, and the daring of the big gambler. He foresaw what with his own eyes he had never seen, and he played to win much or lose all.

"There's too much gold here in Bonanza to be just a pocket," he argued. "It's sure come from a mother-lode somewhere, and other creeks will show up. You-all keep your eyes on Indian River. The creeks that drain that side the Klondike watershed are just as likely to have gold as the creeks that drain this side."

And he backed this opinion to the extent of grub-staking half a dozen parties of prospectors across the big divide into the Indian River region. Other men, themselves failing to stake on lucky creeks, he put to work on his Bonanza claims. And he paid them well--sixteen dollars a day for an eight-hour shift, and he ran three shifts. He had grub to start them on, and when, on the last water, the Bella arrived loaded with provisions, he traded a warehouse site to Jack Kearns for a supply of grub that lasted all his men through the winter of 1896. And that winter, when famine pinched, and flour sold for two dollars a pound, he kept three shifts of men at work on all four of the Bonanza claims. Other mine-owners paid fifteen dollars a day to their men; but he had been the first to put men to work, and from the first he paid them a full ounce a day. One result was that his were picked men, and they more than earned their higher pay.

One of his wildest plays took place in the early winter after the freeze-up. Hundreds of stampeders, after staking on other creeks than Bonanza, had gone on disgruntled down river to Forty Mile and Circle City. Daylight mortgaged one of his Bonanza dumps with the Alaska Commercial Company, and tucked a letter of credit into his pouch. Then he harnessed his dogs and went down on the ice at a pace that only he could travel. One Indian down, another Indian back, and four teams of dogs was his record. And at Forty Mile and Circle City he bought claims by the score. Many of these were to prove utterly worthless, but some few of them were to show up more astoundingly than any on Bonanza.

He bought right and left, paying as low as fifty dollars and as high as five thousand. This highest one he bought in the Tivoli Saloon. It was an upper claim on Eldorado, and when he agreed to the price, Jacob Wilkins, an old-timer just returned from a look at the moose-pasture, got up and left the room, saying:--

"Daylight, I've known you seven year, and you've always seemed sensible till now. And now you're just letting them rob you right and left. That's what it is--robbery. Five thousand for a claim on that damned moose-pasture is bunco. I just can't stay in the room and see you buncoed that way."

"I tell you-all," Daylight answered, "Wilkins, Carmack's strike's so big that we-all can't see it all. It's a lottery. Every claim I buy is a ticket. And there's sure going to be some capital prizes."

Jacob Wilkins, standing in the open door, sniffed incredulously.

"Now supposing, Wilkins," Daylight went on, "supposing you-all knew it was going to rain soup. What'd you-all do? Buy spoons, of course. Well, I'm sure buying spoons. She's going to rain soup up there on the Klondike, and them that has forks won't be catching none of it."

But Wilkins here slammed the door behind him, and Daylight broke off to finish the purchase of the claim.

Back in Dawson, though he remained true to his word and never touched hand to pick and shovel, he worked as hard as ever in his life. He had a thousand irons in the fire, and they kept him busy. Representation work was expensive, and he was compelled to travel often over the various creeks in order to decide which claims should lapse and which should be retained. A quartz miner himself in his early youth, before coming to Alaska, he dreamed of finding the mother-lode. A placer camp he knew was ephemeral, while a quartz camp abided, and he kept a score of men in the quest for months. The mother-lode was never found, and, years afterward, he estimated that the search for it had cost him fifty thousand dollars.

But he was playing big. Heavy as were his expenses, he won more heavily. He took lays, bought half shares, shared with the men he grub-staked, and made personal locations. Day and night his dogs were ready, and he owned the fastest teams; so that when a stampede to a new discovery was on, it was Burning Daylight to the fore through the longest, coldest nights till he blazed his stakes next to Discovery.
In one way or another (to say nothing of the many worthless creeks) he came into possession of properties on the good creeks, such as Sulphur, Dominion, Excelsis, Siwash, Cristo, Alhambra, and Doolittle. The thousands he poured out flowed back in tens of thousands. Forty Mile men told the story of his two tons of flour, and made calculations of what it had returned him that ranged from half a million to a million. One thing was known beyond all doubt, namely, that the half share in the first Eldorado claim, bought by him for a half sack of flour, was

worth five hundred thousand. On the other hand, it was told that when Freda, the dancer, arrived from over the passes in a Peterborough canoe in the midst of a drive of mush-ice on the Yukon, and when she offered a thousand dollars for ten sacks and could find no sellers, he sent the flour to her as a present without ever seeing her. In the same way ten sacks were sent to the lone Catholic priest who was starting the first hospital.

His generosity was lavish. Others called it insane. At a time when, riding his hunch, he was getting half a million for half a sack of flour, it was nothing less than insanity to give twenty whole sacks to a dancing-girl and a priest. But it was his way. Money was only a marker. It was the game that counted with him. The possession of millions made little change in him, except that he played the game more passionately. Temperate as he had always been, save on rare occasions, now that he had the wherewithal for unlimited drinks and had daily access to them, he drank even less. The most radical change lay in that, except when on trail, he no longer did his own cooking. A broken-down miner lived in his log cabin with him and now cooked for him. But it was the same food: bacon, beans, flour, prunes, dried fruits, and rice. He still dressed as formerly: overalls, German socks, moccasins, flannel shirt, fur cap, and blanket coat. He did not take up with cigars, which cost, the cheapest, from half a dollar to a dollar each. The same Bull Durham and brown-paper cigarette, hand-rolled, contented him. It was true that he kept more dogs, and paid enormous prices for them. They were not a luxury, but a matter of

business. He needed speed in his travelling and stampeding. And by the same token, he hired a cook. He was too busy to cook for himself, that was all. It was poor business, playing for millions, to spend time building fires and boiling water.

Dawson grew rapidly that winter of 1896. Money poured in on Daylight from the sale of town lots. He promptly invested it where it would gather more. In fact, he played the dangerous game of pyramiding, and no more perilous pyramiding than in a placer camp could be imagined. But he played with his eyes wide open.

"You-all just wait till the news of this strike reaches the Outside," he told his old-timer cronies in the Moosehorn Saloon. "The news won't get out till next spring. Then there's going to be three rushes. A summer rush of men coming in light; a fall rush of men with outfits; and a spring rush, the next year after that, of fifty thousand. You-all won't be able to see the landscape for chechaquos. Well, there's the summer and fall rush of 1897 to commence with. What are you-all going to do about it?"

"What are you going to do about it?" a friend demanded.

"Nothing," he answered. "I've sure already done it. I've got a dozen gangs strung out up the Yukon getting out logs. You-all'll see their rafts coming down after the river breaks. Cabins! They sure will be worth what a man can pay for them next fall. Lumber! It will sure go to

top-notch. I've got two sawmills freighting in over the passes. They'll come down as soon as the lakes open up. And if you-all are thinking of needing lumber, I'll make you-all contracts right now--three hundred dollars a thousand, undressed."

Corner lots in desirable locations sold that winter for from ten to thirty thousand dollars. Daylight sent word out over the trails and passes for the newcomers to bring down log-rafts, and, as a result, the summer of 1897 saw his sawmills working day and night, on three shifts, and still he had logs left over with which to build cabins. These cabins, land included, sold at from one to several thousand dollars. Two-story log buildings, in the business part of town, brought him from forty to fifty thousand dollars apiece. These fresh accretions of capital were immediately invested in other ventures. He turned gold over and over, until everything that he touched seemed to turn to gold.

But that first wild winter of Carmack's strike taught Daylight many things. Despite the prodigality of his nature, he had poise. He watched the lavish waste of the mushroom millionaires, and failed quite to understand it. According to his nature and outlook, it was all very well to toss an ante away in a night's frolic. That was what he had done the night of the poker-game in Circle City when he lost fifty thousand--all that he possessed. But he had looked on that fifty thousand as a mere ante. When it came to millions, it was different. Such a fortune was a stake, and was not to be sown on bar-room floors, literally sown, flung broadcast out of the moosehide sacks by drunken

millionaires who had lost all sense of proportion. There was McMann, who ran up a single bar-room bill of thirty-eight thousand dollars; and Jimmie the Rough, who spent one hundred thousand a month for four months in riotous living, and then fell down drunk in the snow one March night and was frozen to death; and Swiftwater Bill, who, after spending three valuable claims in an extravagance of debauchery, borrowed three thousand dollars with which to leave the country, and who, out of this sum, because the lady-love that had jilted him liked eggs, cornered the one hundred and ten dozen eggs on the Dawson market, paying twenty-four dollars a dozen for them and promptly feeding them to the wolf-dogs.

Champagne sold at from forty to fifty dollars a quart, and canned oyster stew at fifteen dollars. Daylight indulged in no such luxuries. He did not mind treating a bar-room of men to whiskey at fifty cents a drink, but there was somewhere in his own extravagant nature a sense of fitness and arithmetic that revolted against paying fifteen dollars for the contents of an oyster can. On the other hand, he possibly spent more money in relieving hard-luck cases than did the wildest of the new millionaires on insane debauchery. Father Judge, of the hospital, could have told of far more important donations than that first ten sacks of flour. And old-timers who came to Daylight invariably went away relieved according to their need. But fifty dollars for a quart of fizzy champagne! That was appalling.

And yet he still, on occasion, made one of his old-time hell-roaring

nights. But he did so for different reasons. First, it was expected of him because it had been his way in the old days. And second, he could afford it. But he no longer cared quite so much for that form of diversion. He had developed, in a new way, the taste for power. It had become a lust with him. By far the wealthiest miner in Alaska, he wanted to be still wealthier. It was a big game he was playing in, and he liked it better than any other game. In a way, the part he played was creative. He was doing something. And at no time, striking another chord of his nature, could he take the joy in a million-dollar Eldorado dump that was at all equivalent to the joy he took in watching his two sawmills working and the big down river log-rafts swinging into the bank in the big eddy just above Moosehide Mountain. Gold, even on the scales, was, after all, an abstraction. It represented things and the power to do. But the sawmills were the things themselves, concrete and tangible, and they were things that were a means to the doing of more things. They were dreams come true, hard and indubitable realizations of fairy gossamers.

With the summer rush from the Outside came special correspondents for the big newspapers and magazines, and one and all, using unlimited space, they wrote Daylight up; so that, so far as the world was concerned, Daylight loomed the largest figure in Alaska. Of course, after several months, the world became interested in the Spanish War, and forgot all about him; but in the Klondike itself Daylight still remained the most prominent figure. Passing along the streets of Dawson, all heads turned to follow him, and in the saloons chechaquos

watched him awesomely, scarcely taking their eyes from him as long as he remained in their range of vision. Not alone was he the richest man in the country, but he was Burning Daylight, the pioneer, the man who, almost in the midst of antiquity of that young land, had crossed the Chilcoot and drifted down the Yukon to meet those elder giants, Al Mayo and Jack McQuestion. He was the Burning Daylight of scores of wild adventures, the man who carried word to the ice-bound whaling fleet across the tundra wilderness to the Arctic Sea, who raced the mail from Circle to Salt Water and back again in sixty days, who saved the whole Tanana tribe from perishing in the winter of '91--in short, the man who smote the chechaquos' imaginations more violently than any other dozen men rolled into one.

He had the fatal facility for self-advertisement. Things he did, no matter how adventitious or spontaneous, struck the popular imagination as remarkable. And the latest thing he had done was always on men's lips, whether it was being first in the heartbreaking stampede to Danish Creek, in killing the record baldface grizzly over on Sulphur Creek, or in winning the single-paddle canoe race on the Queen's Birthday, after being forced to participate at the last moment by the failure of the sourdough representative to appear. Thus, one night in the Moosehorn, he locked horns with Jack Kearns in the long-promised return game of poker. The sky and eight o'clock in the morning were made the limits, and at the close of the game Daylight's winnings were two hundred and thirty thousand dollars. To Jack Kearns, already a several-times millionaire, this loss was not vital. But the whole

community was thrilled by the size of the stakes, and each one of the dozen correspondents in the field sent out a sensational article.

[6] To copper: a term in faro, meaning to play a card to lose.

CHAPTER XII

Despite his many sources of revenue, Daylight's pyramiding kept him pinched for cash throughout the first winter. The pay-gravel, thawed on bed-rock and hoisted to the surface, immediately froze again. Thus his dumps, containing several millions of gold, were inaccessible. Not until the returning sun thawed the dumps and melted the water to wash them was he able to handle the gold they contained. And then he found himself with a surplus of gold, deposited in the two newly organized banks; and he was promptly besieged by men and groups of men to enlist his capital in their enterprises.

But he elected to play his own game, and he entered combinations only when they were generally defensive or offensive. Thus, though he had paid the highest wages, he joined the Mine-owners' Association, engineered the fight, and effectually curbed the growing insubordination of the wage-earners. Times had changed. The old days were gone forever. This was a new era, and Daylight, the wealthy mine-owner, was loyal to his class affiliations. It was true, the old-timers who worked for him, in order to be saved from the club of the organized owners, were made foremen over the gang of chechaquos; but this, with Daylight, was a matter of heart, not head. In his heart he could not forget the old days, while with his head he played the economic game according to the latest and most practical methods.

But outside of such group-combinations of exploiters, he refused to

bind himself to any man's game. He was playing a great lone hand, and he needed all his money for his own backing. The newly founded stock-exchange interested him keenly. He had never before seen such an institution, but he was quick to see its virtues and to utilize it.
Most of all, it was gambling, and on many an occasion not necessary for the advancement of his own schemes, he, as he called it, went the stock-exchange a flutter, out of sheer wantonness and fun.

"It sure beats faro," was his comment one day, when, after keeping the Dawson speculators in a fever for a week by alternate bulling and bearing, he showed his hand and cleaned up what would have been a fortune to any other man.

Other men, having made their strike, had headed south for the States, taking a furlough from the grim Arctic battle. But, asked when he was going Outside, Daylight always laughed and said when he had finished playing his hand. He also added that a man was a fool to quit a game just when a winning hand had been dealt him.

It was held by the thousands of hero-worshipping chechaquos that Daylight was a man absolutely without fear. But Bettles and Dan MacDonald and other sourdoughs shook their heads and laughed as they mentioned women. And they were right. He had always been afraid of them from the time, himself a lad of seventeen, when Queen Anne, of Juneau, made open and ridiculous love to him. For that matter, he never had known women. Born in a mining-camp where they were rare and

mysterious, having no sisters, his mother dying while he was an infant, he had never been in contact with them. True, running away from Queen Anne, he had later encountered them on the Yukon and cultivated an acquaintance with them--the pioneer ones who crossed the passes on the trail of the men who had opened up the first diggings. But no lamb had ever walked with a wolf in greater fear and trembling than had he walked with them. It was a matter of masculine pride that he should walk with them, and he had done so in fair seeming; but women had remained to him a closed book, and he preferred a game of solo or seven-up any time.

And now, known as the King of the Klondike, carrying several other royal titles, such as Eldorado King, Bonanza King, the Lumber Baron, and the Prince of the Stampeders, not to omit the proudest appellation of all, namely, the Father of the Sourdoughs, he was more afraid of women than ever. As never before they held out their arms to him, and more women were flocking into the country day by day. It mattered not whether he sat at dinner in the gold commissioner's house, called for the drinks in a dancehall, or submitted to an interview from the woman representative of the New York Sun, one and all of them held out their arms.

There was one exception, and that was Freda, the girl that danced, and to whom he had given the flour. She was the only woman in whose company he felt at ease, for she alone never reached out her arms. And yet it was from her that he was destined to receive next to his

severest fright. It came about in the fall of 1897. He was returning from one of his dashes, this time to inspect Henderson, a creek that entered the Yukon just below the Stewart. Winter had come on with a rush, and he fought his way down the Yukon seventy miles in a frail Peterborough canoe in the midst of a run of mush-ice. Hugging the rim-ice that had already solidly formed, he shot across the ice-spewing mouth of the Klondike just in time to see a lone man dancing excitedly on the rim and pointing into the water. Next, he saw the fur-clad body of a woman, face under, sinking in the midst of the driving mush-ice. A lane opening in the swirl of the current, it was a matter of seconds to drive the canoe to the spot, reach to the shoulder in the water, and draw the woman gingerly to the canoe's side. It was Freda. And all might yet have been well with him, had she not, later, when brought back to consciousness, blazed at him with angry blue eyes and demanded: "Why did you? Oh, why did you?"

This worried him. In the nights that followed, instead of sinking immediately to sleep as was his wont, he lay awake, visioning her face and that blue blaze of wrath, and conning her words over and over. They rang with sincerity. The reproach was genuine. She had meant just what she said. And still he pondered.

The next time he encountered her she had turned away from him angrily and contemptuously. And yet again, she came to him to beg his pardon, and she dropped a hint of a man somewhere, sometime,--she said not how,--who had left her with no desire to live. Her speech was frank,

but incoherent, and all he gleaned from it was that the event, whatever it was, had happened years before. Also, he gleaned that she had loved the man.

That was the thing--love. It caused the trouble. It was more terrible than frost or famine. Women were all very well, in themselves good to look upon and likable; but along came this thing called love, and they were seared to the bone by it, made so irrational that one could never guess what they would do next.

This Freda-woman was a splendid creature, full-bodied, beautiful, and nobody's fool; but love had come along and soured her on the world, driving her to the Klondike and to suicide so compellingly that she was made to hate the man that saved her life.

Well, he had escaped love so far, just as he had escaped smallpox; yet there it was, as contagious as smallpox, and a whole lot worse in running its course. It made men and women do such fearful and unreasonable things. It was like delirium tremens, only worse. And if he, Daylight, caught it, he might have it as badly as any of them. It was lunacy, stark lunacy, and contagious on top of it all. A half dozen young fellows were crazy over Freda. They all wanted to marry her. Yet she, in turn, was crazy over that some other fellow on the other side of the world, and would have nothing to do with them.

But it was left to the Virgin to give him his final fright. She was

found one morning dead in her cabin. A shot through the head had done it, and she had left no message, no explanation. Then came the talk. Some wit, voicing public opinion, called it a case of too much Daylight. She had killed herself because of him. Everybody knew this, and said so. The correspondents wrote it up, and once more Burning Daylight, King of the Klondike, was sensationally featured in the Sunday supplements of the United States. The Virgin had straightened up, so the feature-stories ran, and correctly so. Never had she entered a Dawson City dance-hall. When she first arrived from Circle City, she had earned her living by washing clothes. Next, she had bought a sewing-machine and made men's drill parkas, fur caps, and moosehide mittens. Then she had gone as a clerk into the First Yukon Bank. All this, and more, was known and told, though one and all were agreed that Daylight, while the cause, had been the innocent cause of her untimely end.

And the worst of it was that Daylight knew it was true. Always would he remember that last night he had seen her. He had thought nothing of it at the time; but, looking back, he was haunted by every little thing that had happened. In the light of the tragic event, he could understand everything--her quietness, that calm certitude as if all vexing questions of living had been smoothed out and were gone, and that certain ethereal sweetness about all that she had said and done that had been almost maternal. He remembered the way she had looked at him, how she had laughed when he narrated Mickey Dolan's mistake in staking the fraction on Skookum Gulch. Her laughter had been lightly

joyous, while at the same time it had lacked its oldtime robustness. Not that she had been grave or subdued. On the contrary, she had been so patently content, so filled with peace.

She had fooled him, fool that he was. He had even thought that night that her feeling for him had passed, and he had taken delight in the thought, and caught visions of the satisfying future friendship that would be theirs with this perturbing love out of the way.

And then, when he stood at the door, cap in hand, and said good night. It had struck him at the time as a funny and embarrassing thing, her bending over his hand and kissing it. He had felt like a fool, but he shivered now when he looked back on it and felt again the touch of her lips on his hand. She was saying good-by, an eternal good-by, and he had never guessed. At that very moment, and for all the moments of the evening, coolly and deliberately, as he well knew her way, she had been resolved to die. If he had only known it! Untouched by the contagious malady himself, nevertheless he would have married her if he had had the slightest inkling of what she contemplated. And yet he knew, furthermore, that hers was a certain stiff-kneed pride that would not have permitted her to accept marriage as an act of philanthropy. There had really been no saving her, after all. The love-disease had fastened upon her, and she had been doomed from the first to perish of it.

Her one possible chance had been that he, too, should have caught it. And he had failed to catch it. Most likely, if he had, it would have

been from Freda or some other woman. There was Dartworthy, the college man who had staked the rich fraction on Bonanza above Discovery. Everybody knew that old Doolittle's daughter, Bertha, was madly in love with him. Yet, when he contracted the disease, of all women, it had been with the wife of Colonel Walthstone, the great Guggenhammer mining expert. Result, three lunacy cases: Dartworthy selling out his mine for one-tenth its value; the poor woman sacrificing her respectability and sheltered nook in society to flee with him in an open boat down the Yukon; and Colonel Walthstone, breathing murder and destruction, taking out after them in another open boat. The whole impending tragedy had moved on down the muddy Yukon, passing Forty Mile and Circle and losing itself in the wilderness beyond. But there it was, love, disorganizing men's and women's lives, driving toward destruction and death, turning topsy-turvy everything that was sensible and considerate, making bawds or suicides out of virtuous women, and scoundrels and murderers out of men who had always been clean and square.

For the first time in his life Daylight lost his nerve. He was badly and avowedly frightened. Women were terrible creatures, and the love-germ was especially plentiful in their neighborhood.

And they were so reckless, so devoid of fear. THEY were not frightened by what had happened to the Virgin. They held out their arms to him more seductively than ever. Even without his fortune, reckoned as a mere man, just past thirty, magnificently strong and equally good-looking and good-natured, he was a prize for most normal women.

But when to his natural excellences were added the romance that linked with his name and the enormous wealth that was his, practically every free woman he encountered measured him with an appraising and delighted eye, to say nothing of more than one woman who was not free. Other men might have been spoiled by this and led to lose their heads; but the only effect on him was to increase his fright. As a result he refused most invitations to houses where women might be met, and frequented bachelor boards and the Moosehorn Saloon, which had no dance-hall attached.

CHAPTER XIII

Six thousand spent the winter of 1897 in Dawson, work on the creeks went on apace, while beyond the passes it was reported that one hundred thousand more were waiting for the spring. Late one brief afternoon, Daylight, on the benches between French Hill and Skookum Hill, caught a wider vision of things. Beneath him lay the richest part of Eldorado Creek, while up and down Bonanza he could see for miles. It was a scene of a vast devastation. The hills, to their tops, had been shorn of trees, and their naked sides showed signs of goring and perforating that even the mantle of snow could not hide. Beneath him, in every direction were the cabins of men. But not many men were visible. A blanket of smoke filled the valleys and turned the gray day to melancholy twilight. Smoke arose from a thousand holes in the snow, where, deep down on bed-rock, in the frozen muck and gravel, men crept and scratched and dug, and ever built more fires to break the grip of the frost. Here and there, where new shafts were starting, these fires flamed redly. Figures of men crawled out of the holes, or disappeared into them, or, on raised platforms of hand-hewn timber, windlassed the thawed gravel to the surface, where it immediately froze. The wreckage of the spring washing appeared everywhere--piles of sluice-boxes, sections of elevated flumes, huge water-wheels,--all the debris of an army of gold-mad men.

"It-all's plain gophering," Daylight muttered aloud.

He looked at the naked hills and realized the enormous wastage of wood that had taken place. From this bird's-eye view he realized the monstrous confusion of their excited workings. It was a gigantic inadequacy. Each worked for himself, and the result was chaos. In this richest of diggings it cost out by their feverish, unthinking methods another dollar was left hopelessly in the earth. Given another year, and most of the claims would be worked out, and the sum of the gold taken out would no more than equal what was left behind.

Organization was what was needed, he decided; and his quick imagination sketched Eldorado Creek, from mouth to source, and from mountain top to mountain top, in the hands of one capable management. Even steam-thawing, as yet untried, but bound to come, he saw would be a makeshift. What should be done was to hydraulic the valley sides and benches, and then, on the creek bottom, to use gold-dredges such as he had heard described as operating in California.

There was the very chance for another big killing. He had wondered just what was precisely the reason for the Guggenhammers and the big English concerns sending in their high-salaried experts. That was their scheme. That was why they had approached him for the sale of worked-out claims and tailings. They were content to let the small mine-owners gopher out what they could, for there would be millions in the leavings.

And, gazing down on the smoky inferno of crude effort, Daylight

outlined the new game he would play, a game in which the Guggenhammers and the rest would have to reckon with him. Cut along with the delight in the new conception came a weariness. He was tired of the long Arctic years, and he was curious about the Outside--the great world of which he had heard other men talk and of which he was as ignorant as a child. There were games out there to play. It was a larger table, and there was no reason why he with his millions should not sit in and take a hand. So it was, that afternoon on Skookum Hill, that he resolved to play this last best Klondike hand and pull for the Outside.

It took time, however. He put trusted agents to work on the heels of great experts, and on the creeks where they began to buy he likewise bought. Wherever they tried to corner a worked-out creek, they found him standing in the way, owning blocks of claims or artfully scattered claims that put all their plans to naught.

"I play you-all wide open to win--am I right" he told them once, in a heated conference.

Followed wars, truces, compromises, victories, and defeats. By 1898, sixty thousand men were on the Klondike and all their fortunes and affairs rocked back and forth and were affected by the battles Daylight fought. And more and more the taste for the larger game urged in Daylight's mouth. Here he was already locked in grapples with the great Guggenhammers, and winning, fiercely winning. Possibly the severest struggle was waged on Ophir, the veriest of moose-pastures,

whose low-grade dirt was valuable only because of its vastness. The ownership of a block of seven claims in the heart of it gave Daylight his grip and they could not come to terms. The Guggenhammer experts concluded that it was too big for him to handle, and when they gave him an ultimatum to that effect he accepted and bought them out.

The plan was his own, but he sent down to the States for competent engineers to carry it out. In the Rinkabilly watershed, eighty miles away, he built his reservoir, and for eighty miles the huge wooden conduit carried the water across country to Ophir. Estimated at three millions, the reservoir and conduit cost nearer four. Nor did he stop with this. Electric power plants were installed, and his workings were lighted as well as run by electricity. Other sourdoughs, who had struck it rich in excess of all their dreams, shook their heads gloomily, warned him that he would go broke, and declined to invest in so extravagant a venture.

But Daylight smiled, and sold out the remainder of his town-site holdings. He sold at the right time, at the height of the placer boom. When he prophesied to his old cronies, in the Moosehorn Saloon, that within five years town lots in Dawson could not be given away, while the cabins would be chopped up for firewood, he was laughed at roundly, and assured that the mother-lode would be found ere that time. But he went ahead, when his need for lumber was finished, selling out his sawmills as well. Likewise, he began to get rid of his scattered holdings on the various creeks, and without thanks to any one he

finished his conduit, built his dredges, imported his machinery, and made the gold of Ophir immediately accessible. And he, who five years before had crossed over the divide from Indian River and threaded the silent wilderness, his dogs packing Indian fashion, himself living Indian fashion on straight moose meat, now heard the hoarse whistles calling his hundreds of laborers to work, and watched them toil under the white glare of the arc-lamps.

But having done the thing, he was ready to depart. And when he let the word go out, the Guggenhammers vied with the English concerns and with a new French company in bidding for Ophir and all its plant. The Guggenhammers bid highest, and the price they paid netted Daylight a clean million. It was current rumor that he was worth anywhere from twenty to thirty millions. But he alone knew just how he stood, and that, with his last claim sold and the table swept clean of his winnings, he had ridden his hunch to the tune of just a trifle over eleven millions.

His departure was a thing that passed into the history of the Yukon along with his other deeds. All the Yukon was his guest, Dawson the seat of the festivity. On that one last night no man's dust save his own was good. Drinks were not to be purchased. Every saloon ran open, with extra relays of exhausted bartenders, and the drinks were given away. A man who refused this hospitality, and persisted in paying, found a dozen fights on his hands. The veriest chechaquos rose up to defend the name of Daylight from such insult. And through it all, on

moccasined feet, moved Daylight, hell-roaring Burning Daylight, over-spilling with good nature and camaraderie, howling his he-wolf howl and claiming the night as his, bending men's arms down on the bars, performing feats of strength, his bronzed face flushed with drink, his black eyes flashing, clad in overalls and blanket coat, his ear-flaps dangling and his gauntleted mittens swinging from the cord across the shoulders. But this time it was neither an ante nor a stake that he threw away, but a mere marker in the game that he who held so many markers would not miss.

As a night, it eclipsed anything that Dawson had ever seen. It was Daylight's desire to make it memorable, and his attempt was a success. A goodly portion of Dawson got drunk that night. The fall weather was on, and, though the freeze-up of the Yukon still delayed, the thermometer was down to twenty-five below zero and falling. Wherefore, it was necessary to organize gangs of life-savers, who patrolled the streets to pick up drunken men from where they fell in the snow and where an hour's sleep would be fatal. Daylight, whose whim it was to make them drunk by hundreds and by thousands, was the one who initiated this life saving. He wanted Dawson to have its night, but, in his deeper processes never careless nor wanton, he saw to it that it was a night without accident. And, like his olden nights, his ukase went forth that there should be no quarrelling nor fighting, offenders to be dealt with by him personally. Nor did he have to deal with any. Hundreds of devoted followers saw to it that the evilly disposed were rolled in the snow and hustled off to bed. In the great world, where

great captains of industry die, all wheels under their erstwhile management are stopped for a minute.

But in the Klondike, such was its hilarious sorrow at the departure of its captain, that for twenty-four hours no wheels revolved. Even great Ophir, with its thousand men on the pay-roll, closed down. On the day after the night there were no men present or fit to go to work.

Next morning, at break of day, Dawson said good-by. The thousands that lined the bank wore mittens and their ear-flaps pulled down and tied. It was thirty below zero, the rim-ice was thickening, and the Yukon carried a run of mush-ice. From the deck of the Seattle, Daylight waved and called his farewells. As the lines were cast off and the steamer swung out into the current, those near him saw the moisture well up in Daylight's eyes. In a way, it was to him departure from his native land, this grim Arctic region which was practically the only land he had known. He tore off his cap and waved it.

"Good-by, you-all!" he called. "Good-by, you-all!"