

flower-heaped mound—flower-heaped, yet what meaning had flowers placed by a caretaker?

She left the cart at the meadow bars, and with the white box swinging from one hand and the cherub swinging from the other gained the silent little enclosure among the pines. The sunny peace of the day descended dovelike on her spirit as she knelt deep in the netted vines and uncovered her white baby roses, her violets, her fairy daisies.

The boy pressed closer, his lovely little face aglow and alight. He caught her suddenly under her round chin with his soft, eager, baby hands.

'Is they for my little sister, mommie'—the words stumbled out, soft and eager, too—'my sweet, sweet little bit of a sister?'

That set her lips quivering. 'Yes, my precious,' she said, holding up her face to be kissed.

And this was the picture the old lady beheld with an amazement, an indignation not to be put on paper. The pine-needles carpeting the wood road had blotted out the sound of her carriage wheels.

She might have descended from the skies or risen up out of the earth as she confronted the invader, who sprang to her feet confounded and put to shame, and clinging desperately to the one masculine protector in reach. All at once, as if by special revelation, she comprehended the enormity of their impertinence. It was written on the old lady's face as she waited—quite openly waited.

'Forgive me!' stammered Rose. It was a double-distilled inadequacy, but it was all she could think of. She had been startled pale; but now she blushed deeply and moved forward.

'I think you are forgetting your pretty flowers,' reminded the old lady, who conspicuously bore flowers of her own.

As the discomfited invader stooped to recover her flowers a dreadful thing happened. Bitter tears brimmed over and rolled down her cheeks. It was all to have been so sweet, and now—The boy gazed in her face with perplexed eyes.

'Come, sweetheart,' she said, and passed by the old lady, the defrauded mother heart by the insulted mother heart, and the invader's tears were plain to be read upon her cheeks.

Inexplicably and unexpectedly her aspect touched the old lady to a belated comprehension. In a flash it came to her that she was very old and that the invader was very young, and that her long, long years between had indeed been lived to little purpose if she could let this girl go past her and out of her life with those tears on her sweet, hurt face. And the boy, how beautiful he was!

'Child!' she called. The invader looked back, pale once more, and duly wondering, and behold! the old lady offering a shaking hand.

'Forgive me,' she said; for when she capitulated she did it nobly and without reserve. She kept the young hand in hers. 'Come, sit by me here on this bench. May I see the flowers? They are very beautiful. You were going to put them on my little daughter's grave, were you not?' She considered Rose with kindly keenness. 'Why, my dear?'

'Because—' said Rose. She stopped, began again. 'Because I could not put them on my own baby's.'

'Tell me,' said the old lady. Who would have known her!

'She was only three weeks old,' said Rose, apologetically; but, oh! miracle of a like loss, someone understood at last!

'I know,' said the old lady. She looked at the little mound. 'Mine lived a month.'

'I've all her little things,' confided Rose; and you saw where the boy got that soft, eager way of his.'

'I know,' said the old lady again. She touched the flowers. 'Put yours there to-day.'—The Companion.

THE GREENBACK KID

He came into the Greenback mining camp one afternoon on the stage, having paid his fare by helping the driver change the horses at the stations. Though only a boy, his face wore the seriousness of manhood.

His father had been killed in a dynamite explosion at the 'Silver Bell,' and his mother had died of fever soon after.

'A kid around a mine is as useless as a hole in a doughnut,' Simpson, the foreman, told him when he approached that worthy. But the boy looked up Hudson, the big superintendent, and was more successful. His name was Rodney Harris, but he was known by the miners as the 'Greenback Kid,' or just 'Kid.'

He got along well with all except Simpson, the fore-

man, who never let an opportunity slip to curse and abuse him. One of his duties was to take the foreman his breakfast. And one morning when he went up to the cabin he found him ill. The big fellow ate only a little breakfast, and ordered the boy to the 'Dew Drop Inn' for a flask of whisky. Rodney refused to go. This enraged the foreman, who drove the boy from the cabin, declaring he would discharge him. All this occurred in the early spring, about a month after Rodney's arrival at the mine.

On the afternoon of that day there was consternation in camp. The big gong at the superintendent's office suddenly clanged out loud and shrill, as it did when there was a fire or a serious accident. Almost instantly blue and red-shirted miners filed out of the bunk house and cabin. From up the canon came a roar and a crash as of a hurricane tearing the forest. The earth trembled, and the mountain sides were shaking.

'It's a slide!' cried the superintendent. 'There's a big snow slide on Preston's Peak! Run for your lives!' Then he ran up the hill to the shaft house to give the alarm, calling the men to get them out before the shaft was covered up, and to prevent them from being buried like rats.

Then came the slide. Half Preston's Peak broke from its apex and slipped down, leaving a great deep scar. At first it moved gently and easily; then it jumped and leaped. Towering pine trees broke and snapped like straws under the avalanche of snow and earth. The cabin and buildings of the upper part of the camp were crushed and buried beneath a mountain of debris.

After the first slip had passed, the crowd looked up and beheld a little cabin, half-torn from its foundations, hanging at the base of the avalanche.

'It's Simpson's cabin,' said one. 'Simp, Simp! Where is Simpson?' the superintendent anxiously inquired.

'He's in the cabin asleep!' half a dozen answered.

A shudder ran through the crowd. Though accustomed to dangers, there was not one but whose heart sank at the thought of the big foreman in the doomed cabin. Was there one among them who would go to the rescue?

Some one rushed suddenly from the crowd. 'The Kid! The Kid!' a hoarse voice shouted, and then all knew the truth. They vainly tried to stop him.

Up, up he climbed, with the gravel rattling and rolling under his feet, and the snow slipping treacherously. The watchers below held their breath.

He reached the cabin and tugged viciously at the door, which refused to open. Finally he tore it from its hinges and rushed in. Shortly he appeared at the door supporting the limp and intoxicated foreman. The crowd cheered lustily.

The boy shouted into the ear of the dazed miner, and when he looked out, he understood. Impending danger sobered him. The boy clinched him tightly by the arm and started down the slope, tugging and pulling with all his strength, and wading knee-deep through the spongy snow.

When half way down the slide broke with a deafening roar, and hurled its tons of snow and earth upon the camp. The cabin was swallowed up instantly, and the boy and the man were caught in the van of the whirl. They were lifted high and thrown completely over the mill, the wall of which held the snow and saved them, as they were scooted far out to the open valley and safety. Eagerly the men rushed forward to pick them up. Simpson was hurt a little, but was soon on his feet; but the boy was wounded, and blood flowed from a cut upon his head. It was some time before he regained consciousness, and when he opened his eyes a half-hundred men were standing about him, all waiting anxiously, almost breathlessly.

'Thank God!' spoke the big miner, 'the boy breathes again! I want to be the first to thank you, lad, for what you have done for me this day. Were it not for you I would have been buried deep under that mountain of snow, so deep that all the miners in the camp couldn't have dug me out in a year.'

'That's all right,' Rodney answered. 'I only did what any of the miners would have done.'

'You're wrong, sonny,' interrupted Hudson, the superintendent. 'We all had the chance you had, but wouldn't take it.'

'That's right,' chorused the crowd. 'The Kid is the pluckiest one in the camp.'

'And I want to repay you, my boy,' continued Simpson, chokingly, still holding Rodney's hands. 'How can I do it?'

'Just be my friend,' answered the boy, simply.

'With all my heart,' the miner replied, squeezing hard the boy's hands. 'From this time we're pals, never to play quits.'

And they never did.—Exchange.