

place, Jim could work for ye, an' I could wash an' iron, an' churn, an' board extra hands, etc. Could ye?" she asked, in sudden anxiety.

Hal considered a moment, then he said, "I already have a little house of two rooms, near our house, but I've engaged Mike for a steady hand, and—"

"Don't ye need more'n one hand?" asked Mrs. Randall.

"Not the year around," replied Hal, "but I shall need two from now until after haying—say, till the first of September."

"That's three months steady work," said Mrs. Randall, "an' the job at the mine is sure only a day at a time, if Jim does call it steady."

"Mother and Alice would need just such help as you could give," said Hal, "and I've no doubt Mr. Bennett, my nearest neighbor, could give Jim a job on the range when I don't need him. Well," he added, "talk it over with Jim, and if he will take the job, he can. You can have the use of the house, and all the fire-wood you want. I will give Jim \$40.00 per month through the season—that is, from spring plowing, through haying. You will be paid by the week, at regular wages, for what you do in the house. How does that suit you?"

"It's perfect!" declared Mrs. Randall, in a transport. "I quite long for the farm, an' for vegetables an' flowers I can raise myself. An' now I'll not trouble you longer, so good-bye, Mr. Thornton." She arose as she spoke, and held out her hand in farewell. "One thing more," she added, "when'll ye want us if we do come?"

"We will move down on Wednesday," said Hal, "and if you conclude to accept my terms, it would be convenient to have your help in getting settled."

"Le' me see—this is Saturday," said Mrs. Randall, reflectively. "I'll go up tomorrow, an' I'll let ye know Monday."

"All right," said Hal. Mrs. Randall said good-bye again, and went through the other office, and out into the street.

"Mrs. Randall, from the boarding-house, above," explained Hal, to the clerk.

On Monday, one of the ore teams brought down a short, ill-spelled note from Jim Randall, saying he would be glad to go on the ranch, and would bring their goods down next day, and be ready to go out with Mr. Thornton, on Wednesday. Alice and her mother were pleased with the engagement, and Mrs. Randall proved herself an energetic, efficient woman in the moving and settling. Jim, who had been brought up on a farm, was really very practical.

By June 1st, things were running quite smoothly. The plain, but large, and neatly built farm house was comfortably, even luxuriously, furnished. Hal had spent a few days in April in helping Mike set out some little fir trees, from a neighboring mountain. A lawn had been started, and a vegetable garden and a few flowers, started by Mike, were doing finely. Hal was happy in his new home. To be sure, he was in debt for part of the buildings and fences, but he hoped the crops would pay up in the fall—if not, they certainly would in another year. He already felt in better health and spirits, and was conscious of a new independence, as delightful as novel. One moonlight night in June, he stood on his porch, and gazed with rapture on the scene before him—from the sloping lawn and little meadow, to the river below, whose musical ripple mingled with the pretty piano accompaniment which Alice softly played within. Across the grassy field beyond, his eyes wandered to the climbing foot-hills, the fir-clad mountains, with the eternal snow-capped range above and beyond. Over all, the silvery moon-beam lingered lovingly.

"Beautiful! Grand! Glorious!" he