

# THE WEST SHORE.

14TH YEAR.

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No. 2.

## A LAW UNTO HERSELF.



**M**Y first meeting with Roy Mason took place near a small mining town in Eastern Oregon, in 1861. My last meeting with him, up to date, occurred more than a quarter of a century later, on the 8th day of November, 1887, when, among the thousands who flocked to the various polling places of Oregon, my eyes chanced to single out his unforgotten form. In a moment I was grasping his hand, scanning his worn face and silvery hair, with a queer pain at my heart, as a whole flood of old-time recollections came surging up through the dim vistas of the half-forgotten past. But of this latter meeting, more anon.

I am a plain, old-fashioned story teller, and possess not the modern trick of beginning my story at its ending, only to skip back, presently, over half a lifetime, and fill in the interim with the patchwork of events. I must needs do my skipping ere I begin, and thus find myself borne back, in fancy, to the long, snowy winter of '61, and a certain little mining town that nestled at the foot of one of the loftiest spurs of the Blue mountains.

From this town—which I will call Yum Yum, principally because that doesn't sound anything like its real name—a well-worn pack trail wound up and around the mountain to the northward, and it was near this trail, about two miles from town, on a lofty perch in the rugged canyon wall, that I halted one sunny October afternoon in '61, and proceeded to build a cabin for my winter quarters.

I had been prospecting in the vicinity throughout August and September, and believed I had seen enough to justify me in sticking to that locality and resuming my operations the following season.

"But," I think I hear the reader exclaim, "I thought miners always flocked to the nearest towns to take up their winter quarters!"

As a rule, yes, they do; but all rules are subject to exceptions, and occasionally there is a miner who declines to "flock," who doesn't see anything manly or sensible in pouring each summer's earnings into the whisky tills and faro banks of the "nearest town." I was one of those exceptions, principally because of a certain true and trusting little woman, away down in California, waiting patiently for me to "strike something" and return to her. Then, too, I have an innate love of Nature in her mountain solitudes.

The spot I selected for my building site was picturesquely beautiful in its ruggedness. True, the "lay of the land" was pretty steep for building purposes, and I being, perforce, contractor, carpenter and builder combined, with no recollection of ever having served an apprenticeship in either branch, found my task a rather arduous one.

From the very first, the foundation of my edifice evinced a perverse determination to follow the somewhat precipitous slope of the mountain side, and although I extemporized quite a satisfactory carpenter's level by filling my frying pan with water, and perseveringly blocked up my sills until the water ceased to overflow on the lower side of the pan; yet, strange to say, when my mansion was completed, the floor was not level; in fact, the down grade toward the front door was so marked that I found it necessary to "down brakes" every time I started for that point of egress, as, without that precaution, I would have been liable to continue my way down the mountain side indefinitely. Aside from this slight source of annoyance, I was rather proud of the result of my handiwork, with its one slatted and frameless window, its thatched roof, and towering chimney of sticks and mud. The fireplace was broad and deep, and I noticed with a thrill of pride that when I filled