The RED MIRAGE

By I. A. R. WYLIE

Author of THE NATIVE BORN, DIVIDING WATERS, etc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

The red mirage blinds Farquhar's eyes when he sacrifices himself to protect his father's memory, and to protect the girl he loves. Nameless in the Foreign Legion, going through worse than death at the hands of those who should have been his friends, the mirage still blinds him, and when the mirage dissolves in the love and sympathy of a real woman, it seems too late. But you must read the story to know how completely a "perfectly good" woman may ruin the life of an impulsive, chivalrous man, and how a sympathetic, loving one may help him to life and hope again.

—1—

CHAPTER I.

Beginnings.

"And so you have really made up your mind, Richard?"

"With your consent, mother."

Mrs. Farquhar sighed and tapped an impatient tattoo on the fender with her small, well-shod foot.

"My share in the matter has not the slightest importance. You might have spared me the farce."

"It's not a farce; as it happens, I want your consent. It's true—I'll marry without it—but it will make all the difference to my happiness." He put his head a little to one side and looked at her whimsically. "Really, mother, you are the last person to blame me for falling in love. It was you who taught me to adore the sex."

She made no answer. But she glanced up at the tall Venetian mirror and her mouth relaxed. She undoubtedly possessed a charm which made it seem scarcely credible that the man beside her was her son. She was small but beautifully made. She possessed the nameless quality which excuses everything and has sent men in all ages from crime to great place and from great place to the gallows. Richard Farquhar bore her no resemblance, though it was conceivable that without the wig and the coating of powder she might have revealed a certain similarity of coloring. His face and broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped figure revealed race, also vigor and headstrong temperament, which a peculiar light in the eyes accentuated. At the moment his expression was gay, but it veiled excitement and something obstinately resolved.

"You are a vain old woman!" he said lightly. "I believe you expected me to be dancing at your apron strings in blind adoration all my life."

"I did nothing of the sort. I wanted you to marry—but not Sylvia Omney."

He looked at her in unconcealed surprise. Possibly her tone was new to him. It was sharp and irritable; it revealed her suddenly as an old woman.

"I think I must be rather like my father," he said thoughtfully. "I don't remember him, and I have never seen anything of his save an old letter to you. Here it is." From his breast pocket he took out an old letter covered with yellow, faded writing and unfolded it. "It gives me a queer feeling, too, when I read it," he went on slowly. "I might have written it myself—to the woman I loved. He must have loved you madly, mother. One feels in every line that you were a religion to him—that he would have sold himself, body and soul—"

"Don't!" she interrupted sharply, angrily. Then she gave a shrill, unsteady little laugh.

"My poor Richard! Yes, you are like him—very like him. But if it's the wrong woman—what then?"

"Of course, it must not be the wrong woman," he said slowly. "But my father chose rightly, as I know I have chosen. I have chosen a woman after his own heart—Sylvia is like you, mother."

"Sylvia is like me?" She lifted her faded, still beautiful eyes to his face. "Yes, I suppose she is—what men call a womanly woman. God help men from what they call womanly women. Well"—she turned away with a careless, almost contemptuous movement of the shoulders—"I can't save you. Take my blessing, Richard. That's what you want, isn't it?"

"Thank you. I may bring Sylvia to see you?"

"Of course. Sylvia and I get on very well. Has anything been heard of the brother?"

"I don't think so. But I shall hear tonight."

"Cut his throat probably." She glanced back at him with a curious little smile on her colorless face. "All the same, Sylvia is lucky. I am rather proud of you myself, Richard. You are the only man I know who dresses in perfect taste without looking a vulgar noodle. Good night."

She kissed him hurriedly as he held the door open for her, and for an instant she looked up into his face with a curious half-tender, half-whimsical grimace. Then she was gone.

An hour later Richard Farquhar entered the Omneys' drawing room. He found his host by the fireside, a somewhat lone figure with the white, thin face of a man never wholly at rest. He greeted Farquhar eagerly and nervously. We—I expected you before—"

"I have been kept at Aldershot," Farquhar answered. "I came my first free evening. I can't tell you how keen I have been to see you both again—and to hear your news."

The elder man seemed to shrink together. He glanced nervously over his shoulder, and his face was gray and sunken.

"There is no news, Farquhar. We traced him to Marseilles, and then followed a wrong scent over to Oran and farther south. It all came to nothing—the wrong fellow all the time. It broke me up. I've lost hope—all hope, Farquhar."

"He will come back," the other suggested.

"No, no; he was reckless and obstinate and—a bit of a coward. He couldn't face the disgrace—he left that to us—and he couldn't face me. I dare say I was harsh—but I swear I didn't deserve this. And now I have to lie and pretend and play this confounded comedy. People—the few who believe—will tell you that my son is sheep farming in Australia. Farquhar, what in heaven's name possesses a man to want children? Mine have been a curse—"

"You have your daughter," was the sharp interruption.

The banker glanced at the man beside him. The thin, bronzed face was slightly flushed, and there was a fire in the passionate eyes which seemed to cause the observer a new emotion. He turned away, his thin features twisted into a wry smile.

"Yes—I have Sylvia—naturally she is a great comfort. But she is young—you must always remember that, and one must judge youth by other standards. We must not expect too much."

"One might expect everything of Sylvia," Farquhar responded gravely.

Again the swift, anxious glance swept over his face.

"Ah, yes, you are young yourself. Well, I suppose you want to see her; I won't detain you. You will find her in the library, looking out some old prints for a well-intentioned futurist. We have become artistic, you know."

If there was a covert sneer in the last words Farquhar was not in a position to notice it, for he had already begun to cross the room. One or two people spoke to him, but he answered absently, and they did not detain him. A pair of heavy tapestry curtains separated the so-called library from the drawing room. He pushed them softly aside and entered.

Sylvia Omney stood at the long table beneath the subdued cluster of electric light, her head bowed, her back toward him. She did not seem to hear his entrance, for she did not move, and he did not seek to call her attention. She was not looking at the great folio which lay spread out before her, but staring sightlessly into the shadows,

"Sylvia," He Said Brokenly.

her cheeks bathed in color, her lips parted in breathless anticipation. A moment later she lifted her hands to her face, and he saw that she trembled. He knew then that she was conscious of his presence, and that that same awe and dread of their dawning happiness held her as it had held him in paralyzed waiting.

"Sylvia," he said brokenly.

She did not turn. She looked up, and in the glass their eyes met. The color had fled, leaving her whiter than the dead purity of her dress; her jaw had dropped. For an instant it seemed to him that a veil had been torn from her face, leaving it piteously distorted.

"Sylvia!" he repeated in a changed tone.

She turned then with a little stifled gasp. Her hand with the lace handkerchief had flown to her lips in an instinctive effort at concealment.

"Oh," she said under her breath. "You! Oh, Richard!"

He strode across the room to her side. He seized her hands and kissed them in a stormy outbreak of passion which seemed terrify her. She shrank from him, vainly trying to free himself.

"Oh, Richard—don't—you must be more careful—we are not alone—there are people—"

He laughed up at her. His eyes were alight. The subdued flicker of recklessness, never wholly absent, blazed up in defiance of her white timidity.

"I know there are people—hundreds of them—somewhere down in that dull old world which we've left miles beneath. Yes, I dare say, I am a little mad. I feel it—I'm glad of it. It's good to be mad like this—" Suddenly her expression penetrated his intoxication. He stopped short. "Sylvia—you're not ill?" he said roughly.

She shook her head, half smiling, half tearful.

"You may not care what people think, but I do—all nice women do. We are not properly engaged. You forget that."

A story of great love and great hate. Heart-stirring interest in every chapter.

He nodded, his eyes fixed on her half-averted face.

"Perhaps you are right—women are different. In their love and in their religion they seek the outward, visible signs. I have brought the visible signs with me." He put his hand to his pocket and drew out a small case, which he opened and placed on the table before her. "That is my first gift," he said simply. As though drawn against her will, she turned. Her eyes rested on the ring in its cold, gray setting, and their pupils dilated with an amazed involuntary displeasure. It was a single, flawless emerald, square cut and set in a narrow band of sapphire.

Farquhar took it from its case and held it out to her.

"You don't understand. It can't be just now. It's as though we were rejoicing in the midst of a terrible grief. Surely you have heard?"

"I know that your brother has not been found," he answered earnestly. "I know that he was—is very dear to you. Why should that come between us now?"

"Because—" She made a little, feeble gesture of despair, and then went on breathlessly. "It's not for myself, Richard. There is my father to be considered. Robert's loss has broken his heart. He is ill—you must have seen that—I can't tell him that I am going to leave him—"

"I don't ask it of you. I shall be patient. I shall wait a year—two years, but you can't keep me on the outside of your life while I wait. You belong to me—you gave yourself to me. I don't claim more than you gave—I wouldn't claim that much if I saw it was not for your happiness—and now I hold you above my life, my honor—"

"Oh, hush! hush!" She looked at him with terrified, beseeching eyes. "Please don't say that—I don't want to hear it, Richard. It sounds so—wild and mad, and your eyes frighten me. Be reasonable and gentle—dear."

The hard lines of violence smoothed themselves from his face as if by a miracle. With an almost feminine tenderness he took her icy hand between his own and chafed it.

"Forgive me—I think I have a devil in me, Sylvia, a little black fiend that drives me—well, to the very devil, in fact." He stopped, his eyes narrowing as though at some vision which he could not fully face. "If I lost you—Sylvia, what is the matter?" He looked at her more intently, and then, with a sudden flash of perception. "Something has happened—out there in Algiers. What?"

She did not answer. She was not even looking at him. Following her glance, he turned slowly on his heel. A man who had stood hesitating on the threshold now came toward them, his hand extended.

"Forgive me, Miss Omney. I interrupted, but I understood that I should find you here, and I could not wait. You see, I am punctual to the hour and to the day."

He spoke in English, with a faint accent that was not displeasing. Richard Farquhar drew back. The vehemence had vanished from his manner, leaving him curiously at ease. Sylvia Omney glanced at him, swiftly, with an almost childish appeal and fear.

"Richard, this is Captain Arnaud. We met out in Algiers. Captain Arnaud—this is Mr. Farquhar."

Both men bowed. The Frenchman smiled with cordial recognition.

"I have heard your name often, Mr. Farquhar. You are what is called an old playfellow, are you not—a privileged position?"

For an instant Farquhar waited, his eyes fixed on the girl's white face. She did not look at him or speak.

"Indeed, most privileged."

He picked up the emerald ring and slipped it carelessly back into his pocket.

It is a pity that some persons lack the tact to break unhappy news inoffensively. Perhaps it is thoughtlessness that is responsible for a good deal of the sadness in the world—especially in the cases of spoiled women who play with the affections of men whose love is deep.

How much sorrow might have been saved if between Sylvia and Richard there had been really a mutual thoughtfulness and effort to spare heartbreak and soul-misery—than which there is no greater misery.

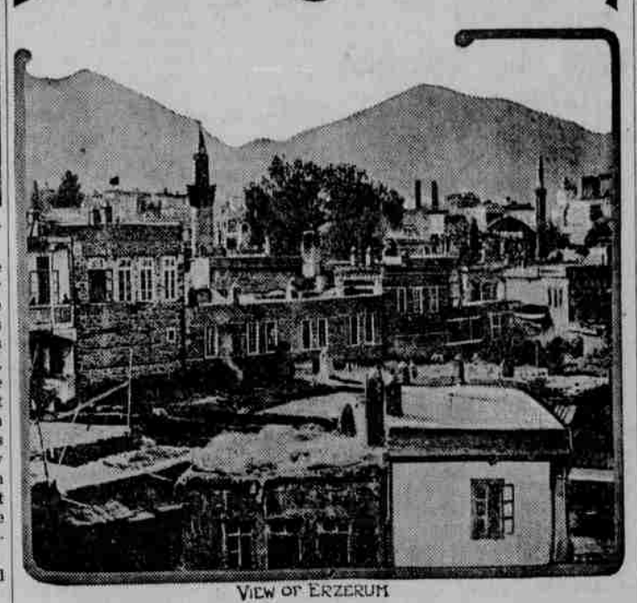
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Able to Defy Burglars.

The story of the strong room is nothing more than one long fight between the safemaker and the burglar. But at last the vault maker would appear to have won, and it is the boast of experts that many of the strong rooms found in the more up-to-date safe deposits, banks and other institutions are not only burglar-proof, but proof against attack by armed mobs and also from earthquake shocks. Their great steel walls are absolutely undrillable on account of the hardness of the metal employed, while by welding the plates together it is virtually impossible to burn through them.

Then, by means of time and combination locks, it is impossible to open the doors without a key and a knowledge of the combination, once they are closed. As a further precaution, many of these strong rooms are so designed that an electrical alarm is sounded should attack be made upon them, or the basement in which they are situated is flooded with water the moment their mechanism is tampered with.

ERZERUM



VIEW OF ERZERUM

WHERE the Armenian plateau becomes a bleak complex of gorge and mountain is traced the present boundary line between the Russian Caucasus and Turkey in Asia, and the largest city and the all-important fortress on this strong natural frontier is Erzerum, which guards the one convenient way through the ragged heights to the flatlands of Mesopotamia and the lower hills of eastern Asia Minor, and which recently was captured by the Russians. The beginning of history finds this city a military station and a point of considerable strategical value; it is the Armenian fortress of Garin Kalakh of antiquity, the Arabian raiding base of Kalikale, the Byzantine frontier post, Theodosiopolis.

The Russians have twice decided wars against Turkey in their favor by capture of Erzerum, and each time Erzerum has been handed back in the peace arrangements, says a writer for the National Geographic society. While the attacks of the Russians against the fortress in 1877 were unsuccessful, their occupation of the town during the armistice of February, 1878, finally brought the Turks to accept the terms of peace. The assault and capture of the fortress by the Russian general, Paskevich, in July, 1829, decided the campaign in Asia.

Erzerum bars the roads from Kars and other points on the frontier. These ways follow the valley of the Aras river through the high mountains and from Erzerum branch north, west and south. North of the fortress, leagues of impassable mountains extend from deep in Turkish Armenia to beyond the Russia border. To the south, an equally mountainous country is broken through by rare, miserable trails. In the extreme south, near the Persian-Turkish border, one of the best of these routes into Turkey leads through the country near Lake Van.

Fine Setting but Dirty City.

Situated at the eastern end of an open, treeless plain, 30 miles long and 12 miles wide, and surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains, steep to their bases, Erzerum enjoys a splendid setting. Within the town, encircled by an earthen enceinte, however, appearances are cramped, unfavorable, and gloomy. The streets are many sizes too small according to the western measure, and they lack utterly in stability of direction. Moreover they are badly drained and dirty, and the houses by their side do not add cheer with their old, unvaried facades of dark gray volcanic stone.

The town has always enjoyed a fairly prosperous transit trade, for it is on the main overland route from Trebizond to northwest Persia and to the trade centers of the southern Caucasus. A good road leads from Erzerum down to the coast at Trebizond, and the journey can be made by carriage in five or six days. The place has also been noted from early times for the quality of its brass and copper work. Wheat, barley, millet, and vegetables are grown in the country around, and sheep are pastured. The population of the town is 43,000, of which one-quarter is Armenian.

Hamadan, the Treasure City.

Another interesting city that has fallen into the hands of the Russians is Hamadan, the treasure city of the great Achaemenian kings, identified with the resplendent Ecbatana of the Greek writers. The ancient city lies 188 miles west-southwest of the Persian capital, Teheran.

All vestiges of the by-gone glory of the place have been destroyed, save alone a famous but battered stone lion, which lies in somber, mutilated desolation flat upon the plain near the road leading to Ispahan. The old lion has lasted through all the ages of Hamadan, a guardian genius of the town; for it was set up as a talisman to protect the walls of the city. The lion's fate and the city's fate were connected in a prophecy that the city and its people would be safe so long as the lion was not thrown down or broken. The talisman today enjoys a superstitious veneration; mothers bring their babies to kiss the hugh carven face and pilgrims place offerings of stone before it. According to one tradition, the lion was set up to frighten away the severe winters of Hamadan.

The name of the city can be traced back to earliest times, and it means literally "a place of meeting of many ways." In the days of the city's splendor the most prominent highways of the civilized world crossed here. It is still a meeting place of many highways from many parts of the Persian kingdom, and the chief station on the road from Persia to Bagdad and to the Persian gulf. It has thus been able to maintain a scrap of its old prestige as a place of wealth and as a city important in Persian commerce and industry.

Its Leather Goods Are Famous.

The leather made in Hamadan is in demand throughout the East, and great quantities of it are exported, unworked and in the forms of saddles, harnesses, trunks and other leather articles. Felt goods and copper utensils are made, and a flourishing transit trade brings its tolls to the city's 40,000 people. There are extensive and well-stocked bazars, and more than 40 caravanseries. Among the few concessions that the hoary "treasure city of the king of the kings of kings" has grudgingly made to the nervous, restless civilization of the West are a post and a telegraph office.

Hamadan is situated at the northeastern foot of Mount Alvand, whose granite walls rise to a height of 11,900 feet. The city itself has an elevation of 5,930 feet, and a level plain, 15 miles in length and 10 miles in breadth, spreads before it like a garden. Barley, wheat, fruits, vegetables and the scarlet poppy plant are grown in profusion here.

Crooked alleys, dirty walks and street ways, squalid houses and dingy brown neglect effectually suppress memories of the city's former greatness, when it was the home of kings, the seat of fabulous riches, a foremost display city of the world whose buildings were fretted with gold and silver, and the home of such riotous luxury as the world has never seen again and as modern civilization has forgotten how to provide. All luxury has departed from Hamadan; but then the city is supposed to have passed its three thousandth anniversary, an age at which the giddy pleasures of youth are no longer tempting.

Ramman-nirari, whose greatest claim to fame is that he was the husband of Queen Semiramis, began the long centuries of royal patronage that built up Hamadan, and his renowned queen, Semiramis, launched the place upon its brilliant career. Hamadan steadily grew in wealth and favor, added ever new splendors to its public works, state buildings and private palaces, erected columns and arcades overlaid with plates of gold and silver, constructed a costly royal home of cedar and cypress woods, and planted famous gardens. Most of this wealth was looted by Alexander the Great, whose men carried away a treasure vast even for the present age of wealth. Following Alexander, Antigonus, Seleucus, Nicator and Antiochus the Great plundered here, and, according to Polybius, the Greek historian, there remained in Hamadan a wealth equal to 4,000 talents ($4,730,000) for the last plunderer.

Daily Thought.

In this world a man must be either anvil or hammer.—Longfellow.

Considerate.

"'Sorrows come not single spies, but in battalions,'" remarked the man who quotes Shakespeare on the slightest provocation.

"How do you feel this morning?" asked his friend, somewhat irrelevantly.

"That's how I feel."

"Um. I was about to ask you for the loan of $5, but rather than join a battalion, I'll tackle somebody else."

Her Favorite Adjective.

"This is a perfectly splendid book."

"Why so, Asphodelia?"

"The heroine wears the loveliest clothes, and she's in love with the loveliest man and always has the loveliest times."

"Umph! And how about the author's literary style?"

"Oh—er—that's lovely, too."

Mystery of Woman.

A distinguished physician says there is no such thing as a normal woman. We presume that what the doctor means to say is that women are normally abnormal.

About Right.

"Who can tell me what is the capital of Mexico?" asked the teacher.

"I can," said Johnny Jones, who had heard his father discussing the affairs in our sister republic only the night before.

"Very well, Johnny. What is the capital of Mexico?"

"About thirty cents."

At the Modern Opera.

Patience—"You say you heard Mme. Highsee in vaudeville today?" Patrice—"Yes; first time she's been heard in this country." Patience—"Nonsense! She sang in this country in opera for two years." Patrice—"Yes, she was in opera, but everybody talks at the opera, and nobody heard her."

Sporting Offer.

"I want to help you," said a benevolent man who had been accosted by a tramp, "but if I give you a dime I'm afraid you won't put it to a good use." "Well," replied the tramp, "that ain't enough ter do much harm with, or much good either, so take a chance, gov'nor!"

VERA'S TRUSTEE

By CLARISSA MACKIE.

(Copyright, 1915, by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

When Judge Linwood died his large estate was left in trust to his only child, Vera, who, now doubly orphaned, went to live with her aunt, Mrs. Henry Hendrick.

The Hendricks entertained lavishly and spent money recklessly, so that when Henry Hendrick's money vanished, together with most of Vera's fortune, that unfortunate gentleman promptly took himself out of the world, leaving his widow to open a fashionable boarding house in the suburbs.

As for Vera, she had decided to go West and claim possession of the old Golden Eagle mine, which her father had left in trust for her. The western trustee was his old friend, Anthony Burgess, and it was through Anthony Burgess that Vera received the semi-annual dividends which now constituted her sole income.

"But, my dear child," protested Mrs. Hendrick tearfully, "you can't go out there alone! Why, you've never even seen this Burgess man!"

"That he was father's friend speaks sufficiently in his favor, Aunt Emily, and, besides, I shall only stop in Eagle City a short time. There is an excellent hotel there."

"I am afraid to have you travel alone," objected Mrs. Hendrick.

"Nonsense; I am twenty-one, and father trusted me thoroughly. You forget that I once spent six weeks at Eagle City."

"But your father was with you."

"Yes, Aunt Emily, but I shall get along nicely. I thought perhaps that there might be some business connected with the mine that I might learn—that I might become a real business woman—not a drone living on the income father left me. I want to be useful."

"Have your own way, child," sighed the widow plaintively. "I can't say too much, Vera, because my poor Henry's slipshod business methods lost your fortune as well as our own. I told your father not to make Henry your trustee. As for the other trustee—have you ever seen Mr. Burgess?"

"He was in Mexico when father and I were in Eagle City."

"I hope he is trustworthy?" was Mrs. Hendrick's final remark.

* * * * * * * *

Eagle City basked in the warmth of an Indian summer day. Vera loved the fresh, sweet mountain air and the low-lying haze reddened by the sun.

"Burgess?" repeated the lantern-jawed stage driver as Vera made inquiries. "Anthony Burgess? Oh, he lives over beyond the mountain."

"How shall I reach his place?"

"Stopping in the city?"

"Yes; take me to the best hotel, please."

"That will be Mrs. Lizzie Smith's, ma'am. To get to Burgess' you'll have to get a hoss. Can you ride?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then going will be easy. A good hoss will take you and most anybody will p'int out the trail to the Golden Eagle. I suppose you've heard of the lucky strike there?"

"No. Do you mean that they have discovered more gold?"

"That's right. Struck the richest vein ever found hereabouts. Seems it's faded out in Burgess' own mine, the Double Eagle, and the lead has been uncovered in the Golden Eagle. There's been a regular stampede for these parts in the past week."

"And the new discovery has made Mr. Burgess poor?" asked Vera.

"Almost. He wasn't expecting it, you see, ma'am, and he's been laying out a lot of money on his own mine; he's trustee for some folks back East, who own the Golden Eagle. If he was anything except the straightest man God ever made he could help himself out of the Golden Eagle and nobody would ever be the wiser."

Vera was thoughtful the rest of the day. She spent a restful night at Mrs. Smith's homelike hotel, and the next day she hired a horse to ride over the mountain.

"You'll not want to go alone, honey," admonished Mrs. Smith.

Vera displayed the little six-shooter which her father had taught her to use.

"I am not afraid," she laughed, and rode away.

Down the street she met the stage driver; he pulled in his steaming horses and held up a warning hand.

"Not going over the mountain alone, are you?" he asked.

"Yes. I am not afraid," she assured him.

"There's likely to be rough characters about," he warned her. "It's pay day at the Golden Eagle and there's a rumor that some of the Rio gang are going to hold up the paymaster. You better wait till tomorrow."

"But someone had better warn the paymaster," protested Vera.

"Burgess has been warned, but he ain't the kind to heed such a warning; he don't know what fear is, doggone him!" And the stage rumbled on.

Vera followed the trail winding up through the hills. She did not meet anyone, and although her surefooted pony sometimes stopped and sniffed inquiringly at the underbrush or heaped-up rocks along the way, she could not guess that the animal instinctively knew that there were men lurking, ambushed, waiting for the paymaster of the Golden Eagle.

At last she glimpsed a dark, evil face as it disappeared behind a rock, and she was glad that she could command her features so that the man could not guess she had seen him.

She must go back along the way she had come and warn the paymaster of the impending danger. Yet the men in ambush must not know that she was suspicious.

She swung her pony about and hummed a gay little tune as she rode down the trail; she talked to the pony in bantering accents.

"Oh, Nicodemus Alexander," she sighed, "I could remain on this mountainside all day and admire the view, but you must get me back to town for dinner; I'm hungry."

So she rode back along the downward trail, hoping to meet the paymaster at the round of every curve in the road.

At last, far below, she glimpsed a black horse flying along the trail and a rider who seemed part of his beautiful mount.

"He doesn't ride like an old man," she thought with quickening pulses. "Perhaps he is one of the Rio gang."

Far down the mountain side she met the rider, a tall, sun-browned man, whose saddlebags were well filled. He looked curiously at her as she approached.

"Are you Mr. Burgess?" she asked breathlessly.

"Yes," he smiled, sweeping off his hat.

"And you are paymaster of the Golden Eagle?"

He looked sharply at her.

"Why do you ask that?" he demanded bluntly.

"Because you are in danger—they are waiting for you up yonder—" And hastily she told him of the evil face she had seen and of the warning uttered by the stage driver.

"I was warned," he admitted, "but I didn't take much stock in it—they've been threatening to hold me up for the past year. I've got to get the money to the boys—they'll be rioting if they don't get it," he ended ruefully.

"Can't you transfer the money to my saddlebags and let me follow you up the trail? Then, if they want you to throw up your hands, you can, and before they discover that your bags are empty I can ride on to the mine. They won't hurt you?" she asked anxiously.

"No—all they want is the money," he assured her. "But I can't permit you to endanger your life."

"It's for my own interests," she said calmly; "I am Vera Linwood."

"Vera Linwood—why, Miss Linwood, I was going East next week to see you. The Golden Eagle has developed another rich vein."

"And the Double Eagle has lost one," she said significantly.

"You know, then?"

"I heard yesterday and I am so sorry—I feel like a robber myself—the owner of a pirate mine!"

"That's miner's luck. Come, let us get along, if we must. Just put these packages in your saddlebags—so, and I'll stuff mine with grass. Ride on ahead and don't worry. It will come out all right!" He slapped her pony's flank and mounted his black and followed.

When Vera passed the ambush she was talking to her pony as before.

"Once more, Nicodemus Alexander!" she threatened. "I will ride to the top of the hill; then down again for dinner!" She passed the ambush and waited breathlessly around the bend of the trail. Somewhere near by she heard the pounding of the ore-crushers and she knew that she was near the mines.

Below she heard the tread of Burgess' horse, followed by a sharp command, a momentary silence, and then the murmur of other voices. The hold-up had happened and they were going through the mine owner's pockets and searching his saddlebags for the Golden Eagle's pay roll.

Nicodemus Alexander was smitten with indignant surprise when his rider suddenly jabbed her sharp heel into his flank.

He bounded up the trail, his hoofs scattering the stones underfoot. In a flurry of dust, horse and rider appeared at the office of the Golden Eagle.

A dozen men surrounded Vera.

"Mr. Burgess—held up—help him," she gasped, and tumbled from her pony.

There was a shout of anger as the miners grabbed their weapons and dashed down the trail to meet the paymaster.

Vera leaned dazedly against the office door and stared at the blood trickling down the sleeve of her white blouse.

"Someone must have fired at me," she smiled faintly.

"The plucky little angel!" exclaimed one roughly dressed man as he led her inside the building.

* * * * * * * *

Weeks afterward Mrs. Henry Hendrick reread a letter from Vera. It was dated from Eagle City.

"Dear Aunt Emily," wrote Vera, "I will be home in another week—and I shall bring my husband with me. Don't faint, poor, dear auntie; he is the most splendid man. You can never guess, so I must tell you that I am marrying Anthony Burgess, the son of father's old friend, my trustee. The trusteeship has been transferred to young Anthony because his father is dead, and Anthony says it is perfectly natural that we should have met and loved and married, for now he can continue the trusteeship forever. And, best of all, you are to give up the boarding house and return here with us, if you will, for the Golden Eagle has developed wonderful riches, and Anthony's mine has a new vein of gold and we are all going to be very rich indeed. And Anthony wants me to add a postscript that we are rich in each other and richer in happiness than all the gold in the world could supply!"

One on the Fat Man.

Fat Man in Tram Car—Why don't one of you young gentlemen get up and let one of these ladies sit down?

One of the Young Gentlemen—Why don't you get up and let them all sit down?—London Punch.

Indecorous Dog.

"Mary, did you take Trix out for a walk?"

"Yis, mum. But it wasn't a bit of use, mum."

"Why not?"

"She ran ivery fut of the way."

Not Inclined to Study.

"Don't you think you ought to give more attention to political economy?"

"No," said Senator Sorghum; "if a man hopes to succeed in politics out in my town he doesn't want to economize."

A Similar Result.

"Hubby, if you had never met me would you have loved me?"

"I don't know about that. But I suppose I would have been just as deeply in debt."