



AN HEIR TO MILLIONS

by FREDERICK REDDALE
AUTHOR OF "THE OTHER MAN" ETC.
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS
COPYRIGHT BY J.B. LIPPINCOTT CO.

CHAPTER I.

The westering sun was casting lengthy shadows among the gaunt pines and sturdy aspens along the steep upward slope of a certain wild canyon in the Nevada Sierras.

Five hundred feet below the dry floor of the gulch, which here widened to a narrow valley, was filled from wall to wall with a motley huddle of rough cabins, log-saw cottages, a glaring red-brick opera house, hotel, and bank all in one, and a pair of clapboarded, whitewashed churches.

Upon the sultry and drowsy air of a summer afternoon there arose the confused hum and the hoarse murmur of strenuous industry, above which, like the footsteps of the animated statue in "Don Juan," the insistent note of the busy "stamps," at work night and day, three "shifts" in each 24 hours, dominated all other sounds.

This was the little mining town of Meleen, named in honor of its founder, who was likewise the discoverer, manipulator, and chief owner of the rich Peacock lode, which gave employment to 300 men and netted over a million a year for its stockholders.

Rough and ready, ignorant and shrewd, was old Andrew Meleen. Originally a Welsh miner in Cardiff and later in the Pennsylvania coal fields, he by turns had been volunteer soldier, pioneer, prospector, and finally many times a millionaire, after weary years of fortune-chasing up and down the gold and silver country of the great west.

For the crude affairs of this typical raw western camp, with its bizarre admixture of civilization and savagery, we have only a passing interest in that it is the starting point of the story in hand. Our present and most vividly human concern is with the creator of all this industry and potential wealth—and he lay a-dying.

Far up the eastern hillside commanding the town, whence one could almost fancy he was looking over the next divide to where the flaming sun was setting amid cloudy billows in the wide Pacific miles beyond, on a sort of bench or plateau an acre in extent, stood a curious and rambling wooden structure, in triple part log cabin, hunting ranch, and modern country house.

This unique huddle of divers styles of pioneer architecture really represented as many different periods in the fortunes of its eccentric owner. The rough, unbarked logs of the original single-roomed cabin which formed a prominent wing or angle marked the poor-pro prospector stage; then, with more prosperous times, came an addition framed by a wandering Yankee carpenter and sheathed with boards of red wood, now beauti-

fully weathered to a rich mahogany hue; finally, as if to mark the ultimate rise to affluence of the occupant, a two-story structure had been added, shingled as to walls and roof, while upon three sides a covered veranda wide enough for a fashionable cotillon, approached by generous steps and a peaked porch, gave comfortable assurance of cool shade and a constant breeze shifting with the sun.

Around and above porch and cabin there clambered festoons of grape vines and wild creepers, the dark-green leaves lending a deeper tinge to the background of cedar and redwood posts and walls.

From this eyrie the old man who was its chief occupant could easily toss a lump of his own shining ore on the roofs of the little town beneath; viewed by day, the smoke of its furnaces went winding away in long spirals and ribbons of vapor; at night, the spurts of colored flame from the chimneys of resort house and smelter lit up the opposite sides of the canyon in fitful flashes of murky red, or paled to an orange glow under the wan light of the moon.

The solitary dweller on the hillside never wearied of the changing picture. It was his; he had called into being the town and its throbbing industries; he loved it with the passionate, yearning love of a wifeless and childless old man. For him the cities of the coast—Los Angeles or San Francisco, Portland or Seattle—possessed few charms. They only served to bank his constantly increasing millions. The rough little town, with its amazing monthly output of gold and silver and copper, stood to him in place of wife and child; the queer old ranch overlooking it all was his real home—his pride, his passion, his delight.

And now the time was come when he must leave it all and go hence, for Andy Meleen was dying, and chiefly of that most incurable of diseases, old age, while his vast wealth must descend to an heir whom he had never seen.

Upon a curious contrivance of domestic devising, half bedstead, half reclining chair, set upon casters so that it could readily be wheeled indoors and out, lay the old millionaire. Each livelong day, from sunrise to sunset, he insisted on being placed in his wide porch, whence he could still oversee his beloved town, and gaze at the noble prospect, with its constantly shifting panorama of lights and shadows. Only nightfall drove him within doors.

Rugged and gnarled as his own native hills, originally of great girth and mighty in stature, he was now shrunk to mere skin and bone. All the life and virility of the man seemed to have retreated to the massive head,

as beleaguered forces take refuge in some strong keep for a last desperate rally. From beneath a square forehead and a thatch of grizzled eyebrows a pair of piercing gray-blue eyes flashed imperiously, while from the heaving chest there still issued tones surprisingly strong for one so evidently near his end. There was no sign of senility when he shot a curt query at his only servant, an old pioneer like himself, who sat in the doorway stolidly cleaning a rifle, out of sight but within call.

"Putty nigh time that lawyer fellow was here, eh?" said Andy over his shoulder, striving vainly to raise his head from the high-backed cushions, but only succeeding in moving it from side to side.

Evan rose and went to the railing of the veranda, whence one could see the winding road, scarcely more than a well-trodden trail, which led from the town to the house on the hill. Shading his eyes from the blinding glare of the nearly level sun rays, he peered downward for some moments before responding. Then, saying laconically:

"Jest comin' up the rise," he returned to his seat and his task.

Shortly there became audible the soft thud of hoof-beats and the creaking of straining leather, punctured by the crackling of a whip and the encouraging "cluck-cluck" of the driver.

The road curved behind the house, and as the sounds drew away Meleen followed them with a hearkening, rolling motion of the head infinitely pathetic in its yearning helplessness and impotence.

Soon there was the sound of footsteps within the house, and there appeared upon the veranda the long-expected arrival, Phineas Carboy, a well-known San Francisco practitioner in the law, whose firm had transacted most of Andrew Meleen's affairs since he had been wealthy enough to afford the luxury of eminent legal advice. Never in his life had he needed it more than now.

His eyes flashed with feverish impatience as he responded to the lawyer's formal greetings. Hardly was he seated, note book in hand, than the dyking man rapped out curtly:

"Are y' ready?"

"Quite so, Mr. Meleen," was the response; knowing his man, Mr. Carboy wasted no words on formal condolences or tame civilities.

"Understand what I want done?" was the next question.

"Your telegram intimated that you desired to give me instructions for your last will and testament."

"Instructions—yes—ye'll get enough of them!" with a grim smile; "but I want the thing fixed up this blessed night. My time's short, as y' see. Can y' do it—will it stand?"

Mr. Carboy nodded gravely, and with pen ready poised looked expectantly at his client. But the latter's next words were not exactly those he anticipated.

"How much sh'd you say I wuz wuth, Carboy, if everything wuz cleaned up an' turned into cash?" inquired the old man. The legal mind hesitated, but only for an instant.

"Twenty-five or thirty million dollars at the very least," was the quiet reply.

"I guess that's about it," sighed Andy Meleen. "Now, man, stick a pin through this: I'm going to leave all that I'm wuth to a feller I've never seen!"

He shot a keen glance at Mr. Carboy to judge of the effect of this somewhat startling announcement, but the lawyer was too well trained to show any mark of surprise beyond a slight contracting and lifting of the eyebrows.

"You know his name, I presume, and where he can be found?"

"No, I don't!" was the reply snapped back; "that's for you t' find out. This is the way of it: I had an only sister over there in th' old country named Mattie. She kem t' Ameriky ten year after I did, an' I heard she wuz married an' had a son. But I've forgotten her husband's name if I ever knew it. Ha'n't seen her since she wuz a slip of a girl. 'Course, she may be dead, an' the boy, too, though she wuz younger'n me by four or five year; but you've got to try an' find 'em."

"You never saw your sister after she arrived in this country, and held our communication whatever?" asked the lawyer, making notes.

Meleen shook his head. "I wuz mighty poor myself in those days, Carboy, an'—oh, well, I'd troubles of my own, an' then I drifted west an' out here."

"Where was this sister living when you last heard of her?"

"N' York."

"How many years ago would that be?"

"'Bout 20, I reckon."

"And her son, if living, is to have everything?"

"That's it!" was the emphatic reply.

"Gosh! I'll bet he'll be astonished wherever and whoever he is!"

"Doubtless!" was Carboy's dry comment. "But had you no other kin, Mr. Meleen?"

"Nary a kin," was the reply. "There was on'y me an' Mattie, an' we wuz left orphans when I wuz no bigger'n a shovel."

"No cousins, for instance?" persisted Mr. Carboy.

"Nary a cousin."

"Were you ever married yourself?" was the next query. Simple and necessary as it was under the circumstances, and put in a colorless, matter-of-fact manner, its effect on the recumbent figure of old Andy Meleen was like that of a galvanic battery applied to a corpse. His nervous and shrunken frame twitched and quivered; the once mighty chest heaved as though it would burst asunder; great beads of sweat broke out on face and forehead, and his strong mouth and chin trembled with emotions entirely apart from causes due to age and weakness. Mr. Carboy was genuinely distressed at the effect he had so unwittingly produced. Something in the question had touched Andy on the raw. In halting and fragmentary phrases he said:

"God forgive me, Carboy, I wuz married, an' to the sweetest little woman that ever trod God A'mighty's foot-stool! I wuz a man full grown then—45 years old—old 'nuff to know better! I wuz workin' in the Pennsylvania coal mines. A month after the weddin' we had a main bitter quarrel. There kem a strike, an' I went out along o' the rest o' the boys. Minna didn't like my bein' out o' work, an' told me so. There wuz hot words, an' in a blindin' rage I struck her an' left the house, swearin' I'd never go back! Then, like a fule, I went an' 'listed for Uncle Sam. At the fightin' in th' Wilderness, my fust battle, I got hit in three or four places, an' th' ambulances left me on the field for dead. But an old farmer picked me up, an' after puttin' in a year o' hospital I kem out putty nigh as fit as ever. Th' war 'wuz over, an' then I heard that my wife, my Minna, had died in her time o' trouble an' her girl baby with her. As heaven's my witness, I've niver squared myself with myself for leavin' her alone at such a time. I tramped west—niver showed my ugly face east ag'in—an' you know the rest."

"Forgive me for arousing such painful memories, Mr. Meleen," said Carboy, "but the inquiry was inevitable; we must know where we stand."

Old Andy signified that he heard and appreciated. The strain of this long recital had come mighty near to parting his mortal coil then and there, and he lay as one indeed very near to death. Mr. Carboy waited a few minutes—he was not yet done with his probings into the past. At length Meleen opened his eyes once more and turned them mutely on his inquisitor, who interpreted that as a sign for him to proceed.

"I presume these matters can be verified—the time and place of your marriage and the date of demise of your wife and child?"

For answer the old miner produced a well-worn leather wallet from under the blanket which covered

"You'll find th' dates there," he said faintly. "Anythin' more y' want t' know?"

"One other point must be settled: Suppose this nephew of yours is dead, or cannot be found—who is to inherit in that case?"

Another spasm contorted Andy's rugged features.

"It goes to the state, I s'pose; that's the law, ain't it?"

Carboy nodded.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Ultimate Aim.

Life is given us primarily to develop character, to unfold and evolve the soul, and the physical organism, our body, is the testing ground and gymnasium for its development, says the Philadelphia Record.

The ultimate aim, then, of living should be making the life beautiful within, which always insures loveliness without—the masterful conquest of the lower nature, the willing renunciation of trifling and unnecessary habits; love of the true and perfect and avoidance of the untrue and imperfect; a realization that whatever else others may do or be, that our conscious universe will be made for and by ourselves. The key of life and the art of living are expressed in the words mastery and attainment. This can be done by right thinking, by finding our soul center. We will claim our divine birthright, our royal privilege of standing erect and free with brow bared to the white light of truth, veritable sons and daughters of God.

Independence of a Turkish Princess.

The young Princess Chadye, daughter of the ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid, has refused to accept Ali Namih Bey, son of the ex-grand vizier, to marry whom she was recently brought from Salonica to Constantinople.

She has written to the papers protesting that she was not consulted in the matter, and the papers have published her letter. The princess is only 16 years of age, but she has displayed so much energy in this affair that in order to avoid scandal an official communique has now been made to the press announcing that the engagement has been broken off.

Don't overdo a thing unless you are also prepared to do it over.

THE KEYSTONE
TO HEALTH
IS
HOSTETTER'S
STOMACH
BITTERS



You will find the Bitters
worthy of your confidence
in cases of Poor Appetite,
Indigestion, Dyspepsia,
Colds, Grippe and Malaria.
It has given satisfaction
for over 57 years. Try a
bottle and be convinced.

Prosperous Outlook.

"Since bein' in the city," the Billville man wrote to his home folks, "I have been hit by three automobiles, and ef my lawyer tells me true, I'll get enough money in damages to fetch the whole family for a good long stay, an' ef the balance of you kin continue to git run over we'll be able to buy a big farm an' live happy ever after ward."—Atlanta Constitution.

For Any Disease or Injury to

the eye, use PETTIT'S EYE SALVE, absolutely harmless, acts quickly. All druggists or Howard Bros., Buffalo, N. Y.

A Sensitive Ear.

The poet, Malherbe, the founder of the purity of the French language, was very sensitive on the score of diction. When, during his last moments, his confessor, by way of encouraging him, began to enlarge on the joys of paradise. "Stop," cried Malherbe. "Your ungrammatical style is giving me a distaste for them!"

Injunction Erred.

"What," said the little girl. The father is something of a fastidious as to speech, and he said to the five-year-old: "You should never say 'What!' my dear; always say: 'I beg your pardon.'" That the injunction erred on the side of sweepiness was conveyed to him later, when the little girl, pointing to a blossom, said: "I beg your pardon" is the name of that flower!"

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

To Churn on a Traction Engine.

Jim Nixon went to church last Sunday on his steam threshing traction engine. Jim said he had got good and durned tired of taking to the ditch with his horse and wagon every time he met one of those dod-blasted automobiles, and thought he would ride down the road in a rig they couldn't jar.—Hedge Corners Mass.) 11-14

Care of Screens.

Window and door screens usually get very dusty during the latter part of the summer, and it is poor economy to put them away in that condition; neither is it a good idea to wash them just before storing unless they are most carefully dried to prevent rusting. Kerosene applied with a paint brush cleans the wires better than water, and also prevents rusting.

BEAUTIFUL POST CARDS FREE.

Send 2c stamp for five samples of our very best Gold Embossed Birthday, Flower and Good Luck Post Cards. Beautiful colors and 2c format. No extra. Art Post Card Club, 180 Jackson St., Topeka, Kan.

Her One Condition.

He—Would you be satisfied to give up your present beautiful home and live in a little white cottage?

She—I might, if there was a little, red automobile hitched in front of the door.—Montreal Star.

If Abe Martin Has No Objection.

Link Gillenwater says no man kin be religious when he's breakin' in a pair o' new shoes. More'n half o' the cocoanuts ain't wot they're cracked up to be.

MUNYON'S
PAW-PAW
LIVER PILLS

I want any person who suffers with biliousness, constipation, indigestion or any liver or blood ailment, to try my Paw-Paw Liver Pills. I guarantee they will purify the blood and put the liver and stomach into a healthful condition and will positively cure biliousness and constipation, or I will refund your money—MUNYON.

PISO'S
THE BEST MEDICINE
for COUGHS & COLDS