

## THE INFATUATION OF SILAS P. HOPKINS

"You take my advice, stranger, and don't be so blessed polite to the women, as to put yourself out for 'em."

These words were addressed to me, when I had sat down after giving up my seat to a lady in a New York car; and I felt vexed. The man who spoke them was a shabby-looking individual, so far as clothes went; but he wore diamond studs in his shirt, and a diamond ring on his finger which he was careful to show off to advantage. I took no notice of his remark, and he did not speak again. I alighted at a railway station, where I was to embark on a two or three days' journey, which I looked upon with disfavor, for it promised to be a monotonous time.

I had not been long seated when my friend of the car seated himself opposite, and wrapping himself up in a thick rug, and lighting a cigar, puffed away with evidently supreme enjoyment.

I asked him why he had such a strong feeling against women in particular.

"Wal," he said, "you can't treat 'em same as you can a man; you can't get away from the fact that a woman's a woman; if a man does you a bad turn you can fight him for it. But when it's a woman, wal, I guess you've just got to let things slide and own you're beaten."

"If you're fond of a yarn," he continued, "I guess I ken open your eyes as to what a woman can do, when she feels disposed to try something big. And I shall be more surprised if when I've finished you don't do more than sympathize with me."

The prospect of a yarn pleased me greatly, so I pressed him to get under way, and he began:

Wal, it was this way. About twenty years ago, when I was a young man, I went prospecting for gold. That was before the Klondyke boom, and we didn't shovel it out in spades, I can assure you, at that time. No, it was steady, hard work, and slow at that.

Some of us were more lucky than the rest. There was about twenty-five to thirty in the camp, and about half-a-dozen of us, including myself, were laying up a fair stock of nuggets; we were seeing our fortunes increasing each week, congratulating ourselves an' standing drinks all round on the strength of it. We kept the gold in our huts locked up, certainly, but not that strong, for we were all straight-going men, and had no fear of anyone turning round and dealing dishonest, at any rate Captain Sol would see to that.

Solomon Bare, or Captain Sol, as he was called, ruled the roost on the strength of his being the oldest man in the camp; and if the men were not afraid of him they were of his six-shooter, for he was a dead shot, and took care that everybody knew it.

He was clean shut against fighting, was Captain Sol—I mean just an ordinary drunken row, with no cause for bloodshed. But let a man be insulted, or insult another, or let there be some real cause for satisfaction, Captain Sol was the man to see it through. If the aggrieved parties did not fall in with gentle persuasion, Captain Sol would show them his revolver and swear he'd shoot both if they did not begin operations at once.

But I am drifting away from the point. It was women I was to tell you about, not Captain Sol and the boys, though they will have to figure pretty considerably for all that. Captain Sol was one of the lucky half-dozen, and had a very fair fortune locked up in his hut; and we reckoned the time was not far off when he would shift, and the boys of Sandy Gulch would have to elect another captain.

Things were getting this way, and the Captain and I were both thinking of clearing off, when two strangers came into the camp, who caused us to alter our plans and put off leaving for some little time. It was one evening after a more successful day than usual, and we were all pretty happy. The drink flowed freely, when someone stumbled against the Captain, just when he was in the act of drinking, spilling his drink and half choking him into the bargain.

Most of us could lay claim to possessing a good flow of language, but the Captain, as in everything else, could go one better, and when once started it was some time before his stock was exhausted. He was pulled up this time, however, by a deep strong voice, that just caught him up in the middle of one of his choicest sentences.

"A little less of that language, please; as for the drink I'll stand you another." The Captain closed his mouth with a snap and faced the speaker, drawing his revolver at the same time. "You can can just put that away," said the stranger, quite calmly. "It's not for my sake, but for hers; she's not used to it."

There were exclamations at this, I can tell you. Her; she! and, turning on the stranger we saw, seated near him, a girl. When she saw us all looking at her, she rose and stood by the stranger; her father, I judged at the time. She was a handsome girl, the handsomest I have ever seen; any way, she was a woman, and Sandy Gulch didn't hold out many attractions in their line; eastwards, she was the first to visit

it during my time, and I fancy the last as ever will.

The impression she made on the "boys" was wonderful. I reckon manners had grown rusty out in camp, and they were a proud lot on the whole; but the way they knuckled down before that girl was astonishing. Captain Sol took off his hat and bowed, begged her pardon, and set about clearing the store.

It appeared that the father and the girl had come to look for gold and a fortune; the father to dig, the girl to look after him and do his cooking for him. She would not be left behind, though her father wanted her to; she was bound to have her own way. She was a lively girl, and would have made herself agreeable to all the boys had Captain Sol allowed it, but he seemed to think he had a special claim upon her, and did his best to keep the others at a distance.

She had got on from the first, and the more I saw of her the more I liked her. It did not take Captain Sol long to find this out, and he came and spoke to me about it.

"Good evening, Si," he said. Silas is my name, but the boys called me Si for short.

"Good-night, Captain," I answered very shortly, and walked on; but he caught me up, and started again.

"Now look here, Si," he said, "the sooner you stop fooling round after Miss Julia Harman the better. I'm not one to stand any nonsense."

"All right, Captain. Miss Julia Harman is not your property yet, an', if I can prevent it, she's not going to be. If Julia Harman marries anyone out of this camp, it will be me. See?"

I told you I was in a raging temper or I should never have spoken to the Captain like that, an' I think Sol was taken aback, for it was some minutes before he spoke.

"All right, Si, if you're going to talk like that look out for yourself. If it had been any other of the boys but you there would have been daylight through your precious body before this. But just keep before you that that girl will be Mrs. Solomon Bare, and no one else."

With that he turned on his heel and strode off, while I went off to tell Julia what had happened. A place like Sandy Gulch is not the best place to go courting in, especially when the girl is the only one for miles round, and I found my work cut out to prevent jealousy. However, before long I got Julia to say she loved me and that was all I cared for. The Captain did not remain bad-tempered for long, and we were soon as friendly as before. He kept hanging round Julia more than I cared for, however, and I spoke to her about it.

"Well, Si, now," she said, "I thought you said you loved me, and if you do you ought to trust me."

"It's because I love you," I answered, "that I can't stand seeing you with the Captain so much."

"Then I guess you'll have to stand a bit more of it," she answered, tossing her head. "I'm not going to have murder committed, and over me. If you want to go on loving me you must let me keep in with the Captain and the boys, or you'll find yourself making tracks for another world before long. I've seen the Captain shoot more than once."

Of course, I smoothed things over when I found out her reason for being in the Captain's company, and for some time I found things real pleasant. She was a smart girl was Julia. She could play the banjo, which went down as well as anything else she could have done in Sandy Gulch. I tell you, we had some fair lively evenings.

The boys would form a ring, and there she would sit in the middle and strum out music from that banjo that was a perfect treat to listen to. Then she'd sing—and she could sing, too! but when she got on to love songs she just reached the top of her popularity. She would sigh and flash her dark eyes at you, as though she meant every word she sang. I didn't mind, so long as she sang them at me; it was when she turned them on to the Captain and a few others that I got wild. The worst of it was, I used to let her see I was angry, and that made her all the worse, and she would get as far as throwing kisses at Sol, until I had to get up and leave, for fear of hurting somebody.

But when she came round afterwards, and said she was sorry she had vexed me, I had to give in, and we would kiss and be as good friends as before. I had talked a great deal to Julia about the future; I told her I was thinking of leaving Sandy Gulch with my gold, which I gave her to understand was considerable, and asked her if she would go with me and become my wife. I had better see her father, she said, and ask him.

Old Man Harman was sitting in his doorway on the day when I went to ask him for Julia's hand, smoking a seedy-looking clay pipe, in want of cleaning, I judged, by the way, he shook it, poked it, and growled at it, at frequent intervals. He nodded good-humouredly when I approached and put a chair for me to sit down on.

"Wal, an' how's gold?" he asked as I sat down.

"Pretty fair," I answered, "more work than pay, as a rule; nothing one day, and little more the next."

"Ah, you're one of the lucky ones; I'm just starting, worse luck; you've about laid in your store, I reckon—you don't care which way things run now."

"I've certainly done fairly well," I answered, wondering how to bring up the subject I had come to talk to him about. "I hope you'll have

a good haul, too, one of these days, for Julia's sake.

He flared up in a moment.

"Miss Harman, to you, sir; Julia to me, and no other. My daughter's not common property, let me tell you. I guess I'll have to lay the law down pretty firmly in this yer camp, if this sort of thing is going to flourish."

It was not a bright prospect for me to continue, now—was it? I tell you I felt inclined to throw it up and leave, but Silas P. Hopkins—my name, sir—is not the one to give in, so I went at it straight on the head.

"Mr. Harman, I should not have called your daughter anything but Miss Harman, only I have asked her to be my wife, and she has consented, that is if you agree."

"Hang it!" he said, jumping out of his chair. "You've done what? Your wife, my daughter? What d'you think I came here for? D'you think I came here to marry my daughter to a gold grubber, like the boys here, yourself for example? Understand, young man, I came here to make a fortune, so that my gal could go back and marry among the best in New York, or pick up an English Lord if she wants to. Now you get back to your gold. That's my answer, if there's any more bother," and he handled a revolver threateningly.

Wal, now, there was nothing for me to do but quit, and I guess you'd have done the same if you'd been in my place. I felt tarnation angry, but he was Julia's father, or I wouldn't have answered for the consequences. When I left him I went and told Julia. She was very sorry. "Maybe he'll come round shortly," she said.

I did not think it probable, but there was nothing for it but to wait. I was in a bad temper over it. The camp was in a bad temper over something. Captain Sol and one or two others were vexed, too for some reason. As a result the atmosphere was heavy, we growled at one another over nothing and wanted to fight each other over trifles, which made things unpleasant all round. I got sick of the whole thing, and wanted to chuck it, but I could not go without Julia, and Old Man Harman had not given in.

I told my feelings to Julia, and she said she was tired of the camp, too, and if I liked to take her she would go whether her father would consent or not. She said she was quite old enough to do as she liked, and nobody would prevent her. I was mighty surprised, nevertheless I jumped at the idea, for I loved the girl, and this proved she loved me. We discussed matters for some time, finally arranging to get away under cover of darkness. I was to meet her on the third night from that date at a spot half a mile from camp, when there would be no difficulty in getting away quietly. I was so delighted that it took me all my time to keep my feelings under control, lest I should show the boys that there was something in the wind. On the night on which we were to elope Julia sang and played the banjo as usual, and I laughed to myself to think that after to-night it would be only myself who would be entertained with love songs, and that the camp would be deserted and lonely after her departure. What gave me most pleasure was having beaten Captain Sol, and I let her flash her beautiful eyes at him all the evening without a murmur.

I'm not timid or nervous as a rule, but I will admit, the nearer the time the more fidgety I got; I was afraid something would happen at the last moment. When the time came for me to move, I went to the cupboard where I kept my gold and took out the bags, placing them in one large enough to take the lot; then I went to the door and listened. The boys were fond of going to bed early, and as soon as they'd finished their drink for the night they turned in, and I was mighty glad of it. It wanted about a quarter of an hour to go by before Julia was likely to turn up when I arrived at the appointed place. And I stood there stamping my feet with impatience. It was a dark night, and everything looked favorable. The half hour had scarcely turned when I heard footsteps approaching and Julia appeared, out of the shadow of the trees.

"Julia," I called softly, as I advanced to meet her, "Julia," I had not taken many steps before I was startled to hear another voice and to find Old Man Harman standing in front of me with a revolver levelled at my head.

"Throw up your hands, cuss you," he cried, "or you're a dead man."

I was so taken aback, there was nothing for me to do but give in. I put up my hands and looked at Julia. There was no pity in her face, though she looked at me, curled her lip and laughed.

"Where's the cord, girl?" said her father, without lowering the revolver. "Now, you take this while I do the rest."

While the girl I had loved kept me quiet with the pistol I was being bound hand and foot by the old man cursing most furiously at both of them. When Old Man Harman had tied me to his satisfaction, he took my bag of gold and put it over his shoulder.

"I guess we'll take this along with us," he said, and laughed. "There were six of 'em going to elope with my gal to-night, and we've treated 'em the same as we've treated you, nuggets and all. You're the last, thank Heaven. I reckon Julia will get a handsome wedding present out of all this gold."

I lay there and swore, but all the swearing in the world wouldn't do

any good. Julia came up to me and whispered—

"What a blind lot you are, you men, when you're in love." "But you said you loved me," I answered, as well as I could for swearing, "and that you only went with the others to put them off the scent."

"You fool," she said. "That's what I told them all. Never mind, it's a dry night, I don't think you will take cold; good-bye."

She was polite enough to put something in my mouth to keep me from shouting, or she'd have had my opinion of her pretty strong, I can tell you. As I lay there that night, bound up by that cord, I swore I would never have truck with another woman as long as I lived. When the boys found us next morning all lying in the same condition, only in different directions from the camp, the others said the same thing.

It seems she had made some six of us—those with the most gold laid up, including the Captain and myself—love her, and had made arrangements to elope with the lot, in different places and different times, the same evening. And then she and her parent had trussed us all up and scooted with our gold. It was the meanest trick I ever heard of. It meant us beginning all over again to make a fresh pile. You can understand now, sir, how women have lost their attraction for me and the reason why I never put myself out for 'em.

I assured him he had my sincerest sympathy, and thanked him for his yarn.

But I tried to make him see that women were not all after the stamp of Julia Harman.

"No, stranger," he said, "it's no use; I've been fooled once, and Silas P. Hopkins is not the man to be done twice."—London Tit-Bits.

### DON'T GIVE WAY.

The Sun Is Shining Behind the Clouds.

If you are seeking to accomplish any great serious purpose that your mind and your heart tell you is right, you must have the spirit of the reformer. You must have the courage to face trial, sorrow, and disappointment, to meet them squarely, and to move forward unscathed and undaunted.

Truth, with time as its ally, always wins in the end. The knowledge of the inappreciation, the coldness, and the indifference of the world should never make you pessimistic. They should inspire you with that large, broad optimism that sees that all the opposition of the world can never keep back the triumph of truth; that your work is so great that the petty jealousies, misrepresentations, and hardships caused by those around you dwindle into nothingness.

What cares the messenger of the King for his trials and sufferings if he knows that he has delivered his message? Large movements, great plans, always take time for development. If you want great things, pay the price like a man.

Anyone can plant radishes. It takes courage to plant acorns and to wait for the oaks. Learn to look not merely at the clouds, but through them to the sun shining behind them. When things look darkest, grasp your weapon firmer and fight harder. There is always more progress than you can perceive, and it is really only the outcome of the battle that counts.

### A DIFFERENCE OF LANGUAGE.

Footpad (presenting pistol): "Fork over yer rhino, and be quick about it!"

Near-sighted Editor of Weekly: "I beg your pardon?"

(Sternly): "No monkeying! Unlimber! Perdue the blunt!"

"Pardon me, but I do not exactly apprehend the drift of your—"

"Cheese yer patter! Don't yer see I've got the drop? Unload yer oof."

"I am totally at a loss, my dear, sir, to perceive the relevancy of your observations or to—"

"Whack up, or I'll let her speak!"

"Is there any peculiarity in the external scenery of my apparel or demeanor, sir, that impels you, a total stranger, to—"

"Once more, will yer uncork that swag?"

(Hopelessly bewildered): "My friend, I confess my utter inability to gather any coherent idea from the fragmentary observations you have imparted. There is something radically irreconcilable and incapable of correlation in the vocabularies with which we endeavour to make the reciprocal or correspondential interchange of our ideas intelligible. You will pardon me if I suggest that synchronization of purpose is equally indispensable with homogeneity of cerebral impression, as well as parallelism of idiom and—"

But the highwayman had fled in dismay.

### HUGE SCHEME.

A scheme of unparalleled magnitude is about to be undertaken in California involving the construction of two reservoirs, one of 8,000 acres area and the other, at a level of 250ft. lower, of 2,000 acres area. A canal about ten miles in length will connect the reservoirs. Provision is to be made for a vertical fall of 1,600ft., and this, it is calculated, will develop energy equal to 270,000 horse-power, which will be applied in the generation of electric current for long-distance transmission.

## FROM BONNIE SCOTLAND

NOTES OF INTEREST FROM HER BANKS AND BRAES.

What Is Going on in the Highlands and Lowlands of Auld Scotia.

The price of gas at Gurock has been reduced 4d per 1,000 feet.

Paisley corporation has a balance to the good this year of £2,005.

Greenock fire brigade is not as liberally staffed as it ought to be.

There have been no open-air concerts on Greenock Esplanade this season.

Greenock is evidently declining as a port of embarkation for the Green Isle.

Wishaw tramway has been opened for traffic. It is over eight miles in length.

The new Motherwell cars are the most sumptuously furnished in the Kingdom.

There is an apparent deficit of £1,891 in Paisley Water Trust account this year.

This year the holidays at Johnstone were considerably prolonged owing to dull trade.

Greenock is to make a big effort on behalf of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

Musselburgh is to get a better water supply from the Edinburgh Water Trust.

The late Mr. Peter McK. Martin, Dempster street, Greenock, left £3,327 of estate.

The calico print works, which are the staple industry of Thornliebank are not busy.

There is a deficit of £3,068 this year in Paisley electricity fund, compared with £4,840 last year.

Towards Paisley coronation celebrations only £74 falls to be taken from the common good.

Mrs. Gillespie, the oldest resident in the parish of Corstorphine, has died there in her 99th year.

The Duke of Hamilton is to lay the memorial stone of the new U. F. church at Low-waters, Hamilton.

Mr. Beardmore, Parkhead Forge, has been found liable in £300 for running down a boy with his motor car.

The sale of work in connection with Gillespie U. F. church, Biggar, realized £260—£10 more than was aimed at.

Rev. D. M. Milne, St. Luke's, Edinburgh, has been appointed Grand Chaplain of the Order of Free Gardeners.

By the death, aged 90, of Mr. Peter McKechin, of Hazel Bank Place, Cathcart has lost its oldest male inhabitant.

For the benefit of children it is proposed to erect a sand garden on the western terrace of Well Park, Park, Greenock.

An old Kilmalcolm woman has been struck off the parish roll by death after 50 years on the rates. Her keep was over £1,000.

The Town Council has consented to the proposed memorial to the Scots Greys being erected in Princess street Gardens, Edinburgh.

The Town Council and the Parish Council are fighting over £350 of assessments imposed by the latter on the municipal buildings of Edinburgh.

The design for the new public library, town hall and municipal buildings for Hamilton, by Mr. Alex. Culen, architect, has been awarded the first premium.

The Presbytery have formerly suspended the Rev. H. G. Graham, Avondale, from performing any of the functions of the ministry of the Church of Scotland.

The other day Mrs. Wilson, Springfield place, was fatally injured by falling out her kitchen window while hanging out clothes. She was impaled on an iron railing below.

There is much grumbling in Motherwell over the fact that although it is two years since Mr. Carnegie gifted £12,000 to build a library, nothing has been done in the way of building.

By the falling of a shaft that was being fitted to the Union-Castle liner Armadale, in the Fairfield yard, Glasgow, two engineers and a laborer were instantly killed. The shaft weighed fifteen tons.

### A SALUTARY LESSON.

"Now, remember your salutes," said the corporal, when posting the Irish recruit on sentry. "If you see a lieutenant—he wears one star on his shoulder—slope arms; if a captain—two stars—slope arms. If you see a major—a crown—present arms; if the colonel—stars and crown—present, and turn out the guard."

Pat pondered his orders carefully, but presently he was awakened from his reverie by the approach of the general.

The worthy son of Mars surveyed the cross-swords on the gallant officer's shoulders, and as he was not included in the corporal's category, simply nodded cheerfully.

"Well, my man," said the genial general, "and who are you supposed to be?"

"I'm supposed to be a bit of a sentry," said Patrick. "And who are you?"

"Oh, I'm supposed to be a bit of a general," said the latter.

"A general, is it?" cried the startled Pat. "Then ye'll want something big. The corporal told me about the others, but nothing about yourself at all, at all! But hold hard a minute, and I'll give ye the bayonet exercise, if that'll do."