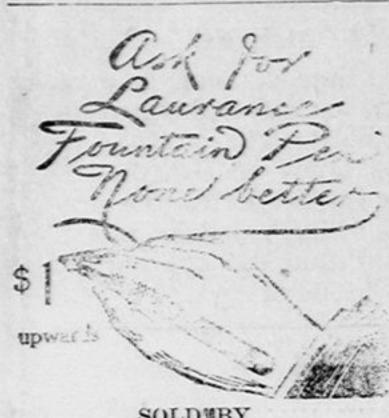
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HAMLIN GARLAND

CHAPTER XI. N the second morning after his meeting with Dolan, Raymond, riding down the trail toward Bozle, discovered a small figure toiling toward him, pausing often to rest. "It can't be Louis," he said, "and yet there's something familiar in that walk. It is Louis, and he's on my trail!"

When the boy, lifting his tired head, recognized the rider he uttered a fierce shout of joy, but he fairly staggered with weakness.

Raymond slid from his horse and put his arm about the reeling lad. "When did you come to camp?"

right?"

Louis leaned against his big friend. "Oh, I've been here a week. I knew you were here somewhere, but I couldn't get track of you. Don was over here yesterday, but I dodged him, and he went back. I didn't sign my own name on the register." He grinned slyly. "See my boots. Aren't they

Raymond looked down at the boy's small legs clothed with miner's laced boots. "You believe in dressing the part, don't you? You are a kidlet." He laughed at the boy's chapfallen look, for Louis detested being called a boy, and added: "Well, what now? Does your sister know where you are?"

Raymond's whole expression changed. "Climb that horse," he said sternly. "You're going back to town, and you're going to send her a telegram at once." As he led the horse down the hill Raymond comprehended something of the anxiety the runaway had brought to Ann and that he indirectly was the cause of it, but at the door of the office he said more gently: "Now, youn-



He led the horse down the hill. ker, hop off. You're going to send word to the folks that you're with me and

Raymond looked at him in silence. "No. I'm going to out you to work." The boy's face threw off its shadow. "That's bully! Now I'm all right. Give me a pen." He wrote:

I have found Rob. We're all O. K.

As he handed it over he said gayly, "Will that do?" "That's artisfactory. Now rush it." As they walked out Raymond sternly asked: "Want to stay with me, do

you? Well, everybody works where I live. We don't allow idlers. If you had something to do you'd keep out o' mischief."

Louis twisted his small right arm. "I'm ready for anything." "Got your outfit-your whole kit?"

"I've got one camera and my drawing materials." Raymond packed his hand bags on the horse, and together they set out up the trail. At first the lad exulted and cried out like a blue jay, but his breathing grew labored as they rose, and at last Raymond turned. "Now, see here, Louis, this air is pretty thin

till a fellow gets used to it; you'd better mount. You'll enjoy the scenery better."

With a feeling that he was succumbing to an unmanly weakness, Louis clambered to the horse's back and perched among his possessions, while Raymond, striding ahead, led the way up and up till the whole world seemed coming into view. "Oh, this is fine! Jupiter, this is the place for me!"

He was unfeignedly delighted with everything-with the new shacks, with the slab tables and the plank chairs and with the liberal and smoking dinner which Mrs. Kelly provided-but he drew a hissing breath of admiration over the grand figure of old Matthew Kelly. "Gee, but you're a wonder! I must do you."

Kelly was puzzled and a little embarrassed by this outspoken admira-

tion and regarded Louis with definite disfavor till he presented him with a pencil drawing of the lads playing on the doorstep, and then he said: "The Lord God has made a power o' people that the Kellys have not seen. This is wan of them. Now, isn't that a wonder? He put the whole thing together in five minutes." Thereafter he accepted the boy for the cunning that lay in his fingers.

Raymond wrote that night to Ann as formally as the riot in his brain would permit:

I planned to take myself out of your life as completely as if I were dead, but Louis would not have it so. When I met him on the hill today and he told me how long he had been from home, I determined to hustle him back to the Springs, but he asked to stay a day or two, and here he is. Will you trust him with me? He will tire of it here by and by and go back to you of his own accord. Just now he is mad over the life and the scenery. As for myself, I am a new man, with new aspirations. They may not seem very high to you, for I am striving now to acquire gold, but that is only a means to an end. There is something else in the world for me to do. I don't know what it is to be-perhaps my care of this wonderful boy is a part of it. At any rate, he is here and not to be driven away without great risk to him and deep pain to me. So, unless you object, I shall keep him. Our life is rough, but not contaminating. I will see that no harm comes to

There was nothing more personal in the letter than this, but Ann's heart warmed to the writer unaccountably. And yet the thought of Louis in a mining camp troubled her. "I ought to go and fetch him away," she said to Don. "No, no! You remain here, and I will go over and see the little scamp

and bring him back if possible." The next morning Raymond put into action a measure he had formulated during the night. He called Louis to him, and together they ascended the "Lookout," as Kelly called the ledge back of his cabin. "See here, lad, I've brought you up here to ask you a few questions," said he.

Louis braced himself. "Fire away!" "As I understand it, you and-Ann are alone in the world-I mean you are closer to each other than to any one else-she's your best friend. You've given her a great deal of anxiety, my lad, and that isn't right. You must go straight back to her and apologize and ask her permission to come back. If she consents, then I'll make a place for you here." "She won't consent. I'd have to run

away again, and I'd do it!" he added deflantly.

Raymond, after a pause, slowly resumed: "Now, I want to make a compact with you. If you'll go down and see her. I will write a letter interceding for you and asking her to let you re-

The lad's face was suddenly illumi- whether you"nated. He threw out his small palm. "I'll do it!" he cried out, and his tone carried conviction.

Raymond continued: "You like me, and I like you. You can't live in the Springs, and your sister can't live here. So it seems that I must be your big brother and look after you. And, hark ye, you must mind what I say, or I'll take a birch to you."

boy. "Can I work in the mine?"

"You're not going to drive me I'll find something on top for you to do. You must take care of those lungs of yours for awhile. But come, let's see if we can't catch the stage."

> "Oh, let me stay till tomorrow!" pleaded the boy. "I don't want to go today. It's too beautiful to miss."

Raymond reflected a moment. "Very well, but you'll want that stage ride. It's one of the finest roads in the mountains. You rattle down the canvon tomorrow, sure thing. Remember

Together they went down toward the reflective. mine, where a group of men were building a log cabin. "Here is where we are to live, provided your sister consents."

Barnett came riding up the hill about sundown and immediately at sight of Louis began a jocose tirade. "You scamp! You young flyaway! A nice interlude you've given us. Ann hadn't slept a wink for a week till she got your message yesterday. How long have you been here?"

Raymond hastened to say, "I induced him to wire as soon as he turned up." "Had you been here all the time, you young rattlepate?"

Louis was not afraid of Barnett. "Yes; I was down there looking for Rob." He pointed toward the town of Bozle.

"Well, I'm to bring you home-in-Louis took shelter behind Raymond.

"No, you don't. Tell him. Rob." Raymond winked at Barnett. "He's going tomorrow on a promise to me,

Don. I've made a bargain with him. He can tell you about it on the way. Moreover, he is going by stage. He's on honor." When they were alone Barnett said:

is the human heart. That boy is crazy about you. By the way, how's the "Almost as good as ever." "Your constitution is a wonder. And

the mining deal?"

"The most unaccountable of all things

"Very promising." In the talk that followed Raymond learned for the first time of the proposed consolidation of the Red Star with two or three other heavy properties, and they fell into a discussion of

the camp. "If I had my way," said Barnett, "I'd have this meddling idiot Larned thrown out of the camp. What business has he here? He's a rank outsider anyway, and this union is a breeder of war." Raymond raised a warning hand.

"Careful, Don. It doesn't do for you to say such things up here. This union has come to stay, and you who employ labor will do well to treat it with a certain measure of respect."

"But you're an employer too." Raymond laughed. "Oh, my little crew don't count. They're all prospectors or cowboys, and, besides, I work right with them and am classed as a working miner. Your case is dif-

Barnett went away calmly superior, but came back from a conference with Mackay, the superintendent of the Red Star, less haughty of manner, but distinctly more acrid of tone. "Mackay says this confounded union is growing rapidly and that practically every incoming miner joins at once. I told him to nip the thing in the bud, and he has begun to formulate a plan to do so."

"Wait a year," warned Raymond. "Wait till I pay for my mine."

That night as Louis sat before the fire in the center of the unfinished cabin his face shone with joy and the heart of the tall miner grew very tender toward him. It was good to have this gay young brother of his love to keep him company. A new sensation arose from having some one to plan for and to protect.

The dreaming lad, outstretched on a pile of blankets with his hands under hysterical with joy over his wonderful his head and his small feet, clothed in moccasins, extended to the blaze, sud-| Skytown. denly turned and said: "Rob, this is the kind of life for me. Wouldn't fa- his value to Ann. She had not realized ther have liked this? I'd be perfectly up to that moment how deeply his care happy if I didn't have to pack off down | was woven into her daily life. it was the hill tomorrow. Why couldn't Ann | jealousy of Raymond's power-an acri come up here?"

cabin fixed up, we will ask your sister resentment, and now that he was we and Mrs. Barnett to come up and visit and triumphantly drawing the 'ox us," said Raymond.

Louis started up. "Oh, will you? If hatred, but she gave her entent Ann were here I would never want to Louis' return because she direct go back east again-never! I could do otherwise, and in a letter to the live here always."

A foot outside disturbed Raymond, and a man's voice called, "Is Rob Raymond here?"

In the unfinished doorway stood a graceful young fellow in a white sombrero and a neatly fitting dark suit. "Jack Munro!" exclaimed Raymond, and they shook hands. "Sit down. This is a boy friend of mine from the Springs," he said, indicating Louis. "What can I do for you?"

"Nothing, old man. Just lined you out today. I heard that a man named Raymond had taken a lease with Kelly, but I didn't know it was you till I saw you with Barnett today. Well, this is wonderful! Where you from? What have you been doing since we-graduated?" There was something in his voice that eluded Louis. Raymond gave Munro a warning glance.

"Oh, a little of everything - cattle ranching, hunting, mining, I saw you last night in Hanley's saloon."

"Why didn't you speak up?" Raymond hesitated. "I didn't know

"Oh, rats! I'm not one to dodge. What did getting fired amount to anyway? I was ready to leave."

Raymond repeated his warning sign. "Have you been back-home?"

Munro smiled broadly. "You bet! I went back and swelled around in high feathers-told my side of the storyunderstand? I didn't let the institution get the drop on me. But, see here, This threat seemed not to appall the | come up to the saloon; I want to talk things over with you. The boys are "No; you can't work in the mine, but | bound to make me take a hand in this

down again. Louis is going back tomorrow, and I'll be alone for a day or two, and then we can talk freely."

"All right. There are a whole lot of things I want to turn over. By the Lord, this is wonderful—our meeting up here!" He was reluctant to go. "You bring up the old days. Well, so

long.' When Raymond returned to his seat his face was grave and his eyes deeply

Louis was much interested in the

stranger. "Who was that, Rob?" "A chap I used to know."

diseases known.

Next morning after breakfast Raymond hurried Louis off down the can-

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yon to the stage and in his letter to Ann repeated his pledge to look carefully after the boy's health and to keep him out of mischief.

Louis arrived at the Springs fairly day's ride and set about to describe His absence had been a revelation of

juice-which had turned her pitt for "Maybe, by and by, when we get our him, while wounded and helpless, in: I his side her beart was lifter w mond she said:



"This is a pay triend of mine."

his happiness is more than my own and I have heard much of the gambling and "Can't do it now, Jack. But come drinking of mining camps. I beg of you to guard him. He is so fine and sweet now. and defilement is so easy.

suddenly became a dark and dangerous place to the young miner. He found it harder to make excuse for profanity and foul jests of the miners, and he went less and less among them and spent more of his time with the lad watching him draw or listening to him while he read.

Their cabin became the certer of the finer spirits of the camp. Dolan and one or two of his friends often came in of an evening to smoke a pipe and | mei and in a few days you will notice play a friendly game of cards. "A visit to the bungalow always pays,"

said one young fellow whose weakness was drink. "They send a fellow away feeling respectable." Mrs. Kelly supervised the house-

keeping as well as she could, and the place was at least warm and cheerful. Once a fortnight Louis rode down the trail to spend Sunday with Ann, but Raymond steadily refused to join him,

though he suffered keenly of loneliness. "I am a miner now," he said. "I've taken myself out of that life." And Louis did not know when he carried these words to his sister that they conveyed a deeper meaning. Ann was aware that Raymond was holding aloof from her, and, while she respected him for his consideration, she was, after all, a woman and resented his self mastery a little.

She was beginning to be bored to hopelessness by the narrow life at the Springs, under conditions which seemed to the outsider ideally beautiful. But Louis came down each time browner, more manly in bearing-almost comical in his assumption of Kelly's walk and Raymond's impassive face. He always had exciting tales to tell and seemed so entirely happy and so well that Ann had not the heart to ask him to return east with her. She even found herself listening with interest to his account of the doings of his heroes, for he had placed Matthe Kelly on the same pedestal with Rob

Mrs. Barnett responded graciously to his invitation to come up and see the peak, but explained that the high altitude was destructive to her, and Ann sbrank from meeting Raymond again, though she expressed to him in a letter a tepid sort of gratitude for his care of her brother.

(To be Continued.)

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