

MOLLY McDONALD

A TALE OF THE FRONTIER

By **RANDALL PARRISH**
Author of "Keith of the Border," "My Lady of Doubt," "My Lady of the South," etc., etc.
Illustrations by V. L. Barnes
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SYNOPSIS.

Major McDonald, commanding an army post near Fort Dodge, seeks a man to intercept his daughter, Molly, who is headed for the post. An Indian outbreak is threatening. Brick Hamlin, a sergeant who has just arrived with messages to McDonald, volunteers for the mission. Molly arrives at Fort Dodge two days ahead of schedule. She decides to push on to Fort Dodge by stage in company with "Sister Bill" Moylan, Gonzales, a gambler, is also a passenger. Hamlin meets the stage with stories of depredations committed by the Indians. The driver deserts the stage when Indians appear. The Indians are repulsed in attacks on the stage. Moylan and Gonzales are killed. Hamlin and Molly plan to escape in the darkness by way of a gully. Molly is wounded and Hamlin carries her. They cross a river and go into hiding. The Indians discover their escape and start pursuit, but go in the wrong direction.

CHAPTER XI.

A Remembrance of the Past.
 Moylan must have had Miss McDonald in mind when he had stocked up with food at Fort Dodge, and had therefore chosen all the delicacies to be found at that frontier post. These were not extensive, consisting largely of canned goods, which, nevertheless, made a brave show, and were clearly enough not the ordinary fare of the border. Hamlin had to smile at the array, but Molly handled each article almost with reverence, tears dimming her eyes in memory.

"He—he bought these for me," she said softly, and looking across reproachfully at the sergeant. "It was the best he could do."
 "I was not laughing at poor Moylan; only, I fear, he had a wrong conception of a girl's needs on the trail. But I reckon our combined appetites are equal to it."

"I do not feel as though I could swallow a mouthful."
 "Under orders you will try. We have a hard day before us, young lady, and some tramping to do afoot. I wish I knew where that horse I turned loose last night has drifted to; in to the bluffs, probably, where the grass is green. He would be of some help just now. Try this, Miss McDonald, for lack of something better. I mean for ham and coffee, but hardly dare build a fire yet. The smoke would be seen for miles away."

"If we were across the river we could use the stage fire."
 "Yes, but there is a wide river flowing between. Don't be afraid of that trip," noting the expression of her face. "It will be easy enough to cross back by daylight, now that I know where the danger spots are."
 "I was not so terribly afraid last night; I hardly had time to realize what was being done, did you?"
 "Well, yes; it was risky business. Awfully treacherous bottom and I was trusting to good luck."
 The sergeant ate heartily, speaking occasionally so as to divert her mind, but for the most part, busily thinking and endeavoring to decide his next move. He sat facing the river, continually lifting his head to scan the opposite shore. There was probably a scouting detail somewhere near at hand, either approaching from the east, alarmed by the report of the fleeing stage crew, or else a detachment tracking Roman Nose's warriors across those plains extending into the north. The latter contingency was the more probable, judging from the Indians' flight, and his own knowledge of the small reserve force left at Dodge. Besides, ride as they might those two fleeing cowards of yesterday could hardly have yet reached that shelter of safety and might not confess the truth of their desertion even when they did arrive. A pursuing force was the only real hope for escaping the necessity of a hard tramp back over the trail. Well, the girl looked fit, and he glanced toward her appreciatively.

In spite of the sad experiences of the past night she was a pleasant spectacle, her eyes bright with excitement, her cheeks flushed under the morning sun which fanned her dark, disordered hair with odd color. Here was a winsome face, with smiling lips, and frank good nature in its contour. He was surprised to note how fresh and well she looked.
 "Are you tired?"
 "Not very. It seems more as though I had dreamed all this than actually passed through the experience. Perhaps when I do realize, the reaction will set in. But now I am strong, and—and not at all frightened."
 "Nor hungry?"
 "It is hard to eat, but I am often that way." Her hand strayed to the

emptied haversack, and she turned it carelessly over, where it lay beside her on the sand. "Why, this is an old Confederate sack, isn't it? I hadn't noticed before; see, 'C. S. A.' is on the flap."

"So it is; perhaps Moylan served in the south."
 "I think not. I am sure this was never his, for he bought it at Dodge. I remember he told me he would have to find something to carry our lunch in." She pushed the flap farther back, then held it up to the sunlight. "There are some other letters, but they are hardly decipherable. I cannot read the first line at all, but the second is somewhat plainer—"Fourth Texas Infantry."

Hamlin reached out his hand swiftly, and grasped the haversack, forgetting everything else in suddenly aroused interest. The girl, surprised, stared up into his face, as he closely studied the faded inscription, his face expressing unconcealed amazement.

"Good God!" he ejaculated breathlessly. "It was Gene's. What can this mean?"
 "You—you knew the soldier?"
 "Knew him? Yes," speaking almost unconsciously, his incredulous eyes still on the inscription, as though fearful it might vanish. "That man was either my best friend, or my worst enemy; under heaven, I know not which. Why, it is like a miracle, the finding of this bag out here in the desert. It is the clue I have been searching after for nearly five years." He seemed to pull himself together with an effort, realizing her presence. "Excuse me, Miss McDonald, but this thing knocked me silly. I hardly knew what I was saying."
 "It means much to you? To your life?"

"Everything, if I can only trace it back, and thus discover the present whereabouts of the original owner."
 "Was that your regiment, then—the Fourth Texas Infantry?"

He bowed his head, now looking frankly at her.
 "Would you mind telling me your rank?"
 "I became Captain of 'B' Company after the fight at Chancellorsville; we served in Virginia under Massa Robert, and lost every commissioned officer in that affair." He hesitated to go on, but she prompted him by a question:
 "And then what? What was it that happened? Don't be afraid to tell me."

"Nothing until the day we fought at Fisher's Hill," he said slowly. "Then I was dismissed from the service—for cowardice."
 "Cowardice!" repeating the word in quick protest. "Why, how could that be? Surely your courage had been sufficiently tested before?"
 "Cowardice, and disobedience of orders," he repeated dully, "after I had been under fire almost night and day for three years; after I had risen from the ranks and commanded the regiment."
 "And you had no defence?"
 "No; at least, none I could use; this man might have saved me, but he did not, and I never knew why."

"Who was he?"
 "My senior captain, detailed on Early's staff; he brought me the orders verbally. I was afterwards accused of disobeying. I was temporarily in command of the regiment that day with rank as major. There was a mistake somewhere, and we were horribly cut up, and a number taken prisoners. It was my word against his, and—he died."

She took the haversack from him, studying the scarcely legible inscription.

"E. L. F. Are those the letters?"
 "Yes; they stand for Eugene Le Fever; he was of French descent, his home in New Orleans."
 "You knew him well?"
 "I thought so; we were at school together and afterwards in the army."
 She looked across at him again, touched by the tender echo of his voice; then leaned forward and placed one hand upon his.
 "You have not spoken about this for a long while, have you?"
 "No," his eyes lighting up pleasantly, "hardly thought of it, except sometimes alone at night. The memory made me savage, and all my efforts to ascertain the truth have proven useless."
 "That is why you enlisted?"
 "Largely; there is no better place to hide one's past than in the ranks

of the plains. I—I could not remain at home with that disgrace hanging over me."

"You must tell me all about it."
 Her head lifted suddenly as she gazed out across the river, shading her eyes. "Why, what are those?" she exclaimed eagerly, "there, moving on the bluffs opposite?"

His glance swept to the northward, and he was as instantly the soldier again. Far away on the upper plateau, clearly outlined against the blue of the distant sky, appeared a number of dark figures. For a moment he believed them buffaloes, but in another instant decided instead they were horsemen riding two by two.

"Get down lower, Miss McDonald," he commanded. "Now we can see, and not be seen. They must be cavalrymen, the way they ride, but we can take no chances."

They watched the black specks pass east to where the bluff circled in toward the river. It was from there those distant riders first observed the dim spiral of smoke still curling up from the burning stage, for they halted, bunching together, and then disappeared slowly down a gash in the side of the hill. Emerging on the lower slope they turned in the direction of the fire, spurring their horses into a swift trot. There was no longer any doubt of their being troopers, and Hamlin stood upright on the sand hummock waving his hat. They were gathered about the fire, a few dismounted beside the dead bodies, before his signal was observed. Then a field glass flashed in the sunlight, and three or four of the party rode down to the bank of the river. One of these, the glasses still held in his hand, his horses, hoofs in the water, shouted across the stream.

"Who are you over there?"
 "White people," answered Hamlin, using his hands for a trumpet. "We escaped from the stage last night. I am a sergeant, Seventh Cavalry, and the lady with me is the daughter of Major McDonald at Fort Devere."
 "How did you get across?"
 "Waded in the dark; there is good bottom. Send a man over with a couple of horses."

The officer turned and spoke to the others grouped beside him; then raised his voice again.
 "Are you sure there is no quicksand?"
 "None to hurt; come straight over the end of that sand spit, and then swim about a dozen feet to the right to keep out of a hole. The water won't go to a horse's belly. Try it, Wasson, you ought to know me."

"You're 'Brick' Hamlin, ain't you?"
 "A good guess, Sam; come on."
 Two troopers left their saddles, and the third man, the one answering the last hail, gathered the reins in one hand, and spurred his horse confidently into the brown water. Following the Sergeant's shouted directions, the three animals plunged forward, and came dripping up the low sand bank. The rider, a sallow-faced man clad in rough corduroy, patched and colorless, leaned over and held out his hand.

"Dern yer o' skin," he said solemnly, but with a twinkle in his eyes, "ye're sure got the luck of it. Ain't see ye afore fer two years."

"That's right, Sam; down on the Cowskin, wasn't it? Who's over there?"
 "Lieutenant Gaskins, an' some o' the Fourth Cavalry, scoutin' out o' Dodge; ben plum to ther mountings, an' goin' home ag'in. What the hell (beggin' yer pardon, mam) has happened here?"

"I'll explain when we get across," and Hamlin swung the haversack to his shoulder, and turned to the girl.
 "This is Sam Wasson, Miss McDonald, a scout I have been out with before; let me help you into the saddle."
 "What the Hell (Begging Your Pardon, Ma'am) Has Happened Here?"

fellows will turn north before they get that far, and will run straight into Maxwell. What do you say, Sam?"
 The scout lolled carelessly in the saddle, his eyes on the river, his lean, brown face expressionless.
 "I reckon as how it don't make no great difference what I say," he answered soberly. "Ye ain't taken no advice from me yet, fur as I remember. But if ye really want ter know, this time, my notion is them bucks will most likely hide in the bluffs till night, an' then sneak past Maxwell after it gets good an' dark. If this yer was my outfit now, I'd just naturally light on to the trail fast, orders or no orders. I reckon it's Indians we run out after, an' I don't suppose the war department would find any fault if we found a few."

The blood surged into the lieutenant's face, but opposition only served to increase his obstinacy.
 (TO BE CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER XII.

The Parting.
 They recrossed the stream carefully, the horses restless and hard to control in the current, the men riding on either side, grasping the bit of the girl's mount. Others had joined the little squad of troopers on the bank, and welcomed her with a cheer. The lieutenant dismounted. At sight of the girl's face he whipped off his hat, and came forward.

"Miss McDonald," he said, pleasantly greeting her, "I am Lieutenant Gaskins, and I have met your father—of the Sixth Infantry, is he not? So glad to be of service, you know. You were in the stage, I understand; a most remarkable escape."
 "I owe it all to Sergeant Hamlin," she replied, turning to glance toward the latter. "He bore me away unconscious in his arms. Indeed, I scarcely realized what happened. Do you know anything regarding my father?"
 "Oh, yes, I can put your mind at ease so far as he is concerned. I presume you were endeavoring to reach his post when this unfortunate affair occurred."

"Yes."
 "Sheridan has ordered Devere abandoned for the present, and the major's troops are to return to Dodge. No doubt we shall be in the field within a week or two. But we can cultivate

acquaintance later; now I must straighten out this affair." He bowed again, and turned stiffly toward Hamlin, who had dismounted, his manner instantly changing. He was a short, heavily built man, cleanly shaven, with dark, arrogant eyes, and prominent chin.

"You are a sergeant of the Seventh," he began brusquely. "What were you doing here?"

"My troop is stationed at Fort Union," was the quiet response. I carried despatches to Devere, and while there was requested by Major McDonald to intercept his daughter and turn her back."
 "Were you subject to Major McDonald's orders?"
 "It was not an order, but a request."
 "Oh, indeed; a mere pleasure excursion?"

"It has hardly turned out that way, sir, and conditions seemed to justify my action."
 "That is for others to determine. When was the attack made?"

"Just before sundown last evening. The driver and guard escaped on the lead horses, and the wheelers ran away, wrecking the coach."
 "There were four passengers?"

"Yes; we fought them off until after dark, although the Mexican was killed by the first fire. I don't know when the other man got his."
 "Who were they?"

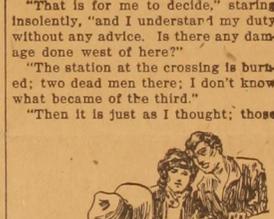
"Gonzales ran a high-ball game at Santa Fe; the other, Moylan, was post-sutler at Fort Mercy."
 "How many Indians? Who were they?"

"About thirty; we must have killed five or six. It was hardly more than daylight when they left, and I could not tell just how many bodies they strapped on the ponies. They were a mixed bunch of young bucks, principally Arapahoes, led by Roman Nose."
 "Went west, hey?"
 "Yes, sir."

The lieutenant turned his gaze up the river, and then looked at Wasson, who remained seated in the saddle.
 "Must be the same lot Maxwell told us about up on Pawnee Fork, Sam," he said at last. "He will be likely to cut their trail some time today. We knew a bunch had headed south, but didn't suppose they had got as far as this already. Better leave Maxwell to run them in, I suppose? Our orders are to return to Dodge."

"They haven't three hours the start," ventured Hamlin in surprise, "and cannot travel fast with so many of their ponies doubly loaded."
 "That is for me to decide," starting insolently, "and I understand my duty without any advice. Is there any damage done west of here?"

"The station at the crossing is burned; two dead men there; I don't know what became of the third."
 "Then it is just as I thought; those



IDEAS for HOME BUILDERS

By **WM. A. RADFORD**

Mr. William A. Radford will answer questions and give advice FREE OF COST on all subjects pertaining to the subject of building, for the readers of this paper. On account of his wide experience as Editor, Author and Manufacturer, he is, without doubt, the highest authority on all these subjects. Address all inquiries to William A. Radford, No. 178 West Jackson boulevard, Chicago, Ill., and only enclose two-cent stamp for reply.

An eight-room, full two-story house, with a splendid cellar and a good attic, is what every large family needs. There are a great many different styles of eight-roomed houses. Eight rooms seem to be about the size required by business men in the smaller towns and country places.

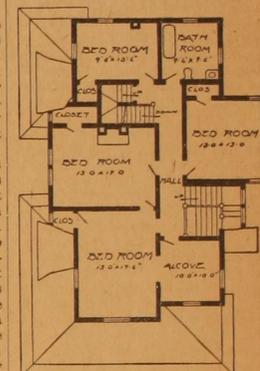
A great many farmers are now building new houses. Farmers have been prosperous of late, and they are using considerable money in building. A farmer likes to have a house look well, and to have conveniences for doing the work; that is, live, up-to-date farmers do. There are plenty of the other kind, but they are not building houses like this.

This house is about as large as necessary on the average farm. It is about as large as a furnace will heat economically, being 35 feet in width by 49 in length, exclusive of porches. The stairway to the attic is closed so that no heat is wasted in that direction. A hot-air furnace is the best means of heating up a house of this size. Anything larger should have hot water or steam. There is a great advantage in hot air, from the fact that it furnishes ventilation; most houses in the country are shy on ventilation.

Members of farmers' families in some rural districts are more subject to lung diseases and pulmonary troubles than the inhabitants of towns or cities. Physicians in country places say harsh things about some farmers, claiming that the prevalence of consumption in rural districts is due to living in houses without proper ventilation and heating; also that the extra burden thrown upon females by want of conveniences for doing housework is a contributing factor. They name farmers who are very careful of their horses and cattle, but very neglectful of wife and daughters. They are even bold enough to say that the first care with such men

the comfort of the farm stock; that is humane, and it is profitable; but the family is worth more than the animals. The first consideration should be bestowed on the house, and the barns should be a close second. Water supply, heat, ventilation, drainage, plumbing, laundry arrangements, bathroom facilities, disposal of sewage and garbage, and ventilation of the cellar, are very important topics for consideration. They make for health; but, when neglected, they often lead to disease.

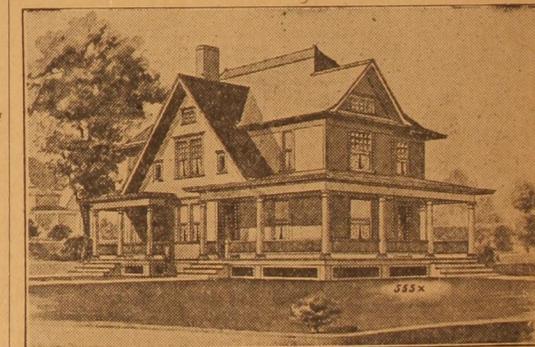
The verandas on this house are especially attractive when it is built in the country. They give an air of



Second Floor Plan.

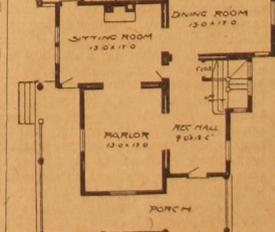
ease and refinement which goes especially well with a good farm that is properly managed. The front veranda for hammocks and easy chairs, with a porch parlor for callers in the summertime, is just right. The side porch, having a door from the kitchen and another from the sitting room, makes a splendid work room for hot weather, while the sitting room projection makes sufficient division between porches.

The back stair in this house reaches from the cellar to the attic, one flight over another all the way up—an arrangement that is convenient and



seems to be to provide good feed, shelter, and good stables for the stock, and the old house must wait until everything else is attended to. In the meantime the women folks are obliged to work in a drafty kitchen, and to sleep in bedrooms that are not heated. The result is that they spend the night in close rooms with the windows shut in order to keep warm.

Some of these physicians claim that there would be no difficulty in keeping the girls and boys on farms if the liquid from this is siphoned into the second tank automatically when it fills up to a certain point. Two kinds of bacteria are known to work in the two tanks. The kind in the first tank require but little air; the work when no light or plenty of air is admitted. These bacteria destroy the solids in the sewage. A peculiar feature about this system is the fact that the solids, even greases, are reduced to a harmless deposit in the form of scum on the top of the water, and the amount of scum and precipitate does not increase but remains the same month after month. It is not definitely known what becomes of the additional amount added each year. It disappears as if by magic.



First Floor Plan.

economical" of room. The cellar is big enough to partition off a storage room for fruits and vegetables in different compartments.

House drains should connect with a septic tank, when properly constructed, is just as good as a city sewer, and it is no more trouble. What is known as the septic system of sewage disposal was tried out theoretically, scientifically, and practically in England years ago. It consists of two tanks—the first as nearly air-tight as possible. The liquid from this is siphoned into the second tank automatically when it fills up to a certain point. Two kinds of bacteria are known to work in the two tanks. The kind in the first tank require but little air; the work when no light or plenty of air is admitted. These bacteria destroy the solids in the sewage. A peculiar feature about this system is the fact that the solids, even greases, are reduced to a harmless deposit in the form of scum on the top of the water, and the amount of scum and precipitate does not increase but remains the same month after month. It is not definitely known what becomes of the additional amount added each year. It disappears as if by magic.

The septic tank system is not necessarily expensive. Two round holes in the ground six feet in diameter each, and six feet deep, are sufficient to take care of the sewage from a large house. These underground tanks may be made of cement, and should be connected with a siphon at least three inches in diameter. This siphon is a simple affair, and may consist of a U-shaped pipe, or the outlet of which should be three or four inches lower than the inlet. The liquid discharge from the second tank is clear, colorless, and almost pure water.

HORSES LOVED BY SOLDIERS

Animals That Have Carried Leaders Through Famous Campaigns Remembered With Affection.

The fact that King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, commander-in-chief of the Balkan forces, has a favorite black charger which he has named Yama, after the place of that name on the Black sea, where his summer place is situated, reminds one of the affection which has existed between cele-

brated soldiers and the horses which have accompanied them through their numerous campaigns.

One of the most famous war horses was Lord Roberts' gallant charger, Volonel, which died a few years ago, and lies buried near the Royal hospital, Dublin. Volonel was a gray Arab which Lord Roberts bought in India, and he rode the animal to Kandahar. Lord Roberts was very much attached to the animal, and when Queen Victoria awarded medals to the soldiers who had gone through the Af-

ghan war the hero of Kandahar proudly hung round his charger's neck the Kabul medal with four clasps and the Kandahar star of bronze.

The best known of Lord Kitchener's war horses was a handsome chestnut which he named Omdurman. The animal carried Kitchener during that battle, and ultimately went with his master to South Africa during the Boer war.

Modern idealism. Our intuitions of a goodness, a beau-

ty, a truth, transcending anything that earth can show, our persistent devotion to ideals that actual life always disappoints, our postulates of a perfection that rebukes and shames our practice—what can these things mean save that—a refraction of the white light of eternity by life's dome of many-colored glass, a sequence of shadow pictures cast on the further wall of the dim cavern where we sit, our eyes averted from the true light of the world?—Paul Shorey (in Plato).