

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.
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SYNOPSIS.

Major McDonald, commanding a company near Fort Dodge, seeks a man to intercept his daughter, Molly, who is headed for the post. An Indian outbreak is threatened. "Trick" 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 "Sugar" Moyle, a horse salesman, a gambler, is also a passenger. Hamlin meets the stage with stories of devastation committed by the Indians. The driver deserts the stage when Indians appear. The Indians are twice repulsed. Hamlin and Molly escape in the darkness. Molly is wounded. Hamlin is marked C. S. A. He explains to Molly that he was in the Confederate service and dismissed in disgrace under charges of cowardice. At the close of the war he enlisted in the regular service. He says the haversack was the property of one Capt. LeFevre, who he suspects of being responsible for his disgrace. Troops appear and under escort of Lieut. Gaskins Molly starts to join her father. Hamlin leaves to rejoin his regiment. He returns to Fort Dodge by summer, fighting Indians, and finds Molly there. Shots are heard in the night. Hamlin rushes out, sees what he believes is the figure of Molly hiding in the darkness and falls over the body of Lieutenant Gaskins, who accuses Hamlin of shooting him. The sergeant is proven innocent. He sees Molly in company with Mrs. Dupont, whom he recognizes as a former sweetheart, who threw him over for LeFevre. Mrs. Dupont tells Hamlin LeFevre forced her to send him a lying note. Hamlin declares he has been looking for LeFevre to force him to clear his record.

though coupled with his former intimacy with the woman, was not sufficient excuse for his interference. The Major would treat the revelation with indifference, even disbelief, and Miss Molly might even resent his meddling in the affair. Besides he was not altogether convinced that the girl had not been actually present at, and in some manner connected with, the attack on Gaskins. The memory of that face, shrinking behind the corner of the barrack wall, remained clear in his mind. He might be mistaken, but perhaps it would be best to go slow. It was a huge, bare hall, although the walls were concealed by flags, while other draperies were festooned along the rafters. The band was stationed upon a raised platform at the rear, and a hundred couples occupied the floor. The men present were largely officers attired in dress-uniforms, although there was a considerable sprinkling of civilians, a few conspicuous in garments of the latest cut and style. Evidently invitations had been widely spread, and, considering time and place, liberally responded to. Among the women present the Sergeant saw very few he recognized, yet it was comparatively easy to classify the majority—officers' wives; the frontier helpmates of the more prominent merchants of the town; women from the surrounding ranches, who had deserted their homes until the Indian scare ceased; a scattered few from pretentious small cities to the eastward, and here and there, younger faces, representing ranchmen's daughters, with a school-teacher or two. All together they made rather a brave show, occasionally exhibiting toilets worthy of admiring glances, never lacking ardent partners, and entering with unalloyed enthusiasm into the evening's pleasure. The big room presented a scene of brilliant color, of ceaselessly moving figures; the air was resonant with laughter and trembling to the dashing strains of the band. Primitive as it was in many respects, to Hamlin, long isolated in small frontier posts, the scene was strangely attractive, his imagination responding to the glow of color, the merry chime of voices, the tripping of feet. The smiling faces flashed past, his ears caught whispered words, his eyes followed the flying figures. For the moment the man forgot himself in this new environment of thoughtless pleasure. From among that merry throng of strangers his eyes soon distinguished that one in whom he felt special interest—Mrs. Dupont, dancing now with McDonald, the rather corpulent Major exhibiting almost youthful agility under the inspiration of the music. The lady talked with animation, as they circled among the others on the floor, her red lips close to her partner's ear, but Hamlin, suspicious and watchful, noted that her eyes were busy elsewhere, scanning the faces. They swept over him apparently unseeing, but as the two circled swiftly by, the hand resting lightly on the Major's shoulder was uplifted suddenly in a peculiar, suggestive movement. He stared after them until they were lost in the crowd, feeling confident that the motion of those white-gloved fingers was meant as a signal or warning. To whom was it conveyed? He glanced aside at the jam of figures in the doorway. Both the black-whiskered man and Connors had disappeared. It was a signal then, instantly understood and obeyed. The Sergeant had scarcely grasped this fact when his attention was diverted by the appearance of Miss McDonald. She was dancing with a civilian, an immaculately dressed individual with ruddy, boylike face. His intense admiration of his partner was plainly evident, and the girl, simply dressed in white, her cheeks flushed, her dark eyes bright with enjoyment, set Hamlin's cool nerves throbbing. He could not resist gazing at her, and as their eyes met, she bowed, the full red lips parting in a smile of recognition. There was no reservation, no restraint in that quick greeting, as she whirled by; he could not fail to comprehend its full significance—she had not forgotten, had no desire to forget. What he imagined he read in her face swept all else from his mind. Instantly, and with eager eyes, he followed her slight, girlish figure as they circled the hall. The music ceased, and he still watched as the lad led her to a seat, himself sinking into a chair beside her. Then the passing out of several men, who desired return checks, claimed his attention.

When the last of these had disappeared, he glanced again in his direction. She was alone, and her young partner was walking toward him across the deserted floor. The lad came to the door, which by now contained few loiterers, and stood there a moment gazing out into the street. "Are you Sergeant Hamlin?" he asked quietly. "Yes." "Miss McDonald requested me to hand you this note unobserved. I have no knowledge of its contents." Hamlin felt the flutter of the paper in his palm, and stood still, clinging to it, as the other carelessly recrossed the room. She was looking toward him, but he made no motion to unfold the missive, until his eyes, searching the chairs, had located Mrs. Dupont. The very secret of delivery made him cautious, made him suspect it had to do with that woman. She was beside the band-stand, still conversing with the Major, apparently oblivious to any other presence, her face turned aside. Assured of this, he opened the paper, and glanced at the few hastily scribbled lines. "I trust you, and you must believe I do not do this without cause. During the intermission be in the hotel parlor."

CHAPTER XIX.

A Full Confession.

There were two more dances scheduled on the program. The last of these had begun before the infantry sergeant returned, and, apologizing for his long absence, resumed his duties at the door. Across the room, Hamlin's eyes met those of Miss McDonald, where she danced with an unknown officer; then he turned and showed his way to the street. The hotel opposite was all bustle and confusion, the bar-room crowded with the thirsty emergency waiters who had rushed about the hall completing final preparations. The Sergeant, intent on his purpose, and aware that the band had ceased playing, dodged past these and entered the parlor. It was already occupied by four men, who were playing cards at a small, round table and smoking vigorously, entirely engrossed in their game. None of them so much as glanced up, and the intruder hesitated an instant, quickly determining his course of action. There was little choice left. The girl would never make an appointment with him except through necessity, and it was manifestly his duty to protect her from observation. Two of the men sitting there were strangers; the others he knew merely by sight, a thin-horn gambler called Charlie, and a sutler's clerk. His decision was swift, and characteristic.

"Sergeant Hamlin, Seventh Cavalry." "Oh!" the exclamation came from between clenched teeth. "Hell, man, you startled me." "So I see; nervous disposition, I reckon. Well, are you going quietly or shall I hoist you over the rail?" "I had an appointment here." "Can't help that, partner. This porch is going to be vacant inside of one minute, or there is a declaration of war. Your easiest way out is through that window, but you can go by rail if you prefer." The black beard wasted half his allowed time in an effort to bluster; then, to Hamlin's utter disgust, slunk through the open window and across the darkened parlor. "The pusillanimous cuss," the latter muttered, "he's worse than a cur dog. Blamed if he wasn't actually afraid of me. A gun-fighter—pugh!" He lifted his voice, as "Reb" paused in the light of the hall beyond and glanced back, a fist doubled and uplifted. "Oh, go on! Sure, you'll get me? You are the brave boy, now," and Hamlin strode toward the door threateningly. "Lope along, son, and don't turn around again until you face the bar." He drew the door partially to again, and sat down facing the opening, where a stray beam of light fell across the floor. Thus far the adven-



"This Porch is Going to Be Vacated Inside of One Minute."

ture had scarcely proven interesting. The last encounter had been a distinct disappointment. The dispersal of the card-players was, as anticipated, easily managed, but the reputation of "Reb" as a killer and bad man had given him hope of resistance. But instead he had proven a perfect lamb. Hamlin crossed his legs and waited, his mind divided in wonder between what Miss McDonald might want, and the cowardice of the fellow just driven out. The man was actually afraid to start a row. Yet he had got to his feet with that intention; it was only after he had looked into Hamlin's face and asked his name, that he began to hedge and draw back. Could he have recognized him? Could Mrs. Dupont have warned him of danger in his direction? That would seem impossible, for the woman had not been with him for even a minute since their conversation. She had given him a swift signal at the door of the dance hall, but that could scarcely account for his present desire to avoid trouble. An engagement? Probably with Mrs. Dupont. But what was the use of speculating? Perhaps when the girl came she would have some light to throw on these matters. Surely her sudden determination to see him privately must have connection with this affair. These thoughts came swiftly, for his period of waiting proved to be but a short one. He heard the laughter and talk as the merry-makers came into the hotel from the dance hall, crowding the passage, and thronging in to where the tables were set. Then a rattle of dishes, and the steady shuffling of waters rushing back and forth. Occasionally he could distinguish a shadow out in the hall, but never changed his motionless posture, or removed his eyes from the aperture, until she slipped noiselessly through and stood there panting slightly, her hand clasping the knob of the door. Apparently in the semi-darkness of the room she was uncertain of his presence, while her white dress touched by the outside reflection made her clearly visible. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Unwarranted Criticisms.

Major Hubert J. Cashalton, who has been ten days in New York, and therefore has a right to speak as one with authority on phases of life in the metropolis, admits that he has seen there more beautiful young women from eighteen to twenty-five years old than in any other city. "After that the women appear to incline toward plumpness and lose their symmetrical lines, which is a pity. Fifteen! And the gallant major belongs to the Indian army, and the Orientals like their women with curves rather than with lines. With more desperate energy than another," says an English author, Mr. Charles Thomas-Stanford, in a recently published book "About Algeria," "it is that our people are the only successful colonists." A motor drive through the rich plain which encircles Algiers will send our long cherished beliefs a-packing to the limbo of dead British prejudices." The author describes with special enthusiasm a visit to a farm whose equipment included two motor cars and an aeroplane.

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.

When going into a building project there are three considerations of importance that present themselves. In the first place there is the design or outward appearance of the structure, next the arrangement of the dwelling inside for comfort and convenience, and last the cost of the building.

There is apt to be a wide range of choice in regard to the first factor—the design or outward appearance of the house. This is a matter to be decided according to the taste of the owner and the requirements of the building site. It is proverbial that tastes differ widely; so there can be no definite fixed requirements along that line. Also the needs of different locations vary greatly. It has been said that we plan the outside of our houses to please the neighbors, or to make a brave show from the street. Accordingly this first factor, that of outward appearance, may at times be of very little real importance, although of course everyone would prefer to live in as attractive a dwelling place as possible.

All things considered, the interior of a residence is far more important than the exterior. Real satisfaction in a home comes from the comfortable,

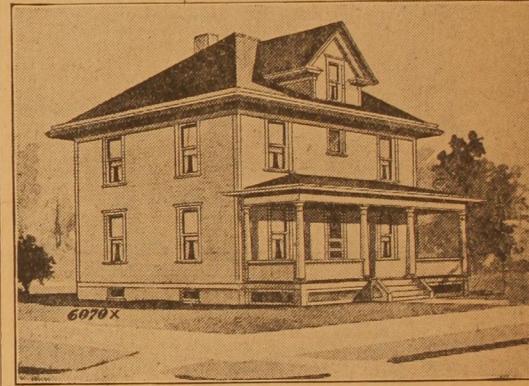
started it will be a constant joy and satisfaction to add to its comforts and attractions by working in new features as time goes on.

In the design illustrated herewith the interior of the house has been made most important, while the outside is of neat and trim appearance. Still, there is nothing elaborate about it, it being designed just as economically as could be possible. A perfectly square house with a hip roof has proved itself to be the most economical of any; and when properly arranged within makes as comfortable and satisfactory a home as could be desired.

The first floor plan of this house is exceptionally good. From the central square hall one finds the living room occupying the entire space at the left, while to the right is the dining room, with the kitchen just back of it. The stairway goes up with a single turn, and is so arranged that the front stairway from the reception hall and the back stairway from the kitchen open onto a common landing, thus saving the expense of an extra stairway and the space usually occupied by one.

The living room is designed in accordance with the most modern ideas. It is very large and comfortable, 12 feet by 27 feet in size. In addition there is an alcove containing a wide fireplace. This room would always be the center of the home life, cheery and inviting, and capable of accommodating a large number of persons without crowding.

On the second floor four good-sized bedrooms with an abundance of closet



cozy and inviting features of the living room; the bright cheerfulness of the dining room, and the conveniences provided not only in the kitchen and pantry, but also in the other parts of the house. It matters little what the outside appearance is—granted of course it is trim and neat—if the interior is comfortable and home-like and so arranged that the work can be done easily. The third factor, that of cost, very often seems to be, if not most important, the most important of the three. Most home builders have to set a definite figure and make up their minds not to go over it. The outside design can be changed from one style to another, and the interior arrangement is a matter of choice, no one plan being absolutely essential. But with the cost it is different. Most of us have to carefully determine, before building, just what can be afforded; and if the figure decided upon should be exceeded disaster might follow. It is just as well, too, that this is so. It leads to economy and close figuring and careful attention to the details of the work, and this leads to satisfactory results. It seems to be quite the habit of many building contractors, and also with the architects, to be too optimistic when quoting on preliminary estimates. The prospective builder is misled, perhaps unintentionally, into believing that a much more elaborate structure can be built for the amount he has decided on than is in reality the case. The little \$2,000 bungalow, of the story, which cost \$5,000 to build, is an example. The fact of the matter is, it is difficult if not impossible matter to make an accurate estimate on preliminary plans. The little extra features that are not shown, but which are usually included in the specifications as the planning proceeds, amount up to an astonishing total. If all the desirable features that the banker has in his new \$20,000 residence are attempted to be incorporated into the plans for a simple little \$3,000 house it is certain that there will be a wide difference between the preliminary estimates and the final figures offered in the final bids based on the complete plans and specifications. For a house of moderate cost, especially if it is of pretty good size, the only safe way is to make a firm resolution, and stick to it, to cut out all the little costly luxuries and to retain only the essentials which are necessary for comfort. Many features can be added five years after a building is put up just as well as while the house is being built. After a home is once

HAVE TO BE RESOURCEFUL

Postal Service Employees Called On to Decipher Some Extremely Odd Forms of Address.

A postcard came into the local post-office yesterday with simply this address: "To the man whose picture is on the other side." The card on the reverse side contained the pictures of Dr. Joseph M. Ganey and Dr. Gordon I. Hislop of this city. The card was turned over to Dr. Ganey.

It was sent by L. B. Meimeyer, a fruit grower of Los Angeles. The picture was taken by him on board the Prince Heinrich en route from Alexandria to Naples just as the steamer was getting into Naples. Apparently he had forgotten the names of his fellow passengers, but did remember that they were from this city, so he sent the card on with the odd directions. The card was mailed from Naples.

In this connection probably the most peculiar address was that of a letter coming into this country—one that came to New York from a city in Germany. It was addressed: "Third House in America," and bore the name of a German. The New York post-office was nonplussed. Finally one of the men got an idea. He went to the pier of a line in Hoboken where he thought the man to whom the letter belonged might have landed with others from Germany. Then he walked up three houses and went in. Sure enough, that was the destination of the letter. The addressee didn't know how to tell his friend in far-off Germany how to direct the letter, but just told him the house was the third in America, and that was the way the letter came to the right man—New London Telegraph.

Small Beginning.

"My love," said Mr. Blockspur, striking a pose "I feel that I was born to be a leader." "Is that so?" asked Mrs. Blockspur, mildly. "Well, you might begin by leading the cat out. It is nearly time for us to retire."

CHAPTER XVIII.—Continued.

Left alone, except for the infantry man at the other side of the entrance, and with nothing to do beyond keeping back the little crowd of curious watchers thronging the steps, Hamlin interested himself in the assembly, although keenly conscious of those two men who continued to linger, staring into the brilliantly lighted room. That the two were closely involved with Mrs. Dupont in some money-making scheme, closely verging on crime, was already sufficiently clear to the Sergeant's mind. He had overheard enough to grasp this fact, yet the full nature of the scheme was not apparent. Without doubt it involved Gaskins as a victim; possibly Barrett also, but Hamlin was not inclined to interfere personally for the protection of either of these officers. They could look after themselves, and, if they succumbed to the charms of the lady, and it cost something, why, that was none of his affair. But somehow the suspicion had come to him that he had accidentally stumbled upon a more complicated plot than mere blackmail. Mrs. Dupont's intimacy with Molly, and the use she was making of her distant relationship with the Major to further her ends, made him eager to delve deeper into her real purpose. At least these two, apparently ignorant of their guest's true char-



The Hand Resting on the Major's Shoulder.

acter, should be warned, or, if that was impossible, protected from imposition. Their open friendliness and social endorsement were the woman's stock in trade at Dodge, and whatever the final denouement might be, McDonald and his daughter would inevitably share in the ensuing disgrace of discovery. Even if they were not also victimized, they would be held largely responsible for the losses of others. Had Hamlin been a commissioned officer he would have known what to do—his plain duty as a friend would have taken form in a frankly spoken warning. But, as it was, the chains of discipline, of social rank, made it seemingly impossible for him to approach either the Major or his daughter openly. He did not actually know enough to venture such an interview, and mere suspicion, even

TELLING DISTANCE BY SOUND

Modern Science Has Brought It to Extremity That Is Easily Susceptible of Proof.

There is an old saying that if you can count five between the flash and thunder you are safe. Modern science tells us that if you can see the flash at all you are safe, because if it struck you you would have no time to see it. The speed of lightning is about 180 times that of light.

The old idea was that if you could count five the storm was a mile away, which was considered a safe distance. Sound travels at the rate of 1,142 feet a second, or about a mile in five seconds. In order to count seconds accurately many photographers start by saying to themselves: "No one thousand, one one thousand, two one thousand, three one thousand," etc. This gives about the right space between each count of one, two, three, etc., if you stop at the number of seconds you want to time. With a little prac-

tice with a watch beside you this is accurate up to half a minute or more. If you hear a steam whistle blowing and note the instant it stops you can count the seconds until you lose the sound, and by allowing a fifth of a mile for each second you can judge the distance. The same is true of guns, or an explosion, or even of hammering or any loud sounds. Other Colonists Than British. If there is one tenet in which British self-complacency has clung

with more desperate energy than another," says an English author, Mr. Charles Thomas-Stanford, in a recently published book "About Algeria," "it is that our people are the only successful colonists." A motor drive through the rich plain which encircles Algiers will send our long cherished beliefs a-packing to the limbo of dead British prejudices." The author describes with special enthusiasm a visit to a farm whose equipment included two motor cars and an aeroplane.