

# 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 an army post near Fort Dodge, seeks a man to intercept his daughter, Molly, who is headed for the post. An Indian outbreak is threatened. Sergeant "Buck" Hamlin meets the stage in which Molly is traveling. They are attacked by Indians, and Hamlin and Molly escape in the darkness. Hamlin tells Molly he was discharged from the Confederate service in disgrace and at the close of the war enlisted in the regular army. He suspects one Captain LeFevre 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 after a summer of 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 seeks Molly in company with Mrs. Dupont, whom he recognizes as a former sweetheart, who throw 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. Later he overhears Dupont and a soldier talking up a money-making plot. Molly seeks an interview with Hamlin. She says her father seems to be in the power of Mrs. Dupont, who claims to be a daughter of McDonald's sister.

## CHAPTER XX.—Continued.

"If the woman has not ensnared him by her usual methods," he said soberly, "and I think myself you are right about that, for I watched them together in the dance hall—I did not comprehend what it meant then, but it seemed to me he actually disliked being in her company—then she has uncovered something in his past of which he is afraid, something unknown to you, which he does not desire you ever to know."

"Yes," softly, "that must be true."  
"No; it may not be true; it may all be a lie, concocted for a purpose. A clever woman might so manipulate circumstances as to convince him she held his fate in her hands. We must find that out in this case."

"But how, Sergeant Hamlin? He will not tell me."

"Perhaps she will tell me if I can reach her alone," he said grimly, "or else that husband of hers—Dupont. He'll know the whole story. It would give me pleasure to choke it out of him—real pleasure. Then there's Connors, just the sort of sneaking rat if he can be caught with the goods; only it is not likely he knows much. I shall have to think it all out, Miss Molly," he smiled at her confidently. "You see, I am a bit slow figuring puzzles, but I generally get them in time. You've told me all you know?"

"Everything. It almost seems silly when I try to explain what I feel to another."

"Not to me. I knew enough before to understand. But, perhaps, you had better go—hush, some one is entering the parlor."

She got to her feet in spite of his



The Two Started Back at His Rather Abrupt Entrance, restraining hand, started and unnerved.

"Oh, I must not be seen here. Is there no other way?"

"No; be still for a moment; step back there in the shadow, and let me go in alone."

He stepped forward, his grasp already on the curtain, when a woman's voice spoke within.

"Yes, that was what I meant; he does not know you—yet. But you must keep away."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### Molly Disappears.

The speaker was Mrs. Dupont, but Hamlin's one thought was to prevent

any discovery of Miss McDonald. Without an instant's hesitation he drew aside the curtain, and stepped into the room.

"Pardon me," he said quietly, as the two started back at his rather abrupt entrance, "but I did not care to overhear your conversation. No doubt it was intended to be private."

The woman stepped somewhat in advance of her companion, as though to shield him from observation, instantly mastering her surprise.

"Nothing at all serious, Mr. Sergeant Hamlin," she retorted scornfully. "Don't be melodramatic, please; it gets on the nerves. If you must know, I was merely giving our ranch foreman a few final instructions, as he leaves tomorrow. Have you objections?"

"Assuredly not—your ranch foreman, you say? Met him before, I think. You are the fellow I ordered out of this room, aren't you?"

The man growled something unintelligible, but Mrs. Dupont prevented any direct reply.

"That's all right, John," she broke in impatiently. "You understand what I want now, and need not remain any longer. I have a word to say myself to this man."

She waited an instant while he left the room; then her eyes defiantly met Hamlin's.

"I was told you had driven every one out of here," she said coldly. "What was the game?"

"This room was reserved—"

"Pish! keep that explanation for some one else. You wanted the room for some purpose. How have you got out there?" she pointed at the window.

"Whether there be any one or not," he answered, leaning against the window frame, and thus barring the passage, "I fall to see wherein you are concerned."

She laughed.

"Which remark is equivalent to a confession, Dave," suddenly changing, "why should we quarrel, and misjudge each other? You cannot suppose I have forgotten the past, or am indifferent. Cannot you forgive the mistake of a thoughtless girl? Is there any reason why we should not be, at least, friendly?"

There was an appeal in her voice, but the man's face did not respond.

"I cannot say that I feel any bitterness over the past," he answered lightly. "I am willing enough to blot that out."

"What I am interested in is the present. I should like to understand your purpose here at Dodge."

"Surely that is sufficiently clear. I am merely an exile from home, on account of Indian depredations. What more natural than that I should take refuge in my uncle's house."

"You mean Major McDonald?"

"Certainly—he was my mother's only brother."

"I think I have heard somewhere that the Major's only sister married a man named Counts."

She drew in her breath sharply.

"Yes, of course—her first husband."

"You were a daughter then of her first marriage?"

"Of course."

"But assumed the name of Carson when she married again?"

"That was when you met me."

"The change was natural enough," he went on, "but why did you also become Vera in place of Sarah?"

"Oh, is that it? Well, never attempt to account for the varieties of a girl," she returned lightly, as though dismissing the subject. "I presume I took a fancy to the prettier name. But how did you know?"

"Garrison rumor picks up nearly everything, and it is not very kind to you, Mrs. Dupont. I hope I am doing you a favor in saying this. Your rather open flirtation with Lieutenant Gaskins is common talk, even among enlisted men, and I have heard that your relations with Major McDonald are peculiar."

"Indeed!" with a rising inflection of the voice. "How kind of you, and so delicately expressed." She laughed. "And poor Major McDonald! Really, that is ridiculous. Could you imagine my flirting with him?"

"I have no recollection of using that term in this connection. But you have strange influence over him. For some reason the man is apparently afraid of you."

"Afraid of me? Oh, no! Some one has been fooling you, Dave. I am merely Major McDonald's guest. I wonder who told you that? Shall I guess?"

Before he could realize her purpose

the woman took a hasty step forward, and swept aside the curtain, thrusting her head past to where she could gain a view outside. Hamlin pressed her back with one hand, planting himself squarely before the window. She met his eyes spitefully.

"I was mistaken this time," she acknowledged drawing away, "but I'd like to know why you were so anxious to prevent my looking out. Do you know whom I thought you had there?"

"As you please," rejoicing that the girl had escaped notice.

"That little scamp of a Molly. You made a hit with her all right, and she certainly don't like me. Well, delightful as it is to meet you again, I must be going." She turned away, and then paused to add over her shoulder:

"Don't you think it would be just as safe for you to attend to your own business, Sergeant Hamlin?"

"And let you alone?"

"Exactly; and let me alone. I am hardly the sort of woman it is safe to play with. It will be worth your while to remember that."

He waited, motionless, until assured that she had passed down the hall as far as the door of the dining-room. The sound of shuffling chairs evidenced the breaking up of the party.

In preparation to return to the ball-room, if Miss McDonald's absence were to escape observation, she would have to slip out now, and rejoin the others as they left the house. He again turned down the light, and held back the curtain.

"The way is clear now, Miss Molly."

There was no response, no movement. He stepped outside, thinking the girl must have failed to hear him. The porch was empty. He stepped from one end to the other, making sure she was not crouching in the darkness, scarcely able to grasp the fact of her actual disappearance. This, then, was why Mrs. Dupont had failed to see any one when she glanced out. But where could the girl have gone? How gotten away? He had heard no sound behind him; not even the rustle of a skirt to betray movement. It was not far to the ground, live or six feet, perhaps; it would be perfectly safe for one to lower the body over the rail and drop. The matted prairie grass under foot would render the act noiseless. No doubt that was exactly the way the scamp had been accomplished. Alarmed by the presence of those others, suspecting that the woman within would insist on learning whom Hamlin was attempting to conceal, possibly overhearing enough of their conversation to become frightened at the final outcome, Miss McDonald, in sudden desperation, had surmounted the rail, and dropped to the ground. The rest would be easy—to hasten around the side of the house, and slip in through the front door.

Assured that this must be the full explanation, the Sergeant's cheerfulness returned. The company of officers and guests had already fled out through the hall; he could hear voices laughing and talking in the street, and the band tuning up their instruments across in the dance hall. He would go over and make certain of her presence, then his mind would be at ease.

He passed out through the desert hallway, and glanced in at the dining-room, where a number of men were gathering up the dishes. Beyond this the ball-room was crowded, the rafters lined up before the sloopy bar, among these a number in uniform—untattooed officers who had loitered behind to quench their thirst. Hamlin drank little, but lingered a moment just inside the doorway, to observe who was present. Unconsciously he was searching for Dupont, half inclined to pick a quarrel deliberately with the fellow or with Connors, determined if he found the little rat alone to frighten whatever knowledge he possessed out of him. But neither worthy appeared. Having assured himself of their absence, Hamlin turned to depart, but found himself facing a little man with long hair, roughly dressed, who occupied the doorway. The hooked nose, and bright eyes, peering forth from a mass of untrimmed gray whiskers, were familiar.

"You keep the junk shop down by the express office, don't you?"

"Yep," briskly, scenting business in the question. "I'm Kaplan; vot could I do for you—hey?"

"Answer me a question if you will, friend. Do you recall selling a haversack to a traveler on the last stage out for Santa Fe in June?"

"Vel, I do no; vas he a big fellow? Maybe do von vat was killed—hey?"

"Yes; his name was Moylan, post-sutler at Fort Marcy."

"Maybe dot vos it. Why you vant to know—hey?"

"No harm to you, Kaplan," the Sergeant explained. "Only I picked it up out there after Moylan was killed, and discovered by some writing on the flap that it originally belonged to friend of mine. I was curious to learn how it got into your hands."

The trader shrugged his shoulders. "Vud it be worth a drink?" he asked cannily.

"Of course, Frank, give Kaplan whatever he wants. Now, fire away."

"Vel," and the fellow filled his glass deliberately. "It was sold me six months before by a fellow vat had a black beard—"

"Dupont?"

"Dat vos de name ov de rellar, yes. Now I know it, I saw him here again soon. You know him?"

"By sight only; he is not the original owner, nor the man I am trying to trace. You know nothing of where he got the bag, I presume?"

"I know nothing more as I tell you already," rather disconsolately, as he realized that one drink was all he was going to receive.

Hamlin elbowed his way out to the street. He had learned something, but not much that was of any value. Undoubtedly the haversack had come into Dupont's possession through his wife, but this knowledge yielded no information as to the present whereabouts of LeFevre. When the latter had separated from the woman, the old army bag was left behind, and, needing money, Dupont had disposed of it, along with other truck, seemingly of little value.

The Sergeant reached this conclusion quickly, and, satisfied that any

further investigation along this line would be worthless, reverted to his earlier quest—the safety of Miss McDonald. Merely to satisfy himself of her presence, he crossed the street and glanced in at the whirling dancers. There were few loiterers at the doorway and he stood for a moment beside the guard, where he was able to survey the entire room. Mrs. Dupont was upon the floor, and swept past twice, without lifting her eyes in recognition, but neither among the dancers, nor seated, could he discover Miss Molly.

Started at not finding her present, Hamlin searched anxiously for the Major, only to assure himself of his absence also. Could they have returned to the fort as early as this? If so, how did it happen their guest was still present, happily enjoying herself? Of course she might be there under escort of some one else—Captain Barrett, possibly. He would ask the infantryman.

"Have you seen Miss McDonald since supper?"

The soldier hesitated an instant, as though endeavoring to remember.

"No, I ain't, now you speak of it. She went out with that kid over there, and he came back alone. Don't believe he's danced any since. The Major was here, though; Connors brought him a note a few minutes ago, and he got his hat and went out."

Hamlin drew a breath of relief. "Girl must have sent for him to take her home," he said. "Well, it's time for me to turn in—good-night, old man."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Manhattan Manners.

"Roofers are said to be going out of fashion. Know what a 'roofer' is? It is the letter you write to people, after you have been a guest at their house, telling them what a delightful time you had 'under their hospitable roof,' and thanking them for all the generous favors you enjoyed at their friendly hands, and expressing the sincere hope that the baby has got over her cold. Nowadays, instead of writing this graceful letter, you generally call your friend up on the telephone, you tell him that the train made good connections, and you add: 'My that was a bully time I had out there, old man!' Not so nice as the old epistolary way, but better than nothing; for when you have had a friend at your house and he has taken his departure you do not like to feel that he has gone into the outer world that he has fallen off the edge of the world into echoless space. That is what it amounts to when he gets home and writes not nor telephones and gives no sign.—New York Mail.

Seek Something to Replace Coal.

Coal offers to mankind solar energy in its most concentrated form. Indeed modern civilization may be said to be the daughter of coal. But the supply of coal is not inexhaustible and every ton of it taken out of the earth leaves just that much less for the future needs of the world. Hence it is that today we are looking about so anxiously for some other source of fuel.

The little fellow, waking to life suddenly, yielded them gracefully, explaining confidentially the while:

"There were verses to be said, but you are so beautiful that I can't remember a line!"

In the International Family.

"You don't figure very strongly in diplomatic relations," said the great Nation. "No," replied the small, struggling government. "I'm one of the poor relations." — Washington Star.

# THE AMERICAN HOME



WILLIAM A. RADFORD EDITOR

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.

Most people like large rooms; but large rooms call for a large house. This plan is 31 feet 6 inches by 36 feet in size and is built on the square order, severely plain in design and general treatment. Instead of crowding in as many rooms as possible, they are made larger than is customary at the present time, and it gives to the house an air of old-fashioned comfort that is quite luxurious.

Luxury means in many cases something that is difficult to secure. Since the advance in prices of labor, wages of skilled mechanics, prices of hardware and most building materials the tendency has been to build smaller houses and smaller rooms. Probably the after maintenance has as much to do with the general trend towards smaller houses as any other consideration, because it is almost impossible to obtain help of the right kind to keep a large house in order after you get it. Then the extra cost of heating a large house is a serious objection to some people; but the improvements in hot-air furnaces and in hot-water and steam heaters have gone a long way to reduce cost in this respect.

The shape of the house also has a great deal to do with the cost of heating. A house built after this design is very compact. There are no side rooms to carry the heat to at a disadvantage; so with a modern heater in the basement this house may be kept comfortable for less money than the heating of a much smaller house would have cost ten or fifteen years ago.

These are the days of large living rooms. People have found that at least one room in the house should be as large, as light, and as airy as it is possible to make it. Across the front of this house, 14 by 35 feet inside measurement, is practically one great room with a fireplace in one end and with plenty of large windows that are in keeping with the general character of the house.

This large living room is intended to be one of the main decorative fea-

Interfere with the proper placing of handsome dining-room decorations.

Another feature of this house that is well worth consideration is the pantry. It is seldom you get such a pantry in any house. The extension of the back porch to inclose one end of the pantry has been taken advantage of to lay out an arrangement that will appeal to most women. It is large enough to hold considerable china and the sink so conveniently situated is a great satisfaction at dish-washing time. I often wonder why sinks are not demanded nearer to the shelves where dishes are kept. If you watch a woman doing up the work after meal time you will notice that she is constantly walking back and forth between the dining table, the sink and the pantry shelves and the china cupboard. This combination pantry is a sort of cross between the modern store room pantry and an old-fashioned butler's pantry.

There are other interesting features about this house indicated by the plans, such as the combination stairway going up from the kitchen and from the front room, the hall coat closet and the convenient cellarway with shelves for jelly glasses and other storage, all of which require a house about this size if you expect to work them all in. You can have some of the modern improvements in a small house. If you want them all you must build larger.

English Actor Finds Profit and Amusement in Ridding Farmers of Pest of Moles.

A curious way of spending a holiday has been invented by a well-known actor and his wife. They are in Radnorshire, Wales, and they are obtaining amusement and profit by hunting moles with the object of obtaining a mole-skin coat for the lady.

The actor in question is Stewart Quartermayne, who in private life is W. F. James. Mr. and Mrs. James have already killed 400 moles. It was during a visit to a friend at Bulth Wells that they began their curious hobby of mole catching. They undertook during their stay to destroy all the moles on their friend's land. So successful were they that their fame

spread among the local farmers and land-owners, who asked them to extend their operations.

Mr. James decided to accept such invitations, at any rate until he had procured enough skins to make a long coat for his wife.

A newspaper correspondent recently accompanied them to their hunting ground, where thirty traps had been laid. Fifteen moles had all been killed instantaneously in their little tunnels. Then came the work of resetting the traps in the center of a line of molehills. A spring trap was placed between the two openings of the tunnel after carefully rubbing the trap and openings with a dead mole.

This was done for two reasons—first, because the mole would instantly smell human hands and would avoid the trap; and, secondly, because moles are great fighters. When the master of a tunnel smells what he takes to be an intruder he rushes off instantly to do battle, but actually meets sudden death.

Mr. James said it would be quite easy to make at least \$10 a week by catching moles for skins, which can be sold at from five to ten cents each. He now has 400 of the 600 required to make a coat for his wife.—Baltimore Sun.

Another Confession.

"So you are a lobbyist!" said Senator Sorghum.

"I am."

"But you never took the slightest chance in trying to influence my vote. Your frequent conversations with me have been of the most harmless and common place nature."

"Quite true. But the people who are paying me a large salary to lobby don't know that."



tures, the furnishings of which will require a great deal of studying and planning to bring out all its splendid possibilities. Such rooms nowadays are seldom or never carpeted. The floor is hard wood with a finish that shows the grain to advantage. The floor is nice enough to leave without any covering whatever; but no one likes a bare floor because of the noise and from the further fact that no room has a properly furnished appearance unless the floor has been carefully provided with rugs that harmonize with the wall and ceiling decorations.

There is a good deal in proportioning rugs to the size of the room. This large living room should have two rugs large enough to reduce the outside margin to about ten inches. The space between the rugs in the center should be about the same, but this space directly in the center of the archway should be filled in with another rug to avoid stepping on the polished floor. It needs this little rug for looks and it needs it to prevent a bad spot by wearing away the floor polish.

The rugs, wall paper and curtains must of course harmonize in colors. Turkish rugs are quite fashionable, and the genuine Turkish rug is a prize, but they have their disadvantages. Most of them are too soft to keep their place on the floor, and if the floor is highly polished they are so slippery as to be positively unsafe, especially for old people. A first-class machine-made American rug is good enough for any room if it corresponds with the surroundings.

The dining room offers another splendid opportunity for decorative abridgment. The room is well calculated to show furniture to advantage. It is 12 feet 6 inches by 16 feet in size and there are no projections or corners to

## COMPLIMENT THAT WAS REAL

Not in All Her Days Will Dowager Queen of Italy Receive Praise That is More Honest.

Children, as a rule, have a natural sense of courtesy too often misunderstood or depreciated by the unthinking adult. For some strange and incomprehensible reason the child who is brusque and blunt is apt to be dubbed "natural," while the budding man or woman of gentle tact and

sweet politeness sometimes is discouraged by the prevailing belief that such conduct must be insincere. Yet the simplest "little citizens" not infrequently rise to an unexpected or trying situation with surprising, but quite untutored, gifts and grace. A pretty little tale is told, for instance, of the time when the present dowager queen, Margherita of Italy, was the lovely young bride of the youthful crown prince.

Her majesty, passing through one of the hill towns, was accorded the usual

reception by the residents. A little boy was to present the usual bouquet, and he, coming of the literary family, had been taught a brief poem offering graceful praise of the princess. But when came the moment for delivering flowers and verses the little fellow, overcome by nervousness or some similar emotion, stood mutely gazing at the great lady, saying, never a word.

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