

A Strategic Recovery

A Tale of the Yukon

By May Grinnell.

LOOK out there! you muskrats: catch that line and make it fast. Farther forward there. Now then, who owns this wood? Come up here, all of you, and tell how much you've got. You, Jim, how many cords?"

"Four cord."
"How much?"
"Five dollar."
"All trade? All right. Get to work an' chuck her on board. Hey there, mate, tear yourself away from the lady passenger and lend a hand to measure up this wood. She won't elope with the captain while you're on shore."

"I was sure of that when I saw you go ashore an' leave her," and the mate started sheepishly from the side of the half-breed Indian girl who was leaning over the rail of the steamer watching the scene on the shore.

"It wouldn't be anything that's on shore that would keep me from eloping with the captain," cried the girl, pertly, glancing mischievously toward the bow of the boat, where the captain's broad back was visible.

"Not unless the captain's wife happened to be on shore, eh, sister Susy?"
"Heave to there, young fellers, this here ain't no taffy pull. Plenty of time to hand out them bunches of nonsense after that wood's on board," remarked the captain, grimly, and the work on shore went forward briskly.

The steamer Alice was on her last trip of the season from Dawson to St. Michael, with a few belated passengers, a full cargo of provisions and instructions to deliver to the latter port every available stick of wood between the two ports.

At eleven o'clock the last stick on the little dock at Coltag was in the hold and the Indians gathered around the door of the purser's room, perspiring and noisy.

"Alle board."
"All aboard? All right! Now, Jim, you first. You had four cords, that twenty dollars. What do you want?"
"Tree sackfour, ten pounds rice, five pound tea, five pound coffee, ten pound tobacco—"

"Hold on there, don't ask for the whole cargo. This company ain't no fairy godmother. Flour's five dollars a sack. Three sacks fifteen dollars. Ten pounds of rice at twenty-five cents a pound—"

But a storm of protest drowned the reckoning.
"Five dollar a sack too much! Tree dollar all Summer. Tree dollar nuff. Why five dollar?"

"Look here, you noisy heathens, who owns this flour?" demanded the purser. "You set your own price on wood. That's been three dollars all Summer; why do you charge five now for that?"

"Tree dollar not nuff now. Winter comin', wood worth more. Winter very long, can't sell no more till Spring. Worth five dollar now."
"Well, Winter's comin' in flour, too. Five dollars is what we ask and five dollars is what you pay. So speel out and say what you want and let's get settled up here."

There was more angry remonstrance and sullen murmurings among the Indians, but the boatman had the advantage, and the natives must yield to their masters. So they selected each one his merchandise upon the basis of a sack of flour for a cord of wood, with other merchandise at a proportionate value, and, following the deck hands below, received their goods and departed sullenly, muttering imprecations against the "big thief company", and swearing vengeance for the following season.

And the Alice cast off lines and pursued her way down stream to where another pile of wood and another crowd of eager Indians awaited her arrival.

As they approached the second landing the purser, standing beside Rampart Liz watching the crowd of Indians on the little dock, heard her call across in the guttural accents of her native tongue to the apparent leader of the Indians, and saw the man's alert interest awakened by her words.

"What did you tell him?" asked the purser.
"Asked him how much wood was worth, so you wouldn't make a mistake," answered Liz.

"How much did he say?"
"He said, 'How much is flour worth?'"
"Did you tell him?" demanded the purser, quickly.

"I said, 'It's worth what you have to pay for it,'" drawled Liz, mockingly.
"Little girls shouldn't talk to strangers," he remarked, with an air of parental severity. "I'll have to send you inside to keep you from breaking the hearts of the natives."

"How thoughtful you are of 'the natives,'" she retorted. "Were you ever a missionary, Mr. Williams?"
"No, but I find the native heart a very fascinating study," and with this parting shot the purser swung himself ashore and opened negotiations with the Indians for the purchase of their wood.

"How much is flour worth?" demanded the Indians as a counter question to his query for the price of wood.
"I'll have to ask the captain," replied the purser. "If you want to sell your wood get a price on it and we'll buy it."

Thus urged, the Indians named a price, "Seven dollars."
"All right, we'll take it. You put it on board and do it quick. Tobacco'll be worth two bits more a pound after two o'clock."

When they gathered about his door an hour later he had their individual accounts ready.
"Now, then, Pete, you've got thirty-five dollars coming. Let's hear what you want. Go easy, though: flour's seven dollars a sack, rice six bits a pound, sugar four bits a pound—"

But again a roar of protest drowned the enumeration of the unpopular price list.
"Flour only five dollars at Coltag. Seven dollars too high. We not pay that much. We pay five dollar."
"You'll pay seven or you won't get any," declared Williams. "We didn't bick on the price of your wood, did we? Seven dollars is too high for wood. We took it at your price. All right, the flour's ours and you take it at our

price, or you don't get it."
"We take our wood back. We won't pay that much. Seven dollars. Ugh company damn thief?"
"All right, take it back. There won't be another steamer up the river before May, you know that. If you can eat your wood, keep it. We can get enough elsewhere."

And the Indians, grumbling and swearing, took their goods and departed, knowing that the purser's words were true and that not another steamer would they see until Spring, and that all the provisions they obtained in the meantime must be bought with cash and brought over the ice on sleds.

And so the battle was waged down the river shore, the natives striving to realize a slight advantage on this, the last of their season's wood, and the company determined to hold the values equal though the scale of imaginary prices should ascend to the last cipher of the natives' arithmetical knowledge.

There was but one stop to make after the steamer left "Jim's Landing," where wood had reached the stiff price of seventeen dollars a cord and flour had promptly risen to a corresponding price per sack. As the Alice swung into the little dock at Mission, Rampart Liz sprang ashore and was surrounded by a little crowd of native women, huddled together about the piles of wood. The men, she soon informed the purser, had that morning departed on a big hunt, leaving instructions with the women to sell the wood in case the steamer arrived during their absence.

"What did they tell you to sell for," inquired the purser, diplomatically.
"There was a few minutes of hurried guttural consultation and Rampart Liz stepped from her mother's side to face the purser.

"Is flour still worth seventeen dollars a sack?" she inquired.
"We might make it a little less to please the ladies, if you like," replied the purser, banteringly.
"How much less?"
"Suppose we call it sixteen ninety-eight?"

"All right, we'll pay sixteen ninety-eight for it."
"Then we'll fall to and put this wood on board."
"Wait a minute, we haven't agreed on the price of that yet. Hadn't you better find out what you're going to pay for it?"

"O, we'll fix that up when it's on board. We'll expect you to meet our little cut, of course."
"All right, we'll sell for nineteen ninety-eight,"

"Now you're joshing, sister Susy. Come, we'll talk about that when we get these lady friends of yours busy putting the wood on board. Fall to, there, men, and measure it up."
But the women drew a cordon around their property and stubbornly refused to allow the men to approach. The purser remonstrated.

"Promise us nineteen dollars a cord before you put it on board," demanded Liz.
The purser withdrew to consult the captain.

"How much flour have we left on board?" inquired the captain.
"Eight sacks," replied the purser, consulting his ledger.
"Then promise them nineteen dollars a cord," said the captain.

The purser obeyed and the women allowed the wood to be measured, and then all of them, with the exception of the daintily attired Liz, went faithfully to work and helped the men stow it on board.

When the loading was completed the women, chattering gutturally and triumphantly, gathered around the pile of provisions which had been heaped upon the deck to expedite the work of selection and distribution. There were no finished mathematicians among them, but each knew to a cent the amount of credit due her on account of wood delivered.

The purser began checking off their individual credits and making a list of their wants.
"We've only got eight sacks of flour left, so you'll have to go light on that," she said.

The women held an amiable discussion and settled the apportionment of the flour. Rice and barley were popular substitutes and they were willing to forego some of the more material luxuries in view of the enticing display of bright calicoes.

"How much rice?" demanded a wrinkled squaw, who was laboriously reckoning her account upon her withered fingers and keeping a suspicious eye upon the purser.
"Two dollars a pound," he replied, blandly, without lifting his eyes from her book.

A hiss and an angry sputter followed the announcement. The women saw themselves outdone, and the slight advantage they had gained in the few sacks of flour, wrested from them and restored to the boatmen in the unproportionate increase in the price of necessary substitutes.

And so it was. Not only was there the usual appreciation of values of all commodities save flour to maintain the relative values as established before leaving St. Michael, but an additional increase was made to restore the equilibrium which was momentarily destroyed in the discrepancy between flour and wood.

The women fought stubbornly to regain their lost ground, but the boatmen were practiced in their business and they kept the pile of provisions well surrounded, promptly doing out the articles selected, and inflexibly refusing to alter their schedule. The women exercised to the full the prerogatives of their sex. They deliberated over a decision between three pounds of rice and four of barley, or vice versa. They hesitated between a generous allowance of tobacco and a limited one of calico, or a denial of the grosser sense for the gratification of the more aesthetic.

The boatmen urged, exhorted and threatened, but the deliberations continued. The buyers were in the majority, and they squatted contentedly about the deck and held their friendly discussions, serene in the knowledge that forcible ejection was not feasible.

The captain fumed. Already the delay was unconscionable. He upbraided the purser and anathematized the women. Finally he signalled the engineer to make ready to depart. The whistles blew shrilly, the engine began to pant warningly and the deck hands cast off the stern line.

There was a scurry, a babel of protest and demand, followed by a hurried exodus across the gang-plank of laden and expostulating women. But Rampart Liz, whose heart was set upon possession of a roll of bright-colored calico, stood her ground. The purser insisted upon a price of two dollars per yard, and the maiden persisted in demanding the entire piece of twenty yards for the balance of credit due her family account, an amount of about three dollars. Her mother, withdrawn to the safe viewpoint of the wharf, alternately encouraged and warned her daughter to depart.

"Get out of this now. Chuck! Skeddadle! You'll go to St. Michael and be charged fare down if you stay here till the boat swings out into the river," urged the purser.
"You won't go till you finish payin' for your wood, I guess," said Liz, confidently. "Give me that calico an' I'll go quick enough."

"I'll give you a yard and a half of it. That's all that's comin' to you, an' it's all you'll get," answered the purser depositing the roll of cloth on a bench preparatory to measuring off the stipulated amount.
"Let go that bow line," shouted the captain, as the steamer's wheel began to churn the water.

Like a flash, Liz snatched the roll of calico from beneath the purser's hands and sent it flying across the steamer's rail, and the rapidly widening line of water, straight into her mother's arms. Then she turned and fled toward the open gate, with the purser in full pursuit. He caught her as she paused before taking the gigantic leap, and his arms closed around her firmly.

"Tell her to throw it back," he demanded, threateningly.
"Keep it, mother, keep it," shouted the struggling girl.

A frantic demonstration of mirth and excitement was convulsing the spectators on the wharf. They cried guttural words of encouragement to their champion on the steamer, and shrill maledictions against her captor. They waved their arms and doubled themselves up in an excess of enjoyment of this final triumph. The purser clung tenaciously to his struggling captive, appearing to have contracted some of the women's hysterical enjoyment of the situation. The steamer, swinging slowly outward, suddenly touched the current of the river and shot quickly ahead.

"Young man," broke in the grim voice of the captain, "don't you think you'd better take that precious cargo of yours aft an' hold it in your office for awhile, an' let this yere gate be closed? We don't go chasayin' around this river with that gate open, not even to let our men make yeroes of themselves by keepin' their goods from comin' in suicide."

"But we'll have to slow down, cap'n, an' set her ashore," said the purser, suddenly releasing his prisoner and gazing blankly at the forty feet or more of water that stretched between them and the bank.

"I reckon not," said the captain, laconically. "This ain't no pleasure yacht to go round gatharin' up folks an' puttin' 'em ashore ag'in to 'commodate their whims. When folks pulls out on this yere craft they stays on 'er till she makes port ag'in 'cordin' to skeelue."

"But she aint got any money with her, captain, an' she'll never pay. Besides, there won't be any way for her to get back before Spring," protested the purser, uneasily.

"That's your lookout, young feller. If the officers an' employes of this kempny as sails with me wants to barter the goods they has in their hands fer articles as takes their fancies, it aint no consarn of mine. I reckon they can squar' their accounts with the kempny. But of them articles takes the shape o' passengers, them as ships 'em answers to me fer their fare till the kempny accepts their own arrangements," and the captain moved grimly away, carefully repressing a chuckle until he reached the seclusion of his cabin.

"Well, I'm blowed!" exclaimed the purser, collapsing onto a bench and regarding the cause of his embarrassing predicament wrathfully.
"Not so blowed as you'll be when you've paid my fare, I guess," remarked that imperturbable young woman, coolly.

If her captor had expected to mitigate the ridicule of his shipmates by the spectacle of her wrath or entreaties he had mistaken the character of his captive. Two seasons of catering to the hungry miners in the dining-room of the most popular cafe in Rampart City had initiated her in the art of self-protection and showed her the real chivalry of the men among whom she would be thrown during the winter.

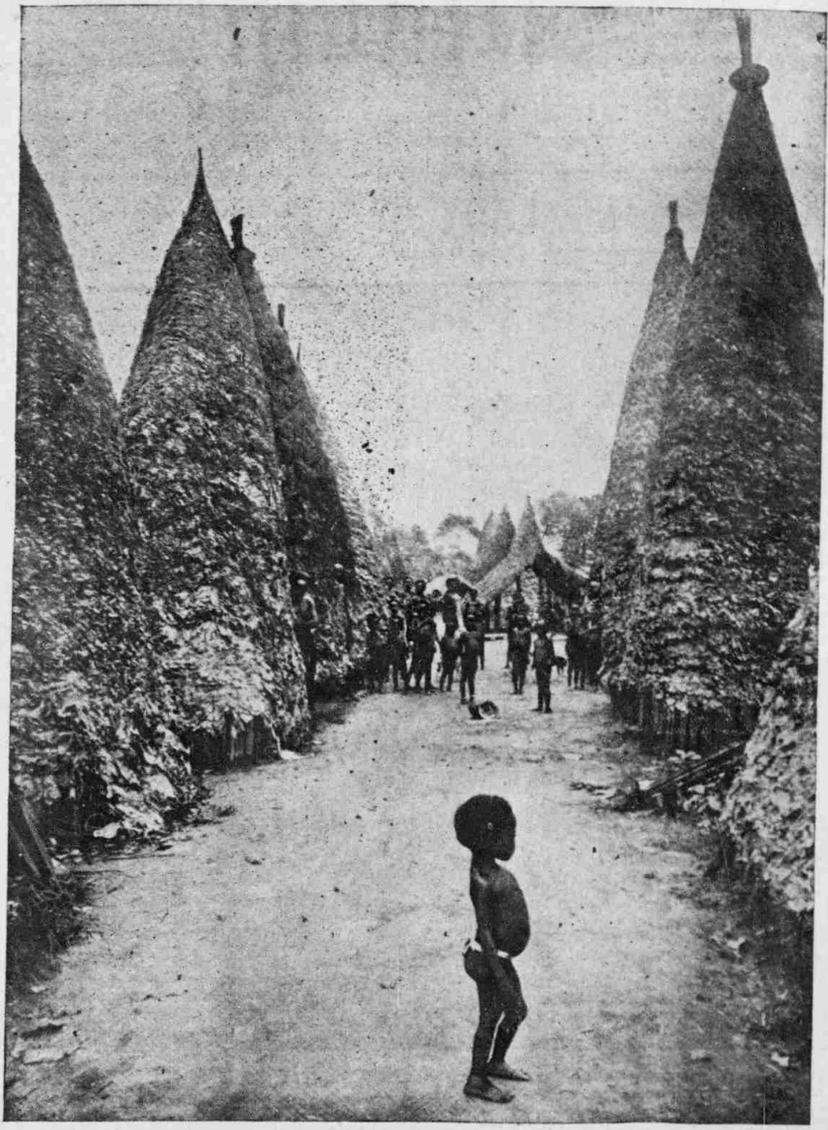
She accepted the situation quietly, evincing not the slightest concern for her present predicament nor her future prospect. She appeared to take the liveliest enjoyment in her trip down the river, and observed the strictest decorum in her attitude toward the purser and the other men on board.

On their arrival at St. Michael the captain made immediate report of the voyage. The purser also submitted his accounts and entered into a detailed report to the proper persons. Whereupon his stores were found to be short one roll of calico, containing twenty yards, for which it was deemed proper to hold him liable to the amount of forty dollars, that being the market price of the goods at the point where they were disposed of. Also, it was found expedient to charge his account with the fare of a passenger from Mission to St. Michael, inasmuch as the said passenger had refused to pay her fare, and had maintained, and been sustained therein by witnesses, that the purser was responsible for her presence on board.

The young man accepted the verdict philosophically. He was familiar with the strict accounting demanded of its employes by the vast company and the futility of resisting its decrees.

But he was moved to vigorous protest when he learned that credit against his account had been extended to Rampart Liz, upon her representations, again corroborated by members of the Alice crew, that she had been forcibly detained aboard that craft by the aforesaid purser and unwillingly transported to St. Michael, far from the shelter of her home and the protection of her family, and without the means to return to them or maintain herself elsewhere.

In the Land of the Congo



CURIOUS DWELLINGS OF THE COLLECTORS OF RUBBER FOR CONGO FREE STATE GOVERNMENT. These curious huts are found at Yambuya, one of the villages of the Congo Free State. They resemble remotely the shape of the Indian wigwam. The skeleton is made of poles, and the outer covering is of clay and thatch. Yambuya is on the left bank of the Aruwimi River, just below its lowest rapid.

As in every community where primitive conditions surround a population of highly civilized men, the instinct of chivalry was strong. Mr. Burt Williams was informed by the officials of the company, who, as he knew, voiced, in this instance at least, the sentiment of the majority of the citizens, that he would have to provide for the young woman whom he had arbitrarily caused to be brought into their midst until she obtained other satisfactory means of support.

Mr. Williams considered the situation. Being unable, apparently, to arrive at any satisfactory solution of the problem by himself, he began to frequent the society of the source of his trouble, probably with the crafty design of discovering from that quick-witted and resourceful young woman an elucidation. Whether or not he really did receive from her any suggestions on the subject, or is himself entitled to full credit for the highly diplomatic finale, is not known, but it is certain that the stratagem must have been abetted by her at some stage of its development, for early the next Spring he succeeded in recovering by process of law and through the cooperation of the mission church the identical piece of calico which had been so impetuously removed from his hands during the preceding fall. And as a further restitution, and as part and parcel of the same transaction, he also received, artistically enclosed within its folds, but sufficiently revealed to awaken the admiration of beholders, a no less award than the mischievous Liz herself.

Dentyne is the gum you should chew if you want clean teeth and a fragrant breath. At all druggists.

Prohibition

does not contemplate depriving the public of the pleasures of a bottle of the purest soda water ever made. On the contrary it suggests indulgence of this sort.

Get yours where you know only purest materials are used.

Consolidated Soda Water Works Co., Ltd.
G. S. LEITHEAD, Manager.
Telephone 71.

New Goods

Cloth and Paper Screens, Embroidered Silk Crepe, Grass Linen and Lawn Shirt Waist Patterns, Carved Tables, various sizes; Satsuma, Sandalwood Fans.

SAYEGUSA
Nuuanu Street, Above Hotel Street.

Have you seen our new stock of

Belt Buckles and Pins?

They are elegant. Now on exhibition in one of our windows.

J. A. R. Vieira & Co.
Manufacturing Jewelers,
113 Hotel St.

Naniwa & Co.
CONTRACTORS AND BUILDERS
MASON, CARPENTERS, DRAYMEN
Room 180 - Magoon Bldg.

After Exercise there is nothing that will recuperate exhausted force more quickly than

RAINIER BEER

SEATTLE BREWING & MALTING CO.
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

RAINIER BOTTLING WORKS
Phone 1331 - Honolulu