

# The Great Dea-wood Mystery.

BY BRET HARTE.

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Miss Alice deigned no reply, but drew the loop of the lasso over her shoulders, and let it drop to her round waist. Then she essayed to throw the other end to her guide. Dismal failure! The first fling nearly knocked her off the ledge; the second went all wild against the rocky wall; the third caught in a thorn bush, twenty feet below her companion's feet. Miss Alice's arm sunk helplessly to her side, at which signal of unqualified surrender, the younger guide threw himself half way down the slope, worked his way to the thorn bush, hung for a moment perilously over the parapet, scoured the lasso, and then began to pull away at his lovely burden. Miss Alice was no dead weight, however, but steadily half-scrambled on her hands and knees to within a foot or two of her rescuer. At this too familiar proximity, she stood up, and leaned a little stiffly against the line, causing the guide to give an extra pull, which had the lamentable effect of landing her almost in his arms. As it was, her intelligent forehead struck his nose sharply, and I regret to add, treating of a romantic situation, caused that somewhat prominent sign and token of a hero, to bleed freely. Miss Alice instantly clasped a handful of snow over his nostrils.

"Now elevate your right arm," she said commendingly. He did as he was bidden, but sulkily. "That compresses the artery." No man, with a pretty woman's hand and a handful of snow over his mouth and nose, could effectively utter a heroic sentence, nor, with his arm elevated stiffly over his head, assume a heroic attitude. But, when his mouth was free again, he said half-sulkily, half-appegetically, "I might have known a girl couldn't throw worth a cent."

"Why?" demanded Miss Alice sharply. "Because—why—because—you see—they haven't got the experience," he stammered feebly. "Nonsense! they haven't the clavicle—that's all! It's because I'm a woman, and smaller in the collar bone, that I haven't the play of the forearm which you have. See?" She squared her shoulders slightly, and turned the blaze of her dark eyes full on his. "Experience, indeed! A girl can learn anything a boy can."

Apprehension took the place of ill-humor in her bearing. He turned his eyes hastily away, and glanced above him. The elder guide had gone forward to catch Miss Alice's horse, which, relieved of his rider, was floundering toward the trail. Mrs. Rightbody was nowhere to be seen. And these two were still twenty feet below the trail!

"There was an awkward pause. "Shall I pull you up the same way?" he queried. Miss Alice looked at his nose, and hesitated. "Or will you take my hand?" he added, in surly impatience. To his surprise, Miss Alice took his hand, and they began the ascent together. But the way was difficult and dangerous. Once or twice her feet slipped on the smoothly worn rock beneath, and she confessed to an inward thankfulness when her uncertain feminine handgrip was exchanged for his strong arm around her waist. Not that he was ungentle, but Miss Alice angrily felt that he had once or twice exercised his superior masculine functions in a rough way; and yet the next moment she would have probably rejected the idea that she had even noticed it. There was no doubt, however, that he was a little surly.

A fierce scramble finally brought them back in safety to the trail, but in the action Miss Alice's shoulder, striking a projecting boulder, wrung from her a feminine cry of pain, her first sign of womanly weakness. The guide stopped instantly. "I am afraid I hurt you?" She raised her brown lashes, a trifle moist from suffering, looked in his eyes, and dropped her own. Why, she could not tell. And yet he had certainly a kind face, despite its seriousness; and a fine face, albeit unshorn and weather-beaten. Her own eyes had never been so near to any man's before, save her lover's; and yet she had never seen so much in even his. She slipped her hand away, not with any reference to him, but rather to ponder over this singular experience, and, somehow, felt uncomfortable thereat.

"Stanislaus Joe," responded Mr. Ryder. "Is that all?" "No. Sometimes he's called Joe Stanislaus."

Miss Alice (satirically)—I suppose it's the custom here to send young ladies out with gentlemen who hide their names under an alias?

Mr. Ryder (greatly perplexed)—Why, dear me, Miss Alice, you allude to me as a gal as was able to take her!

Miss Alice (interrupting with a wounded, dove-like timidity)—Oh, never mind, please! The cabin offered but scanty accommodation to the tourists; which fact, when indignantly presented to Mrs. Rightbody, was explained by the good-humored Ryder from the circumstance that the usual hotel was only a slight affair of boards, cloth and paper, put up during the season, and partly dismantled in the fall. "You couldn't be kept warm enough there," he added. Nevertheless, Miss Alice noticed that both Mr. Ryder and Stanislaus Joe retired there with their pipes, after having prepared the ladies' supper, with the assistance of an Indian woman, who apparently emerged from the earth at the coming of the party, and disappeared as mysteriously.

The stars came out brightly before they slept; and the next morning a clear, unwinning sun beamed with almost summer power through the shutterless window of their cabin, and ironically disclosed the details of its rude interior. Two or three mummy, half-eaten buffalo robes, a bearskin, some suspicious looking blankets, rifles and saddles, dead tables and barrels made up its scant inventory. A strip of faded calico hung before a recess near the chimney, but so blackened by smoke and age that even feminine curiosity respected its secret. Mrs. Rightbody was in high spirits, and informed her daughter that she was at last on the track of her husband's unknown correspondent. "Seventy-four and Seventy-five represent two members of the vigilance committee, my dear, and Mr. Ryder will assist me to find them."

"Mr. Ryder?" ejaculated Miss Alice, in scornful astonishment. "Alice," said Mrs. Rightbody, with a suspicious assumption of sudden defense, "you injure yourself, you injure me, by this exclusive attitude. Mr. Ryder is a friend of your father's, an exceedingly well informed gentleman. I have not, of course, imparted to him the extent of my suspicions. But he can help me to what I must and will know. You might treat him a little more civilly—or, at least, a little better than you do his servant, your guide. Mr. Ryder is a gentleman, and not a paid courier."

Miss Alice was suddenly at entive. When she spoke again, she asked, "Why do you not find something about this Silsbee—who died—or was hung—or something of that kind?" "Child!" said Mrs. Rightbody, "don't you see there was no Silsbee, or, if there was, he was simply the confidant of that woman!"

A knock at the door, announcing the presence of Mr. Ryder and Stanislaus Joe with the horses, checked Mrs. Rightbody's speech. As the animals were being packed, Mrs. Rightbody for a moment withdrew in confidential conversation with Mr. Ryder, and to the young lady's still greater annoyance, left her alone with Stanislaus Joe. Miss Alice was not in good temper, but she felt it necessary to say something. "I hope the hotel offers better quarters for travelers than this in summer," she began. "It does."

"Then this does not belong to it?" "No, ma'am."

Mr. Ryder was as good as his word. A day or two later he entered Mrs. Rightbody's parlor at the Chrysolite hotel, in Stockton, with the information that he had seen the mysterious senders of the dispatch, and that they were now in the office of the hotel, waiting her pleasure. Mr. Ryder further informed her that these gentlemen had only stipulated that they should not reveal their real names, and that they should be introduced to her simply as the respective "Seventy-four" and "Seventy-five" who had signed the dispatch sent to the late Mr. Rightbody.

Mrs. Rightbody at first demurred to this; but, on the assurance from Mr. Ryder that this was the only condition on which an interview would be granted, finally consented. "You will find them square men, even if they are a little rough, ma'am. But, if you'd like me to be present, I'll stop; though I reckon, if you'd calculated on that, you'd have had me take care of your business by proxy, and not come yourself three thousand miles to do it."

Mrs. Rightbody believed it better to see them alone. "All right, ma'am. I'll hang round out here; and if you should happen to have a tickle in your throat, and a bad spell of cough, I'll drop in, careless like, to see if you don't want them drops. Sale!"

And with an exceedingly arch wink, and a slight familiar tap on Mrs. Rightbody's shoulder, which might have caused the late Mr. Rightbody to burst his spleen, he withdrew. A very timid, hesitating tap on the door was followed by the entrance of two men, both of whom, in general size, strength, and unworldliness, were ludicrously inconsistent with their didactic announcement. They proceeded in Indian file to the center of the room, faced Mrs. Rightbody, acknowledged her deep courtesy by a strong shake of the hand, and drawing two chairs opposite to her, sat down side by side.

"I presume I have the pleasure of addressing—" began Mrs. Rightbody. The man directly opposite Mrs. Rightbody turned to the other inquiringly. The other man nodded his head, and replied: "Seventy-four."

"Seventy-five," promptly followed the other. Mrs. Rightbody paused, a little confused. "Has he sent for you," she began again, "to learn something more of the circumstances under which you gentlemen sent a dispatch to my late husband?"

"The circumstances," replied Seventy-four, quietly, with a side glance at his companion, "panned out about in this yer style. We hung a man, named Josh Silsbee, down at Deadwood for horse stealing. When I say we, I speak for Seventy-five yer as is present, as well as representin', so to speak, seventy-two other gents as is scattered. We hung Josh Silsbee on squar, pretty squar, evidence. Afore he was strung up Seventy-five yer axed him, accordin' to custom, of ther was any thing he had to say, or any request that he allowed to make of us. He turns to Seventy-five yer, and—"

Here he paused suddenly, looking at his companion. "He sez, sez he," began Seventy-five, taking up the narrative—"he sez, 'Kin I write a letter? sez he. Sez I, 'Not much, ole man; ye've got no time.' Sez he, 'Kin I send a dispatch by telegraph? Sez I, 'Heave ahead! He sez—this is his dential words—'Send to Adam Rightbody, Boston. Tell him to remember his sacred compact with me thirty years ago.'"

"His sacred compact with me thirty years ago," echoed Seventy-four—"this dential words."

she felt she must not alarm the men heedlessly. "Will you inform me to what extent Mr. Rightbody, my late husband, was interested in her?"

"This time it seemed an age to Mrs. Rightbody before the men returned from their solemn consultation in the corner. She could both hear and feel that their discussion was more animated than their previous conferences. She was a little mortified, however, when they sat down, to hear Seventy-four say slowly:

"We wish to say that we don't allow to say *how* much."

"Will fetch us—alors?" "Do you not think that the 'sacred compact' between Mr. Rightbody and Mr. Silsbee referred to her?" "We reckon it do."

Mrs. Rightbody, flushed and animated, would have given worlds had her daughter been present to hear this unadorned confirmation of her theory. Yet she felt a little nervous and uncomfortable even on this threshold of discovery. "Is she here now?" "She's in Tadmoss," said Seventy-four. "A little better looked arter than formerly," added Seventy-five.

"I see. Then Mr. Silsbee enticed her away?" "Well, ma'am, it was allowed as she rained away. But it wasn't proved, and it generally wasn't her style."

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Mrs. Rightbody inwardly doubted it; but, before she could ask another question, the two men again retired to the corner for consultation. When they came back there was a shade more of kindness and confidence in their manner, and Seventy-four opened his mind more freely. "We wish to say, ma'am, looking at the thing by and large, in a far-minded way, that, ez you seem interested, and ez Mr. Rightbody was interested, and was, accordin' to all accounts, deceived and led away by Silsbee, that we don't mind listening to any proposition you might make as a lady—allowin' you was eckly interested."

"I understand," said Mrs. Rightbody quickly. "And you will furnish me with any papers?" "We wish to say, ma'am, that we think she's got papers, but—"

that the man was wealthy, and evidently no mere adventurer; it was rumored that he was courageous and manly; but even those who delighted in his odd humor were shocked at his grammar and slang. It was said that Mr. Marvin had but one interview with his father-in-law elict, and returned so supremely disgusted that the match was broken off. The horse stealing story, more or less garbled, found its way through lips that pretended to deny it, yet eagerly repeated it. Only one member of the Rightbody family—and a new one—save them from utter ostracism. It was young Mr. Ryder, the adopted son of the prospective head of the household, whose culture, manners and general elegance fascinated and thrilled Boston with a new sensation. It seemed to many that Miss Alice should, in the vicinity of this rare exotic, forget her former enthusiasm for a professional life; but the young man was pitied by society, and various plans for diverting him from any mesalliance with the Rightbody family were concocted.

It was a wintry night, and the second anniversary of Mr. Rightbody's death, that a light was burning in his library. But the dead man's chair was occupied by young Mr. Ryder, adopted son of the new proprietor of the mansion; and before him stood Alice, with her dark eyes fixed on the table. "There must have been something in it, Joe, believe me. Did you never hear your father speak of mine?"

"Never."

"But you say he was college bred, and born a gentleman, and in his youth he must have had many friends."

"Alice," said the young man gravely, "when I have done something to redeem my name and wear it again before these people, before you, it would be well to revive the past. But till then—"

But Alice was not to be put down. "I remember," she went on, scarcely heeding him, "that when I came in that night papa was reading a letter and seemed to be discontented."

"A letter?" "Yes; but," added Alice, with a sigh, "when we found him here insensible, there was no letter on his person. He must have destroyed it."

"Did you ever look among his papers? If done it might be a clue." The young man glanced toward the cabinet. Alice read his eyes and answered: "Oh, dear, no! The cabinet contained only his papers, all perfectly arranged—you know how methodical were his habits—and some old business and private letters, all carefully put away."

"Let us see them," said the young man, rising. They opened drawer after drawer; files upon files of letters and business papers accurately folded and filed. Suddenly Alice uttered a little cry and picked up a quaint ivory paper knife lying at the bottom of a drawer. "It was missing the next day and never could be found; he must have mislaid it here. This is the drawer," said Alice eagerly. Here was a clue. But the lower part of the drawer was filled with old letters not labeled, yet neatly arranged in files. Suddenly he stopped and said, "Put them back, Alice, at once."

**WHY IS IT** That rheumatism and neuralgia are so prevalent? This question has not been satisfactorily answered, but it is certain that these diseases are not only the most painful but among the most common, and some member of nearly every family in the land is the victim of one of these dread tormentors. Ladies seem to be peculiarly liable to neuralgic attacks, which, in the form of neuralgic headache, pain in the back, or nervous pains are of constant occurrence. Not until the discovery of Athlophoros had any remedy been found for either rheumatism, neuralgia or nervous headache, and they were generally conceded to be incurable, but Athlophoros has been proved to be not only a certain cure for these diseases, in all their varied forms, but a safe remedy. If, in the use of Athlophoros, the bowels are kept freely open, its success is certain, and to aid this, Athlophoros Pills are recommended, which, while providing the necessary cathartic, will be found to be a valuable aid to the action of the medicine. Athlophoros is no experiment, it has been tested and has proved its wonderful efficacy.

The Athlophoros Pills were originally prepared as a remedy for use in connection with Athlophoros, for rheumatism and neuralgia and kindred complaints. Used in connection with that remedy, they are a certain cure for either of these very common and distressing diseases. They have also been found to be an invaluable remedy for any and all diseases arising from vitiated blood or general debility. They are especially valuable for nervous debility, blood poisoning, dyspepsia, distress after eating, headache, constipation, loss of appetite, and all stomach or liver troubles. For diseases of women they are invaluable. These pills are perfectly harmless and may be safely used by adults or children.

Testimonials of those who have been cured will be sent free on application. Every druggist should keep Athlophoros and Athlophoros Pills, but where they cannot be bought of the druggist, the Athlophoros Co., 112 Wall St., New York, will send either (carriage paid) on receipt of regular price, which is \$1.00 per bottle for Athlophoros and 50c. for Pills.

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**COUGH**  
**SYRUP**

Cures Coughs, Colds, Hoarseness, Croup, Asthma, Whooping Cough, Bronchitis, Consumption, and all other lung troubles. It is a safe and reliable remedy for all ages. Price 10 Cts. Sold by all Druggists.

**PUBLIC SALE.**

On Wednesday, Dec. 8, 1886, at Bluffdale Farm near Ottawa, Ill., I will offer the following Pure Blood Stock: 24 head of Shorthorn Cattle, including 10 extra good cows and Heifers, and 12 fine young Bulls. From 6 months to 2 years old, among which are sweepstakes and first-prize winners at one of the leading fairs in Illinois, the Chicago Sheep, both sexes, descendants from the most noted flocks in England, and including the sweepstakes pen at Minnesota State Fair in 1886. Also two high grade yearlings, all good ones. I think I may safely say that my flock has won more prizes at leading shows during the past eight years than any other in America. The Clydesdale Stallions—Duke of Ottawa, 2, 19, 3 years old, and weighing more than a ton, conceded by many to be the largest and best colt in our state. Luffy the 4th, 2 years old, 5 years old, whose colts have always been prize winners wherever shown. String Boy, 3 years old, winner of 24 prizes at "The Great St. Louis Fair" in 1885. A few more high grade yearlings, a rare opportunity is thus offered those desiring some of the best stock in the country at their own price. I will also offer, should it be desired, my Fine Stock Farm, consisting of 320 acres, beautifully situated on a fine road, near to market, under a high state of cultivation, being well drained and watered by an inexhaustible Artesian Well. Easy terms, which will be made known on day of sale. For further particulars address

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**EGGESTON'S**  
**ELASTIC TRUSS**

Has a Pad different from all others. It is made with self-adjusting ball in center, adapts itself to the shape of the body while the ball in the cup presses back, after a person does with the finger. With light pressure the truss is held tight and secure. Sent by mail, cure certain, is easy, durable and cheap. Sent by mail, cure certain is easy, durable and cheap. Sent by mail, cure certain is easy, durable and cheap. Sent by mail, cure certain is easy, durable and cheap.

EGGESTON TRUSS CO., Chicago, Ill.



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"We wish to say, ma'am, that we think she's got papers, but—"

"But, mother—"

"The climate, Alice, is overrated. My nerves are already suffering from it. The associations are unlit for you, and Mr. Marvin is naturally impatient."

Miss Alice colored slightly. "But your quest, mother?"

"I've abandoned it."

"But I have not," said Alice, quietly. "Do you remember my guide at the Yosemite—Stanislaus Joe? Well, Stanislaus Joe is—who do you think?"

Mrs. Rightbody was languidly indifferent. "Well, Stanislaus Joe is the son of Joshua Silsbee."

Mrs. Rightbody sat upright in astonishment.

"Yes, but, mother, he knows nothing of what we know. His father treated him shamefully, and set him cruelly adrift years ago; and, when he was hung, the poor fellow, in sheer disgrace, changed his name."

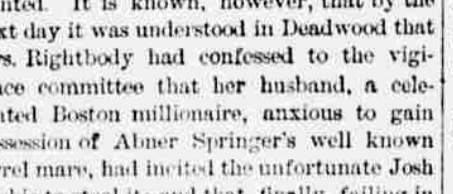
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"Oh, nothing! Only I thought it might lead to something."

Mrs. Rightbody suspected that "something," and asked sharply, "And pray how did you find it out? You did not speak of it in the valley."

"Oh! I didn't find it out till to-day," said Miss Alice, walking to the window. "He happened to be here, and—told me."

THE END.



PART IV.

Mrs. Rightbody's friends had been astounded by her singular and unexpected pilgrimage to California so soon after her husband's decease, they were still more astounded by the information, a year later, that she was engaged to be married to Mr. Ryder, and the return of both men.

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Mrs. Rightbody's heart beat high. Her boldness had made her penetration good. Yet

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