

their own plans, knitted by a comparison of their secret dreams, made them consider in a critical way what the sliding panorama had to offer.

"That's a nice little homestead," Tom said quickly, pointing. "The barn looks a bit shabby, though."

"Did you see the darling little calf in the field?"

"Sure! Wonder what a place like that costs!"

So they would discuss, with great deliberation, a piece of property, live stock, a farmhouse; as if they were indeed on the spot, with funds and serious intentions, instead of already being miles farther on.

"Quick—did you see that nice horse?"

"It was frightened by the train, poor thing."

"Some time"—Tom recrossed his legs leisurely, as if they were before a fire—"some time I suppose it's wise to settle down—after being all over first, I mean. One should settle down and have—well, a horse apiece." A pause. "You feel that way, don't you?"

Alicia turned it over in her mind. Travel a few years this way, go everywhere, and then take a farm? She considered it all very carefully.

"Yes, I feel that way, too," she said at length, as if committing herself to a promise.

It was after she said this that she asked Tom to get her a telegraph blank. He brought it back with him, smiling eagerly, knowingly.

"You're going to telegraph your mother that you're traveling farther with us?"

"No, I'm sending word to my *fiancé* that our engagement is broken."

"Oh, the man your father spoke about? He must have known, then. He saw me with the telegraph blank, and when he heard it was for you, he said: 'The kid's found her reason!'"

Alicia sent the telegram at the next station. As she did so, she pictured the whole scene with her mother, in which she herself, for the first time, would emerge triumphant by simply saying:

"I'm following in your footsteps. Didn't you leave home and travel? Didn't you, mother, dear?"

Of course she hadn't worded the last sentence until after she and Tom had ridden another two hours—after, in fact, they had ridden through a tunnel. Aren't tunnels heavenly things?

Father was standing beaming down at them when the train struck the light. He stood by proudly and smiled, as he heard their plans. He nodded his head happily, as if he had planned it all himself.

"You're glad you came, kid?"

"You bet!" said Alicia.

### MY LOVE

My love may come as a rider  
Over a windy plain,  
Gallop in the sunlight,  
Splashing through the rain;

Or else as a dreamy shepherd,  
Driving cloud-white sheep,  
Playing on a reed flute,  
Singing me to sleep.

He may come as a stalwart swimmer,  
Out of a cold, clean sea,  
Bringing shells of coral  
And mother-of-pearl to me.

Oh! My love shall come in the morning  
With a sunbeam for a staff,  
And instead of a kiss to greet me with,  
My love shall carry a laugh.

*Theodora Elizabeth Schneider*

# Gold

A STORY OF CENTRAL AMERICA, WHEREIN TWO WHITE PROSPECTORS FIND THE YELLOW METAL THAT DRIVES MEN MAD WITH THE LUST OF POSSESSION

By John Steuart Erskine

THE old Indian scrutinized the white men carefully, his brown eyes alert and appraising.

"It is not the custom among us to allow girls to leave the village," he said at last. "Perhaps, when we come to know you, we may allow you wives."

The red-haired man scowled disappointedly. His face, seared with the lines of hardship and unhealthy living, was ill-humored and vicious.

"You've known me seven years," he grumbled in the bad Spanish which was their common tongue. "I tell you what I'll do: I'll give you money for the girl—gold."

Jay, his companion, gave a sudden, instinctive shake of his head, as if in condemnation of bad tactics.

"No, *señor*," said the Indian, curtly but not discourteously.

Jay emptied the calabash of *chicka*, which had been the old Indian's welcoming cup.

"I thank you," he said, interposing a broad shoulder between the two men. "Have you any coffee to sell?"

The old man became genial again, and, turning, strode into the thatch house.

Jay turned upon his partner.

"You damn fool!" he said angrily. "You ought to know better than that. You can't touch these Paya women. And you can't buy them—they're too damn indifferent. These Indians think gold is the property of the devil and not to be touched."

Their host returned with a few pounds of sun-dried coffee, and a deal was made. The two partners picked up their shot-guns, cried "*Adios*" to the swarm of women and children under the palm leaf shel-

ter, and swung off down the trail. The devil was still riding on Red Horton's shoulders, and he muttered his ill humor aloud as he walked.

"Seven years," he grumbled. "Still living in this damn place, still hoping to find something worth taking out. No nearer anything now than when I came to Central America. Even if there is anything here, we couldn't develop it. Lose it to some damn mining firm. Better get out now."

Jay turned with the grin that was never long absent from his face.

"The gold's here, Red," he said cheerfully. "You know that. We can always make day wages washing, anyhow. Then, when we find the real ledge, we'll be on Easy Street. Handfuls of it!"

He made a gesture of scooping up gold with his hand, and grinned mockingly, himself not more than half believing that his vision would ever come true. For years he had spurred himself on with these dreams of the gold as he would find it at last.

Twice Jay had gone away to seek a more satisfactory life, and each time he had been called back by horrible thoughts of others washing the sands of his rivers, of others finding his ledge of gold; and each time he had haled Red from his work and had led him away to the headwaters of the Alvarado River to seek their mine again. For Jay's was the vision and the planning, the great, vapory dream of gold in which the two men were wasting the best years of their lives.

"If I had five thousand dollars," Red muttered on, "I'd go back to the States, get a job, get married, settle down. Have something to eat, somebody to talk to at