

A NORTH POLE ROMANCE.

CHAPTER I.

It was a beautiful morning at Poleville Centre. Strawberries were in full bloom, and lovely great white polar bears could be seen frolicking on the huge blocks of ice along the ocean front. It was high June, and little Trilbena Nansen, getting to be a big girl now, and granddaughter of the famous explorer, was plucking clover by the roadside and ever and anon casting her pretty eyes seaward in the fond hope of seeing the sails of her lover's balloon, which was expected home that very day from the old world, namely America.

'He loves me, he loves me not,' she murmured musically, pulling the petals from a frozen snowflower and dropping them in profusion around her pretty bare feet.

CHAPTER II.

Poleville Centre was the largest village in the great fertile region of the newly discovered country. Some wanted to call it Nansentown, some New Norway, and some New England Number Two, but by a vote of the House, 29 to 3, it was decided the new land should be called Poleville Centre. This, they argued, would be more fitting, since it suggested a turning point in the world's history.

CHAPTER III.

For ten days and nights did the fair maid stalk beside the sad, salt sea, throwing her searchlight across the thickly wooded shores of Greenland into the Baffin Bay beyond, and wringing her soft white hands, which had become soaked with Arctic fog. No sail aboy was visible. At the end of the tenth day she went home to eat and help her mother make some ice cream for the summer boarders. Signal lanterns were run to the top of the pole, and a strolling German band was detailed to waltz along the beach and blow their horns at regular intervals. And the days chased one another onward in their mad glee, and still no sail was visible.

CHAPTER IV.

Now, it so happened that in Poleville Centre lived a young doctor who was also a suitor for the fair Trilbena's hand, but he didn't suit her. He had watched her all through her great sorrow, longing yet fearing to offer her words of love and condolence. Then he was missing for several days. No one skating along the main thoroughfare had seen his familiar figure for some time, and people feared he might have been borne away in the night on a departing iceberg. Not he.

CHAPTER V.

One day he suddenly appeared before the maid who had so many times repulsed him. 'Trilbena,' said he, 'your lover is false.' 'Sir!' she cried. 'It is true, Trillie. I swear it.' 'How do you know?' she asked hoarsely. 'I've seen them.' 'Them? Who?' 'Why—er—he and the woman.' 'Woman? Woman? What woman?' 'Oh—er—one of the Bowery girls.' 'I don't believe it. You are cruelly deceiving me.' 'Will you believe your own eyes?' 'Yes, I will,' she replied, in tones that would have turned cold the blood of an Esquimaux.

'Then come at once to my laboratory.' On the way he explained to her how he had been to work upon a wonderful machine, and that at last it was completed. 'It is called the new triple X-ray long distance telescope,' he said, 'and now look. Look, Trillie, right through the body of your Mother Earth, at New England. Find the streets of Boston, and tell me what you see.'

She took the tube in her hand, while he stood by the throttle. One long, lingering look and she dropped the eyepiece and stammered.

'The villain!' she muttered, 'and that woman has a past; I know it!'

'Yes,' said the doctor, 'but it is a long way.'

'Rottegen Edison,' she cried, springing up. 'I am yours!'

Then he folded her to his bosom, and would have wept for joy but for the danger of the formation of icicles on his face.

'I might have known it,' she fondly murmured, 'for was not the last petal on that snowflower nit?'

CHAPTER THE LAST.

Dear reader, I will not pain or shock you with the details of the awful scene which our heroine was able to witness by the means of the Doctor's wonderful instrument. Suffice to say, she saw distinctly the side-walks of Boston, and on the Bowery, once known as Commonwealth Avenue, she beheld her wayward lover waiting to hand organ music to a horrid looking female, clad in more horrid looking bloomers and a sweater. The other members of the crew were there also, grouped about in unstatueque postures, but as our story deals entirely with life at the Pole, we shall be

obliged to leave the unruly captain and his followers in the midst of their twentieth century hilarity.

THE LARGEST CITIES.

The population of the great cities of the world advances so quickly that the figures of the accepted books of reference need revision about as soon as they are published. For example, according to all the latest annuals and year books, the population is within 2,500,000, but the census taken last March shows it to be 2,511,955, or 87,250 inhabitants more than was shown by the census of 1891. That is to say, Paris is

growing at the rate of 17,450 inhabitants per annum. This, however, is less than the rate of growth of other European capitals, and it is considerably less than the antecedent growth of Paris itself. Between 1872 and 1876 that amounted to an annual increase of 34,763; between 1876 and 1881 of 45,840, and between 1886 and 1891 of 32,752 inhabitants.

The figures of the population of London must also be revised in view of the fact that they are now 4,392,346—an increase of 180,603 in five years, or at the rate of 36,120 per annum. Berlin, to which the almanac makers give 1,679,244 has actually 1,677,135 inhabitants, or more than

two and a-half times what it had about the beginning of the era of Prussian greatness in 1864. Vienna keeps growing at the rate of 25,000 a year, but St. Petersburg barely reaches half this rate of annual increase. Till the Greater New York is a more positive entity than can be created by permissive legislation, Paris must continue to rank as the second city of the world, leaving New York at the head of the nine cities whose population is between the 1,000,000 and the 2,000,000 mark.

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