

**THE CUP OF
TREMBLING, AND
OTHER STORIES**

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The cup of trembling, and other stories by Mary Hallock Foote

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MARY HALLOCK FOOTE

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AND OTHER STORIES

BY
MARY HALLOCK FOOTE



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THE CUP OF TREMBLING

I

A MINER of the Cœur d'Alêne was returning alone on foot, one winter evening, from the town in the gulch to his solitary claim far up on the timbered mountain-side.

His nearest way was by an unfrequented road that led to the Dreadnaught, a lofty and now abandoned mine that had struck the vein three thousand feet above the valley, but the ore, being low-grade, could never be made to pay the cost of transportation.

He had cached his snow-shoes, going down, at the Bruce boys' cabin, the only habitation on the Dreadnaught road, which from there was still open to town.

The snows that camp all summer on the highest peaks of the Cœur d'Alêne were steadily working downward, driving the game before them; but traffic had not

ceased in the mountains. Supplies were still delivered by pack-train at outlying claims and distant cabins in the standing timber. The miner was therefore traveling light, encumbered with no heavier load than his personal requisition of tobacco and whisky and the latest newspapers, which he circulated in exchange for the wayside hospitalities of that thinly peopled but neighborly region.

His homeward halt at the cabin was well timed. The Bruce boys were just sitting down to supper; and the moon, that would light his lonelier way across the white slopes of the forest, would not be visible for an hour or more. The boys threw wood upon their low cooking-fire of coals, which flamed up gloriously, spreading its immemorial welcome over that poor, chance suggestion of a home. The supper was served upon a board, or literally two boards, nailed shelf-wise across the lighted end of the cabin, beneath a small window where, crossed by the squares of a dusty sash, the austere winter twilight looked in: a sky of stained-glass colors above the clear heights of snow; an atmosphere as cold and pure as