A New Romance of the Storm Country

(Concluded).

CHAPTER XVII.

—

Payment in Full.

Edith Devon, with the small black bag in her hand, crept out of the Pendlehaven garden, unapprehensive. She had no power to think—no desire to go anywhere or do anything. She lingered about Pendlehaven place until the morning dawned. During the hours preceding daylight she studied over the events of the afternoon and evening. As her mind cleared, all her love for Uriah rose up and clamored to help him. She remembered leaving him stretched out on the floor as if he were dead. When the town below began to show signs of day she walked back into Pendlehaven place and slowly up to the house.

It was a servant who ushered Mrs. Devon into the library where Doctor John and Doctor Paul still sat, struggling with the mystery that had come into their usually quiet home. After vainly trying to force more than monosyllabic replies from Tonnibel, they had put her to bed, gibbering with fright.

Edith advanced to the middle of the room, holding the little bag in her hand, looking first at Doctor John, who tried unsuccessfully to recall where he had seen her, and then at Doctor Paul.

"Where's my man, my Uriah?" she asked hoarsely, and then Doctor John recognized her and rose to his feet. "You got my husband here with a bit of lead in 'im," went on Edith, monotonously. "I want to see 'im; I want to take 'im back to the boat."

For the space of thirty seconds, perhaps, no one ventured a word. Then, as the woman swayed, Doctor John leaped forward and put her into a chair. The bag dropped to the floor beside her. Tears began to flow down her cheeks and, with her sleeve, she brushed them away.

"Where's my man, my Uriah?" she demanded again fiercely. "Give 'im back to me, mister, and I'll— Where's the pup that shot 'im?"

"Who shot him?" cried Doctor John.

Edith gave him a peculiar look.

"Reggie, Reggie Brown," she whined. "I saw 'im, and Tony, thinkin' I did it—"

A sharp cry fell from Dr. Paul Pendlehaven.

"Tony vowed she did it," he gasped. "Oh, my poor little girl! She didn't even mention your being here."

"Tony's like that," assented Edith. "She wouldn't peach on a dog."

Doctor John came to her side with one long stride.

"Are you ready to swear Reginald Brown shot your husband?" he demanded.

"Of course I am, mister," nodded Edith. "He was always runnin' after Tony, and she hated 'im. He was right over there when, suddenlike, he banged a bullet smack at my man. That duffer, the dirty pup, ain't fit to clean Uriah's boots. When Tony pushed me out of this house she says, well, she says, 'Run, mummy, before somebody gets you,' and I was kind a dazed like and ran away."

Just then Philip flung into the room. room.

"I'm half crazy," he exclaimed and then stopped, seeing Edith Devon, but he was so filled with misery that he gave no further heed to the stranger and went on hastily, "Jack, Paul, there's something behind that affair of Reggie's!"

"There sure is," said John Pendlehaven. "Sit down, boy. We're just getting at it. This is Mrs. Devon."

"And my man," she insisted, struggling up. "Uriah always was a d—n fool, mixin' up with swells like Reggie Brown, but I love 'im; and, mister," she wiped her face and, shudderingly, appealed to Paul Pendlehaven, "if you give 'im to me, mister—"

"We'll see Tony first," he interrupted. "Wait."

While their cousins were with Uriah's wife below, Mrs. Curtis and Katherine were talking over the events of the night.

"If Tony'll only stick to what she's said," Mrs. Curtis was repeating, "nothing could be better. She'll probably go to jail, and Reginald will forget her."

"Rege's such a fool," commented the girl. "I wonder if she really did say she loved him. She simply couldn't care for him when she has Philip, nor after knowing he tried to kill Cousin Paul. I'd like to know what's behind it all."

Tony received the call to the library listlessly. Nothing that anyone could say now would make her lot any easier. Nothing! Nothing! Philip, her new father, kind Uncle John, all had vanished in the waters of bitterness that had overwhelmed her.

The room seemed full of people when she crept timidly in. Uriah Devon, with a white cloth tied around his head, lounged in a large chair. Mrs. Curtis and Katherine were seated, rigidly erect side by side. The girl's gaze passed over their glaring eyes and settled on Philip MacCauley. Was that a smile she saw lurking around his lips? Of course not! He couldn't smile when she was in such trouble! She shivered as she met Reginald Brown's eager eyes, and, thrusting back a sob, she went to Paul Pendlehaven because he had held his hand out to her. Then she saw her mother, and a bewildered expression spread over her face. Doctor Paul, his eyes soft and gleaming, his lips twitching nervously, drew her down beside him.

"Mummy doesn't know anything about it," gasped the girl, extending her arms to Edith. "I won't hear anyone say—Oh, Uriah," she turned to Devon, "you know. Oh, say I did it."

"Won't say any such thing," muttered Uriah.

"Of course he won't, Tony," exclaimed Doctor John. "We know the truth now."

Tonnibel got to her feet, pulling herself away from Paul Pendlehaven.

"Oh, you can't arrest my poor little mother," she cried. "Her whole life has been so miserable. I must help her. You must, you, Philip—"

Tony Received the Call to the Library Listlessly.

Philip got out of his chair, but Doctor John put him back into it again.

"Wait," he whispered into the boy's ear.

"I want to tell you, everyone," went on Tony, fiercely, "that I'll swear 'til I die my mother—"

Paul Pendlehaven took the speaker by the shoulders and forced her face up to his.

"This woman, here, your mother," and he waved his arm toward Mrs. Devon, "says you didn't have that gun in your hand, and it's loaded to the brim now. She didn't use it, either."

Reggie's jaw dropped. He made a dash for the door, as Mrs. Curtis screamed. Doctor John caught the fleeing boy and wheeled him around to face his horror-stricken mother.

"It's a lie! I didn't," he mumbled. "Where'd I get a gun to shoot anyone? This woman did it herself. I saw her."

"Then you were here," cried Philip.

Mrs. Curtis acted as if she were going to faint, but, as no one paid any attention to her, she slumped back beside her daughter, who turned away contemptuously.

"That settles one question," commented Doctor Paul, grimly. "You shot Devon, Reggie," and the boy sank into a chair beside his mother. "Now," continued the doctor, "who robbed the safe?"

To know that her mother hadn't done the shooting relieved but one of Tonnibel's worries. Uriah wasn't hurt much anyway, but the doctor's question brought vividly to her mind another danger, not a whit less serious. Edith was certainly involved in looting the safe!

"I told you once," Tony began weakly.

"Child," interposed Doctor Paul, "you'll shield no one else. I shudder to think what might have happened if your mother hadn't come here for her husband."

His tones were low and stern, though much moved.

His eye caught sight of the black bag at the same time his brother's did. Doctor John opened it and, amid an appalling silence, took box after box out of it.

"Plain stealing," he growled, and then he stared at Mrs. Devon in openmouthed amazement. "What'd you bring 'em back for?" he questioned.

Edith paid no attention to Doctor John's query but addressed her husband.

"Uriah, now you went and done it again!" She turned to Doctor Paul. "You got everythin' back, give me my man. He didn't know what he was doin', sir."

"Then he'll be taught a lesson, the same as Reginald will, madam," rejoined the doctor. "Ever since your daughter came to us, she's been in dread of your husband, her father. Once he was sent away, and she had peace. This time he won't come back in a hurry."

Doctor John reached into the drawer of the table near him and produced the roll of bills that Philip had found on Devon the night before.

"How about this, you?" he inquired of Devon. "Where'd this come from before it was in your pocket? While we're at it, we might as well clear up everything."

The center of interest, Uriah Devon shifted uneasily in his chair. He had discovered the loss of the money but had not dared to make any inquiry about it. Hastily he ran over the situation, and it appeared to him as hopeless as possible, but five thousand dollars was a good thing for a man to have, whatever his position. If Mrs. Curtis claimed the money, her connection with him would come out, and that might make things easier for him. If she didn't, he'd have the cash anyhow.

"That's mine, mister," he grunted, "and I didn't steal it, neither. Give it to me."

The same considerations had been chasing through Mrs. Curtis' mind, and, in the general cataclysm that she saw before her, she concluded the money might be very necessary for her and her children.

"Don't let him have it, John," she screamed. "It's mine. Give it to me."

Doctor John arose and stood between Uriah and Mrs. Curtis, holding the roll of bills in his hand. Amidst the closest attention of the rest of the group, he looked from one to the other, while the claimants indulged in a dispute.

"You give it to me, didn't you, ma'am?" asked Uriah, roughly. "Didn't you?"

"Yes, I suppose I did," she acknowledged, "but you haven't done what you said you would."

"'Twasn't my fault," Uriah grumbled. "If that fool of a son of yours hadn't butted in and shot me, I'd taken Tony like I bargained to."

Then Doctor Paul interposed, and a few questions, sternly put and categorically answered, discovered the whole conspiracy between Mrs. Curtis, her children, and Uriah Devon.

John Pendlehaven, whose anger had been steadily rising, suddenly stepped forward and brushed his brother aside.

"I'll take charge of this now, Paul," he stated. "You're too d—d easy. Here's where you treacherous snakes go to jail," he included Uriah and the Curtises in a sweep of his hand. "Every one of you!" He turned savagely upon Reginald. "You little pup," he charged swiftly, "you tried to poison Paul, didn't you?" He crossed to his side and towered over him with upraised fist. "Own up, d—n you. Didn't you?"

Reginald cowered, slipped out of his chair and attempted to shield himself in Mrs. Curtis' arms, who leaned protectingly over him.

"I—I was drunk," he excused himself, "and I thought," he whimpered to his mother, "I thought you wanted me to."

Then Edith projected herself into the excitement again. She glanced at Uriah, her eyes melting with tenderness, arose and stood looking at the Pendlehaven brothers.

"Mr. Paul," she said in a low voice, "don't you remember me?"

Paul looked her over with no sign of recognition, and his brother turned away from Reginald to observe this new development.

"No," said Paul, and he shook his head.

"Never mind! That don't matter!" was the reply, "but I'll make a dicker with you. You give me my man for keeps, and I'll give you your girl, Caroline. I'm Edith Mindil!"

You could have heard a pin drop, so deep was the silence. All were looking at the haggard woman, facing Paul Pendlehaven, who was rising unsteadily.

"Give me my man," she repeated. "Don't send 'im to jail, and I'll give you your girl."

Doctor Paul had become so white

"You Little Pup, You Tried to Poison Paul, Didn't You?"

that his brother went to him and flung an arm across his shoulders.

"Are you lying?" he thundered at Edith. "If—if—— Sit down, Paul. Let me—"

"Where's my baby?" quavered Paul Pendlehaven.

"Does my Uriah go free, scot-free?" questioned Mrs. Devon.

"Yes, yes," consented both brothers at the same time.

Tony had dropped to the floor. Now that little Caroline had been found, she could no longer be a Pendlehaven daughter. Edith went to her and knelt beside her.

"Here she is, sir," she said in husky tones, lifting a tearful face to the men, "and you couldn't have a finer girl in the world. I ain't goin' to say for you to forgive me, sir, but you've had 'er over two years! Now, gimme Uriah, and we'll go."

Tony threw her arms around Edith's neck. What a change two minutes and a few words had made! She seemed to have taken on a new dignity as, with shining eyes, she said to Paul Pendlehaven:

"Father, darling, whatever it was that separated us, I want, oh, how I want to do something for the only mother I've ever known."

Of course, Doctor Paul consented; he even did more. He got a promise from the confused Uriah that he'd turn his back on the old days and old ways, and begin again with such aid as the Pendlehavens would give him.

While Doctor Paul was settling the fate of the Devons, John Pendlehaven had been sizing up the Curtis family. They were grouped together, clinging to each other.

"Reggie," he ejaculated, "I reckon you did a good job when you stopped Devon with a bullet last night. As for you, Sarah, you and your children aren't safe to have in the house. Here!" He stretched forth his hand and offered the five thousand dollars to her "Here's your money. Now go, and take Reggie and Katherine with you."

Mrs. Curtis was so utterly overcome that she could do nothing but sob, but Katherine took the bills from the doctor's hand and turned to her brother.

"Come on, Rege," she muttered. "Help me get her out of this. We better go." She pinched her mother's arm spitefully. "Get up, mother. Quit that crying, and come on."

The others watched them leave the room, and then Mrs. Devon spoke up:

"We're next, Riah! And we're everlastingly grateful to you, Doctor Paul, and you, Doctor John, for lettin' us go. Ain't we, Riah?"

Devon straightened up from his chair and grinned sheepishly.

"That we be," he agreed, "and I'll try to show it."

* * * * * * *

That evening when Tonnibel and Philip were alone together, the young man said chokingly, "You don't for a moment imagine I ever believed you did that thing, darling? I went away because I thought you didn't love me any more, that you never had loved me. You don't think—any other way?"

"No, dear," she answered gently. "No, of course not!"

The boy pressed her to him, and, as they whispered so low, no one could hear anything, there isn't another word to record, except that Tonnibel Pendlehaven had everything the world could give one little girl.

[THE END.]

GRAIN HELD BY GROWERS.

There is the largest stock of grain in farmers' hands ever known in the State, according to the report issued by G. L. Morgan, agricultural statistician, U. S. bureau of crop estimates.

The stock of corn on farms March 1, is estimated at 43 per cent. of last year's production, or 28,832,000 bushels, as compared with 28,877,000 bushels last year, and 22,002,000 bushels, the average stock on farms March 1 for the past 10 years. The percentage of corn shipped or to be shipped out of county where grown is estimated at 12 per cent. of last year's production, or 8,046,000 bushels, as compared with 5,575,000 bushels last year, and 5,192,000 bushels, the average for the past 10 years. It is estimated that 85 per cent. of last year's crop was of merchantable quality as compared with 87 per cent. in 1919 and 81 per cent., the average for the past 10 years.

The stock of wheat in farmers' hands March 1 is estimated at 35 per cent. of last year's production, or 8,715,000 bushels, as compared with 6,715,000 bushels last year, and 6,388,000 bushels, the average stock on farms March 1 for the past 10 years. The amount shipped out of the county where grown is estimated at 37 per cent. of last year's crop, or 9,213,000 bushels, as compared with 11,179,000 bushels shipped a year ago, and 8,780,000 bushels, the average amount shipped for the past 10 years.

The stock of oats on farms is estimated at 46 per cent. of last year's production, or 21,080,000 bushels as compared with 14,744,000 bushels last year, and 15,348,000 bushels, the average stock on farms for the past 10 years on March 1. The amount shipped out of the county is estimated at 8 per cent. or 3,666,000 bushels as compared with 2,212,000 bushels last year, and 2,755,000 bushels, the average amount shipped for the past 10 years.

The stock of barley on farms is estimated at 115,000 bushels or 24 per cent. of last year's crop as compared with 83,000 bushels a year ago, and 60,000 bushels the average stock on farms for the past 10 years on March 1. The percentage shipped out of the county where grown last season is estimated at 7 per cent. of the crop, or 34,000 bushels, the average amount shipped out for the past 10 years.

The following are the average values of several kinds of farm land throughout the State: Poor plow lands, $39 per acre; good plow lands, $86 per acre; all plow lands, $62 per acre. The average value of all farm lands with improvements is estimated at $89 per acre and without improvements, $55 per acre. These figures show a very slight decrease from a year ago; less than one-half of one per cent.

THOUGHTLESS USE OF FIRE IN WOODS COSTS MILLIONS.

More than $25,000,000 worth of standing timber in the United States is destroyed by forest fires each year, according to estimates made by the Fosert Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. This represents a serious loss to the country, particularly at present when the nation is using up its resources of timber four times as fast as it is grown, and as a consequence is facing a depletion of its forests.

Not every one in the country will be able to visit the display of the Forest Service, which, as a part of the department's exhibit, is to be on show at various fairs throughout the country. The lessons of the exhibit, however, should appeal strongly to everyone, as they point out graphically the more common ways by which destructive fires are started through carelessness. They are part of the work of the service in its endeavor to stir up nationwide sentiment for a cautious use of fire in forests and woodlands.

Tobacco smoking in the forests has been found to be a very serious fire hazard. Smokers, statistics show, are annually responsible for a large number of conflagrations in timbered areas, causing immense losses. So important has this source of forest fires been considered by those interested in guarding the timber supply of the country, that Secretary of Agriculture Meredith recently appealed to the tobacco manufacturers to cooperate in enlisting smokers in a movement against careless use of fire in all forests, both national and private. It is his idea to have the manufacturers print a fire caution on the outside of each tobacco, cigar, and cigarette container. Hundreds of thousands of people would read these cautions and their effect would be very valuable, he believes. Similar action has been taken by a Canadian tobacco company as a step toward safeguarding the timber resources of the Dominion. Some lumber companies in the United States do not allow their employees to smoke in the woods, and the extension of this rule is being strongly urged.

The Forest Service is endeavoring to impress upon the public the danger that results from dropping a lighted match, a pipe coal, or a lighted cigarette or cigar stump in or near a wood. Hunters, fishermen, and woods workers of all kinds smoke in the forests, and automobilists carelessly toss bits of fire from their cars and speed thoughtlessly onward, unmindful of the possible source of conflagration they have left behind them. A single glowing cigarette end may cost the government thousands of dollars for fire figthing, to say nothing of the value of the timber destroyed, the desolation of scenic beauty, and the harm done to watersheds. In protecting the national forests of more than 150,000,000 acres, the Department of Agriculture has to fight thousands of forest fires every summer due to carelessness.

There are several other important sources of forest fire which can be laid to the careless use of fire by individuals. Campers many times leave their camp fires lighted and unprotected while they fish or hunt. Camp sites frequently are abandoned and the fire not extinguished. Here is a very real danger for there are many ways in which the fire can spread to the surrounding underbrush and make its way to the trees. A wind may spread the sparks to the timber near by.

Farmers many times are responsible for starting destructive forest fires. Great care should be exercised in brush burning during dry seasons. The fire is apt to get beyond control and the blaze spread to adjoining woods. It has been found, too, that frequently sparks from locomotives fall in or near woods, set fire to the underbrush, and before long the trees are ablaze.

Records of forest fires in the United States show that there are many other features about them to be dreaded, even aside from the actual money loss of the timber burned. Not infrequently they are attended by a large loss of life. Particularly in the North and Northwest, when the fire gets beyond contral, large towns that happen to be in the path of the blaze may suffer severely and many persons are sometimes killed.

Governors of western States are doing much to awaken individuals to a sense of personal responsibility in guarding against careless use of fire in forests. "Forest protection week" set aside for this purpose has started a movement that promises to become nation-wide.

RABBIT SKINS VALUABLE.

A profit from rabbit keeping sometimes overlooked is that to be derived from the sale of the skins. At the present time the fur is at its best, and it is desirable that the color should be as even as possible. The New Zealand Red and the Flemish Giants both have skins desirable from a commercial standpoint and they can either be sold, or, where a home industry is possible, they could be made up at home into a number of useful and attractive articles.

For using the skins commercially, they must be removed whole—that is to say, there must be no incision made as in the ordinary way for dressing the rabbit and the skin must then be at once placed upon a stretcher. It does not pay to attempt to tan the skins at home. Tanning can be done for 35 cents apiece at the tannery an dthe pelt is then ready for use. Driving gauntlets, in these days of universal motoring, should find a ready sale and with the backs made of fur, they have a fine appearance as well as affording necessary warmth. Slippers and moccasins can be lined and edged with the fur and it could be used with good effect for trimming the ever-popular sweater.

"The lightning bug is brilliant,
But he hasn't any mind.
He goes through life a blundering,
With his headlight on behind.

But the measuring worm is different.
When he starts after pelf,
He stretches to the limit,
And then he humps himself."

——Subscribe for the "Watchman."

SWEET POTATO GUM ON U. S. STAMPS.

Every time a person puts a United States postage stamp to his lips he tastes the sweet-potato gum with which the stamps are backed. The gum is made from that succulent vegetable because Uncle Sam's lieutenant's consider it the most harmless preparation of the sort.

All of the gum used on American postage stamps is mixed by the government at the Bureau of Eengraving and Printing, where the stamps are made. It is spread on the sheets after the stamps have been printed.

The gum in a liquid form is forced up through pipes from the basement where it is made. These pipes lead to a series of machines consisting of rollers between which the sheets of stamps are fed one at a time.

A continuous fine stream of the liquid gum falls upon one of these rollers. The sheet with its wet coating of sweet-potato mucilage passes from the rollers into a long horizontal flue filled with hot air. When it emerges at the other end of the flue the gum is dry.

The government makes two kinds of postage stamp mucilage. If one could see the packages of stamps as they come to the postoffice ready to be sold one would find them labeled, according to season, "Summer Gum" or "Winter Gum." The former is much the harder of the two and was devised some years ago to keep the stamps from getting too sticky in warm, moist weather.

While Uncle Sam tries to make the lot of the stamp-licker as innocuous as possible, he does not advise making a meal off his sweet-potato gum. The whole process of gum making and applying is made as clean as possible, but there is yet another item to be considered.

A sheet of postage stamps is handled a good many times before it even leaves the bureau where it is made. If you must lick any of your stamps pick out those from the middle of the sheet. The corner ones have gone through the fingers of half a dozen or more counters, not to mention the perforators and the separators and the rest. —Lutheran.

BEST POTATO AND CORN VARIETIES FOR PENNSYLVANIA.

As the spring planting season approaches, the progressive farmer is confronted with a possible change in the variety of some of his staple field crops, and will ordinarily give considerable thought to the subject. Recent field demonstrations conducted by farmers in all parts of the State with the co-operation of farm agents and agricultural extension men from The Pennsylvania State College give some interesting data on potato and corn varieties suited to Pennsylvania conditions.

It is a well established fact that the potatoes of the Rural group are the best yielders for late varieties. Actual demonstrations have shown without a question of doubt that the Russets of the Rural group lead all the others. They are being grown more widely in Pennsylvania than any other variety. Three year's results with farm trials which included a dozen varieties, give Russets a competitive yielding score of 98.5 per cent., Sir Walter Raleigh ranking second with a percentage of 83. Rural New Yorker No. 2 and Heath's Late Beauty follow closely after, with scores of 82 and 81 respectively. The next best group is the Green Mountain, the best variety making a score of 70. The early varieties are the lowest yielders, Early Ohio and Irish Cobbler both having a score of 51. These scores are taken from actual yields under widespread Pennsylvania conditions.

In the matter of corn varieties, specialists are in a position to recommend Lancaster Sure Crop for silage in the western part of the State, and it is one of the highest grain yielders in the eastern part, especially on soils that are medium in fertility. Cloud's Yellow Dent and Long's Champion are good grain yielders in the east, while Sweepstakes is the best for silage in the northern counties.

ACID SOIL AND TREATED SEED LESSEN POTATO SCAB.

Scab diseases of potatoes are wasteful. They not only render the tubers unsightly and unmarketable but also cause a loss of from 10 to 50 per cent. of the tubers at cooking time. This scabbiness is caused by a germ which lives in the soil and attacks the tubers whenever the soil shows an alkaline reaction. The same germ also lives in the scab spots on the tubers.

To control the disease two factors must be considered—the tubers must be disinfected, and the reaction of the soil must be changed from alkaline to slightly acid or neutral. The tubers may be disinfected before cutting by soaking them for one and one-half hours in formaldehyde solution which is easily prepared by adding one pint of the commercial product to 30 gallons of water. The temperature of the solution should be about 60 degrees for effective disinfection. After treating, the tubers should be spread out and dried before cutting.

The reaction of the soil may be changed from alkaline to about the desired acid reaction by plowing under a heavy crop of clover or alfalfa in the fall or a good stand of rye early in the spring. These crops bring about the desired change in the soil during their decaying process. If it is possitively known that the soil upon which potatoes are to be planted is acid, the plowing under of a green crop is not necessary, for the scab organism does not thrive under acid conditions. The so-called commercial acid fertilizers do not produce the desired changes in soil reactions.

If farmers will practice these methods common scab will not appreciably affect their crop, says Dr. C. R. Orton, Pennsylvania State College plant pathologist.

Tainted Money.

Soap-box Orator—An' I tell you that all them millionaires' money is tainted—all of it.

Unconvinced person—How do you mean, "tainted?"

Soap-box Orator—Well 'taint yours, an' 'taint mine, is it?