SERIAL STORY

LANGFORD of the THREE BARS

By KATE AND VIRGIL D. BOYLES

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SYNOPSIS.

Cattle thieves despoiling ranches of South Dakota. George Williston, small ranchman, runs into rendezvous of thieves on island in Missouri river. They have stolen cattle from Three Bar ranch. Langford visits Williston and his daughter and Williston reports what he has seen to Langford, who determines to rid country of thieves. Jesse Black heads outlaws. Langford falls in love with Williston's daughter, but does not tell her so. Louise Dale, court stenographer, and niece of Judge Dale, visits Kemah at request of county attorney, Gordon, to take testimony in preliminary hearing. Gordon falls in love with her. After preliminary examination Williston's home is attacked and defended by his daughter and himself. Outlaws fire building just as Langford and his cowboys arrive. Outlaws carry off Williston but Langford rescues the daughter. Without Willistion evidence against Black is meager, and case seems to be going against the state. Gordon takes a night ride and finds Williston, who has escaped from captors. The courthouse at Kemah burns at night. Williston holds a tea party in his room following court house fire, and Mary Williston and Louise Dale attend.

CHAPTER XVIII.—Continued.

cur. A strange elation took possession of him. She was here. He thought of last night and seemed to walk on air. If he won out maybe—but, fool that he was! what was there in this rough land for a girl like—Louise?

"Oh, no, that will be too much trouble," gasped Louise, in some alarm and thinking of Aunt Helen.

"Thanks, old man, we'll stay," spoke up Langford, cheerfully. "He makes excellent tea—really. I've tried it before. You will never regret staying."

Silently he watched his friend in the inner room bring out a battered teakettle, fill it with a steady hand and put it on the stove in the office, coming and going carelessly, seemingly conscious of nothing in the world but the comfort of his unexpected guests.

True to her sex, Louise was curiously interested in the house-keeping arrangements of a genuine bachelor establishment. Woman-like, she saw many things in the short time she was there—but nothing that diminished her respect for Richard Gordon. The bed in the inner chamber where both men slept was disarranged but clean. Wearing apparel was strewn over the chairs and tables. There was a litter of magazines on the floor. She laid them up against Langford; she did not think Gordon had the time or inclination to cultivate the magazine habit. She did not know to whose weakness to ascribe the tobacco pouch and brier-wood pipe placed invitingly by the side of a pair of gay, elaborately bead-embroidered moccasins, cozily stowed away under the head of the bed; but she was rather inclined to lay these, too, to Langford's charge. The howling tempest outside only served to enhance the coziness of the rumbling fire and the closely drawn blinds.

But tea was never served in those bachelor rooms that night—neither that night nor ever again. It was a little dream that went up in flame with the walls that harbored it. Who first became conscious that the tang of smoke was gradually filling their nostrils, it was hard to tell. They were not far behind each other in that consciousness. It was Langford who discovered that the trouble was at the rear, where the wind would soon have the whole building fanned into flames. Gordon unlocked the door quietly. He said nothing. But Paul, springing in front of him, himself threw it open. It was no new dodge, this burning a man out to shoot him as one would drown out a gopher for the killing. He need not have been afraid. The alarm had spread. The street in front was rapidly filling. One would hardly have dared to shoot then—if one had meant to. And he did not know. He only knew that deviltry had been in the air for Gordon that night. He had suspected more than he had overheard, but it had been in the air.

Gordon saw the action and understood it. He never forgot it. He said nothing, but gave his friend an illuminating smile that Langford understood. Neither ever spoke of it, neither ever forgot it. How tightly can quick impulses bind—forever.

Outside, they encountered the judge in search of his delinquent charges.

"I'm sorry, Dick," he said. "Dead loss my boy. This beastly wind is your undoing."

"I'm not worrying, Judge," responded Gordon, grimly. "I intend for some one else to do that."

"Hellity damn, Dick, hellity damn!" exploded Jim Munson in his ear. The words came whistling through his lips, caught and whirled backward by the play of the storm. The cold was getting bitter, and a fine, cutting snow was at last driving before the wind.

Gordon, with a set face, plunged back into the room—already fire-licked. Langford and Munson followed. There sat the little tea-service staring at them with dumb pathos. The three succeeded in rolling the safe with all its precious documents arranged within, out into the street. Nothing else mattered much—to Gordon. But other things were saved, and Jim gallantly tossed out everything he could lay his hands on before Gordon ordered everybody out for good and all. It was no longer safe to be within. Gordon was the last one out. He carried a battered little teakettle in his hand. He looked at it in a whimsical surprise as if he had not known until then that he had it in his hand. Obeying a sudden impulse, he held it out to Louise.

"Please take care of—my poor little dream," he whispered with a strange, intent look.

Before she could comprehend the significance or give answer, the judge had faced about. He bore the girls

Gordon Unlocked the Door Quietly.

back to the hotel, scolding helplessly all the way as they scudded with the wind. But Louise held the little tin kettle firmly.

Men knew of Richard Gordon that night that he was a marked man. The secret workings of a secret clan had him on their proscription list. Some one had at last found this unwearied and doggedly persistent young fellow in the way. In the way, he was a menace, a danger. He must be removed from out the way. He could not be bought from it—he should be warned from it. So now his home—his work room and his rest room, the first by many hours daily the more in use, with all its furnishings of bachelor plainness and utility, that yet had held a curious charm for some men, friends and cronies like Langford—was burning that he might be warned. Could any one say, "Jesse Black has done this thing?" Would he not bring down proof of guilt by a retaliation struck too soon? It would seem as if he were anticipating an unfavorable verdict. So men reasoned. And even then they did not arise to stamp out the evil that had endured and hugged itself and spit out corruption in the cattle country. That was reserved for—another.

They talked of a match thrown down at the court-house by a tramp, likely—when it was past midnight, when the fire broke out with the wind a piercing gale, and when no vagrant but had long since left such cold comfort and had slept these many weeks in sunnier climes. Some argued that the windows of the court-room might have been left open and the stove blown down by the wind tearing through, or the stove door might have blown open and remains of the fire been blown out, or the pipe might have fallen down. But it was a little odd that the same people said Dick Gordon's office likely caught fire from flying sparks. Dick's office was two blocks to westward of the court-house and it would have been a brave spark and a lively one that could have made headway against that northwester.

CHAPTER XIX.
The Escape.

The little county seat awoke in the morning to a strange sight. The storm had not abated. The wind was still blowing at blizzard rate off the northwest hills, and fine, icy snow was swirling so thickly through the cold air that vision was obstructed. Buildings were distinguishable only as shadows showing faintly through a heavy white veil. The thermometer had gone many degrees below the zero mark. It was steadily growing colder. The older inhabitants said it would surely break the record the coming night.

An immense fire had been built in the sitting-room. Thither Mary and Louise repaired. Here they were joined by Dale, Langford and Gordon.

"You should be out at the ranch looking after your poor cattle, Mr. Langford," said Mary, smilingly. She could be light-hearted now—since a little secret had been whispered to her last night at a tea party where no tea had been drunk. Langford had gravitated toward her as naturally as steel to a magnet. He shrugged his big shoulders and laughed a little.

"The Scribe will do everything that can be done. Honest, now, did you think this trial could be pulled off without me?"

"But there can be no trial to-day."

"Why not?"

"Did I dream the court-house burned last night?"

"If you did, we are all dreamers alike."

"Then how can you hold court?"

"We have gone back to the time when church and state were one and inseparable, and court convenes at 10 o'clock sharp in the meeting-house," he said.

Louise was looking white and miserable.

"You are not contemplating running away, are you?" asked Gordon. "This is unusual weather—really."

She looked at him with a pitiful smile.

"I should like to be strong and brave and enduring and capable—like Mary. You don't believe it, do you? It's true, though. But I can't. I'm weak and homesick and cold. I ought not to have come. I am not the kind. You said it, you know. I am going home just as soon as this court is over. I mean it."

There was no mistaking that. Gordon bowed his head. His face was white. It had come sooner than he had thought.

All the records of the work yesterday had been burned. There was nothing to do but begin at the beginning again. It was discouraging, uninteresting. But it had to be done. Dale refused positively to adjourn. The jurymen were all here. So the little frame church was bargained for. If the fire-bugs had thought to postpone events—to gain time—by last night's work, they would find themselves very greatly mistaken. The church was long and narrow like a country schoolhouse, and rather roomy considering the size of the town. It had precise windows—also like a country schoolhouse—four on the west side, through which the fine snow was drifting, four opposite. The storm kept few at home with the exception of the people from across the river. There were enough staying in the town to fill the room to its utmost limits. Standing room was at a premium. The entry was crowded. Men not able to get in ploughed back through the cutting wind and snow only to return presently to see if the situation had changed any during their brief absence. So all the work of yesterday was gone over again.

So close was the pack of people that the fire roaring in the big stove in the middle of the room was allowed to sink in smouldering quiet. The heavy air had been unbearable else. The snow that had been brought in on tramping feet lay in little melted pools on the rough flooring. Men forgot to eat peanuts and women forgot to chew their gum—except one or two extremely nervous ones whose jaws moved the faster under the stimulus of hysteria. Jesse Black was telling his story.

"Along toward the 1st of last July, I took a hike out into the Indian country to buy a few head o' cattle. I trade considerable with the half-breeds around Crow creek and Lower Brule. They're always for sellin' and if it comes to a show-down never haggle much about the lucre—it all goes for snake-juice anyway. Well, I landed at John Yellow Wolf's shanty along about noon and found there was others ahead of me. Yellow Wolf always was a popular cuss. There was Charlie Nightbird, Pete Monroe, Jesse Big Cloud and two or three others whose mugs I did not happen to be onto. After our feed, we all strolled out to the corral. Yellow Wolf said he had bought a likely little bunch from some English feller who was skipping the country—starved out and homesick—and hadn't put 'em on the range yet. He said J R was the English feller's brand. I didn't suspicion no underhand dealin's. Yellow Wolf's always treated me white before, so I bargained for this here chap and three or four others and then pulled out for home driving the bunch. They fed at home for a spell and then I decided to put 'em on the range. On the way I fell in with Billy Brown here. He was dead set on havin' the lot to fill in the chinks of the two car loads he was shippin', so I up and lets him have 'em. I showed him this here bill-o'-sale from Yellow Wolf and made him out one from me, and that was all there was to it. He rode to Velpen and I turned on my trail."

(To Be Continued.)

GIRL LAWYER FREES HERSELF.

Charged With Vagrancy, Wellesley Graduate Secures Quick Release.

St. Louis.—Evelyn Dorothy Clark, graduate of Wellesley, who later studied law at Vassar and whom the police charged with vagrancy, so skillfully defended herself in court here that she won her discharge. It was charged she failed to pay her bill at the Planters' hotel.

"What were you doing in St. Louis?" asked Assistant City Attorney King.

"I refuse to answer on the ground that my answer might incriminate me," she replied.

"Objection sustained," pronounced the court.

"Who is 'Ned,' the Harvard student who wrote that acquaintance with you was so expensive that he had to get a job as telephone operator to recuperate his finances?" asked King.

"I decline to answer on the ground that the question is incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial."

"Objection sustained," ruled the court.

"Have you studied law?"

"Have you?" she parried.

"The prisoner is discharged," interrupted Judge Tracy, who had listened to the legal duel with impatience.

Cornered at Last!

Scientists have been grubbing patiently, almost feverishly, for years in the hope of tracing the etiology or source of the growing scourge of cancer, and although no convincing data have yet been brought forward, it is a general suspicion that the rapid prevalence is due to overindulgence in meats.—Detroit News.

Lim Jucklin on Lawyers

By Opie Read

A lawsuit had been tried on the veranda of the crossroads store, and when it had been settled Limuel Jucklin, who had watched the proceedings, took the home-made chair, vacated by the justice, leaned back against the wall and remkaed: "Rather bad, this thing of goin' to law. And ain't it a peculiar state of society that educates men to stimulate quarrels? We may say that they ain't trained for that purpose, but unless there are misunderstandin's the lawyer's work is cut off, and he's got a little too much of Old Adam in him not to look out for his own interest."

"You take a wrong view of the matter," replied a young lawyer.

"That is just about what I expected you to say. But grantin' to the lawyer all he can claim for himself, it must after all be allowed that the bickerin's and shortsightedness of the human family give him the most of his excuse for livin'. A perfect state of civilization would argue perfect honesty, and if such were the case the lawyers would be powerful scarce. There is no denyin' of the fact that some of the greatest men have been lawyers and that the most of our presidents have practiced law. And so have some of the immortal geniuses been soldiers, but if man had been just and peaceable there never would have been any need for the soldier."

"According to your view, then," said the lawyer, "there is no real need for anybody that—"

"That doesn't build up," Limuel broke in, winking at his former friends. "Every man ought to produce somethin'. If he don't he's livin' on somebody that does. The only real occupation is the one that makes the world better. Understand, now, I have nothin' against anybody's callin'. I'm just expressin' my opinion and it must be taken for what it is worth. But the lawyer shows us one thing if nothin' more—how keen a man's mind may be whetted. I recollect once that a fellow sued me. We had swapped horses—"

"And you had got the better of him, eh?" said the lawyer.

"Well, that's the way it looked to him. The horse I let him have died that night. He asked me if the horse was sound and I said I never had heard any complaint, and I hadn't. He had never been under the care of a doctor so far as I knew. His appetite was good and he'd bat his eye when you motioned at him. I might have seen him fall down—have seen men fall, but I didn't think that they were goin' to die. I told him a child could drive him. A child did drive him out of the garden that day. Well, we swapped, and, as I say, his horse was taken sick in the night and died before day. He came back to me and swore that I had swopped him a horse that I knew'd was goin' to die. I told him that if he'd show me a horse that wa'n't goin' to die I'd give him my farm. I felt that he had the worst of it and I would have evened it up the best way I could, but before I got through havin' fun with him he got mad and went away and hired a lawyer to prove that I was a liar and altogether the worst man in the community.

"I never got such a scorin' in my life. I felt sorry for my wife and children. I didn't think that anybody would ever speak to me again, and I told the lawyer that I would make it a personal matter between me and him. I expected the justice to decide dead against me, but he didn't. He had been a horse trader himself.

"Well, after the thing was over with I took the horse I got from the feller and went over to his house about ten miles away and turned the nag loose in his lot. I did it not because I was sorry for him, but because I was afraid of myself—afraid that I couldn't sleep, and I was workin' hard and needed rest. Well, sir, that night the nag that I'd turned into the lot ups and dies, and the feller swore that I had hauled him there after he was dead, and hanged if he didn't sue me again. He got the same lawyer and he made me out a worse man than I was before. Made it appear that I had poisoned the horse and dragged him over there. Then I swore that the whole county couldn't hold me back from takin' it out of his hide.

"So the first chance I got I went to town to see the lawyer. I went over to the courthouse and he was makin' a speech, and I wish I may die dead if the feller he was a skinnin' this time wan't the very man that had sued me. I never heern anything like it. Tiptoed and called him all sorts of a scoundrel; said that he had defrauded me, as honest a man as lived in the state. I couldn't stand that, I walked on out and after a while he came along and held out his hand and called me 'Uncle Lim,' just as if I was his mother's brother. Then he clapped me on the shoulder and you could have heard him laugh more than a mile. He said he was a comin' out to go a fishin' with me.

"Well, I let him off, and after we had got to be right good friends, I asked him how he happened to be engaged against my enemy, and this is what he said: 'Oh, I wasn't. Some of the boys told me you were comin' into the house and I knew that you were troublesome when you set your head to it, so as court wasn't in session I started in to makin' a speech against the fellow so you could hear me,' and he clapped me on the shoulder and you could have heern him laugh more than two miles this time.

"Get a lawyer with fun in him and he's all right. Once I had some business on hand—the settlement of my brother's estate—and I went to old Tom Cantwell and asked him how much he would charge me, and he almosttook my breath with the amount he named. I knew he was a man of a good deal of ability—liked fun, and I says to him like this: 'Tell you what arrangement to make, colonel. I've got a mighty fine chicken out at my house and if you can fetch out one to whip him I'll engage you and pay your price, but if my chicken whips yourn, why you do the work for nothin'.' He was a man of ability and he agreed. Ah, me, there ain't such lawyers about here these days. I recollect once he—"

"But did the fight come off?" someone inquired.

"Oh, that fight? Yes, held tallow candles for it one night, and you'd have thought it was a snowin', the air was so full of feathers. My wife kept on a callin' out: 'Limuel, what are you a doin' there in the smokehouse,' and I always answered: 'I'm diggin' up a rat. Go on to bed. I've most got him now.'

"I don't know how long they fit—other roosters were crowin' all around the neighborhood when they got through. But my chicken crowed last, and the colonel gave me his hand with feathers a stickin' to it, and says, says he: 'Lim, you've got me and I'll take care of your business.'

"Best settlement I ever made. He took care of the business right up to the handle, and when he had got through he 'lowed, he did, that he could find a bird that could whip mine for the estate—said he'd put up his law books and his house and lot against it, but it looked too much like gamblin', so I backed down. Oh, he would have done it. Ablest lawyer in the county. It's a pity all lawsuits couldn't be settled somewhat in that way—as fairly, I mean.

"I was just a thinkin'," he added after a few moments of silence, "how much trouble the old world has been put to tryin' to govern man. Every year or so the legislatures meet and make laws and unmake them, always experimentin' with man. The trouble with him is he don't know what he wants and don't know what to do with it after he gets it. And the lawyer is the outgrowth of this restlessness and his ignorance."

"Think there will ever come a time when there are no lawyers?" the young advocate inquired, and the old man scratched his head.

"Oh, yes, that time will come, but it will be the time when there isn't anything. The lawyer has come to stay as long as the rest of us do. He's a smart man and a good feller for the most part, and is nearly always willin' to forgive you when he has done you a wrong, and I want to remark right here that this argues the extremest of liberality."

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I'VE BEEN THINKING

By Charles Battell Loomis

I ONCE knew a millionaire who always carried his money around with him in bills. There were some one dollar bills, more ten-dollar bills, and many hundred and thousand dollar bills. He always carried them in a suit case with an ordinary lock and key, and he told me that he was happy just because he had the actual money.

His brother hardly ever handled money at all. He was a millionaire, too, but he did all his business with checks, and seldom had more than $20 on his person, and he was miserable and dyspeptic.

Now, of course, there are persons of imagination who go through life using checks and feeling rich, but it takes a good deal of imagination to do so, and for me the pretty green ten-dollar bill means ten times as much as the check for ten dollars.

Of course, checks have their uses, and I use them myself. When a bill for some prosaic thing, like repairs to the coal chute, comes in, I send out a check in payment, but if I am buying a book that I have long coveted, you may be sure that I hand out real money for it. The book represents something tangible, and I will not insult the book dealer by sending him a cold, unfeeling check.

If I wanted to bring happiness to a widow, whose husband had died leaving her destitute, do you think that I would send her a check for a thousand dollars? If you do, you don't know me.

If I were going to do the thing at all I would go to her house with one thousand crisp dollar bills, and I would receive her thanks for each one. But it is a queer thing about gratitude. Her thanks for the first bill would be heartfelt, but by the time I had reached the first hundred she would have grown tired of thanking me, and I verily believe that before I had handed in the last bill she would have asked me if I couldn't be a little more expedient. Thus usage dulls the senses.

On the other hand, do you suppose that if I were sued for a thousand dollars I would pay the complainant in good green money? No, a thousand times, no. I would purposely buy the smallest blank check that I could find, and in my most minute chirography, and with an autograph that was barely good, I would sign it, and thus I would feel that I was getting off cheap.

In some things most of us are intensely mean, and among the expenditures that offend men's souls are those paid into a railroad company's grasping maw. I hold myself no better than the rest, and, if possible, I always travel in company with another, and before we start out I give him money to cover the expenses, and he buys the tickets and I feel that I have not spent so much.

One objection I have to royalties is that they always come in the form of a check—when they come at all. One time, though, my publisher varied it; instead of sending a check he sent a bill. You see, I had given at least ten copies of the book at Christmas time, and, of course, the balance was in his favor. Do you know, I really enjoyed the thing for a change.

By the way, that receiving of royalties, even if they are paid in check form, is a good game. You sell your stories for so much, and then, when they are all printed, you are induced to make a book of them. Well, you have already been paid for them, so that you stand to gain, whatever happens. It may be only ten dollars that will come to you, but it may be $10,000, and the joy of looking forward to royalty day is one that cannot be expressed in words. You do not hear much about the sale of your book; your friends say nothing about it, but perhaps they are keeping its phenomenal success a secret from you. You live in the country, and you never see the Bookman, so you do not know what the six best sellers are, but you have your suspicions. At last the fateful day arrives, the familiar envelope of your publisher comes to you by mail, and as you open it a check flutters out. You remember the stories of du Maurier and "Trilby," and how his publishers sent him several thousands over and above the contract agreement.

To be sure, it is only a check, and not money, but, after all, any bank will convert a check into money if you are known, and your book has doubtless made you known through the wide world.

You pick up the check and close your eyes until you are holding it right in front of them. "The Second National bank of New York. Pay to the order of yourself $47.50. Harp, Scrib. & Co."

It isn't quite what you thought it would be. The book is not one of the six—yet. Still, after the first disappointment is over, you reflect that it is all clear gain, and you go to the bank and have it converted into new dollar bills, and then you go down town to the bookstore and you buy thirty odd books that you have wanted for years.

No, you don't. You know very well you don't, for the same mail that brought the check brought its antithesis in the form of a bill from the gentleman who raised the price of beef on you, and the other gentleman who charged you eight dollars a ton for coal, and like a good little man you sit down and you write out two checks which take up 42 of the dollars.

But take my advice and get the better of fortune by taking the five-fifty that is left—and your wife—and going into town for a small jamboree. Remember that a jamboree, small though it be, remains in the memory long after the memory of a paid bill has left you.

Pay the bills, but save enough out of the cost of your clothes for a little jamboree. Clothes warm the body, but jamborees warm the cockles of the heart, and a man who neglects the cockles of the heart to put Jaeger underwear on his lusty limbs has failed in his duty toward himself—and his better half.

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