THE CENTRE REPORTER, CENTRE HALL, PA.

THE FREE TRA By VICTOR ROUSSEAU

"AND YOU?"

SYNOPSIS .- Lee Anderson, Royal Canadian Mounted Police ser-geant, is sent to Stony range to arrest a man named Pelly for murder. He is also instructed to look after Jim Rathway. reputed head of the "Free Traders," illicit liquor runners. At Little Falls he finds Pelly is credited with having found a gold mine, and is missing. At the hotel appears a girl, obviously out of place in the rough surroundings. A halfbreed, Pierre, and a companion, "Shorty," annoy the girl. Anderson interferes in her behalf.

CHAPTER II—Continued -2-

He took refuge in irony. "Well, whadya t'ink of him, boys?" he de turning over, managed to lose conmanded again of the men, who had formed a close circle around the pair. "He don' fight an' he got de nerve to say 'dat 'll be all' to Pierre Cauchon. No, by gar, I guess you know better dan to fight," he continued, adding a foul epithet; and, grinning, he lurched insolently past toward the bar, shouldering Lee as he passed.

He looked back for an instant to afterward kicking his heels about the showed no signs of doing so, he went the kitchen. on his way with Shorty. The erowd instinct is not supposed to pose as a be moving." lady's champion and then back down.

too obtuse to see that Lee had simply been satisfied with gaining his point and enabling the girl to get away unmolested.

Lee paced the stoop for a while, finished a pipe, and went early to his blankets.

He interested himself in speculating ing. I suppose?" who the girl was. She was almost certainly going to the mission; there o'clock," grunted the squaw. could be no other destination. Perhaps Noze.

He was awakened when the men be- ful and taken a few bites at the bread noisy altercations, they were soon tling his bill. sprawled out like logs all over the floor, and snoring loudly. Several times Lee was obliged to remove she beat you to it, though !" heads, arms, and feet from various portions of his anatomy.

He was just falling asleep again abouts seems to know her. But when the sound of a name, whispered shucks, Little Falls ain't more'n three almost in his ear, startled him into or four year old! Guess she's the gal

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pearance.

But he could not afford to take any furnish any clue to Pelly's whereabouts-if he were alive.

fell into a restless slumber, from basca. which he was partly aroused by the sound of a horse's hoofs clattering in

or some belated arrival, and then, match. and looking at his watch, discovered that it was nearly six o'clock. He threw his blankets over his arm. stepped over the sprawling limbs of the sleepers, and went out to the stable where he watered his horse,

see whether the other would accept place until, in the first glimpse of the the provocation, and, seeing that he dawn, the squaw came shuffling into Lee went in. "Get me a cup of cof-

gave Lee the once-over contemptu- fee and a piece of bread," he said, ously. It had no love for the bully. putting a fifty-cent plece into her hand. but an individual without the fighting "That'll be enough for me. I've got to

The woman filled the kettle from a The minds of the prospectors were pail of water on the kitchen table. Lee asked: "You know that girl who came last

night?" "Me not know um." the squaw

grunted, as she set the kettle on the stove. "Don't know what time she's leav-

"Girl um gone. Gone at four

Lee whistled softly. That was her he would see her again. He thought horse that he had heard, then. She of the possibility quite without emo- was losing no time, whatever her busi- he decided that the better course tion. He ceased to think of her, and, ness and destination might be. Lee would be to make himself known, and tired after the day's ride, began to fidgeted while the coffee came to the accordingly he descended the slope

gan to stagger into the parlor. Nearly and butter which the woman gave him all of them were drunk, some were when the landlord came sleepily in, rolling drunk, and, after sporadic, and Lee took the opportunity of set-

> "Well, you're shore off early," grumbled the fat proprietor. "Say,

"Who is she?" Lee inquired. "Blamed ef I know. Nobody here-

protecting her from the pair of ruf- | force carries on the tradition of the old fians whenever they made their ap- North-West; it does not return without its man.

Siston lake was admirably adapted action which would give the clue to for the needs of the Free Traders. It his status and activities; and apart was at the extreme northern limits of from that, he wanted to keep in touch the range, or a little beyond, and the with the two men, in case they could head of a lake and river system by which communication could be had by water north to Fort Churchill or York Some time early in the morning he Factory or west as far as Lake Atha-

The York boat, laden to the gunwale with supplies of liquor, could push the yard. He wondered sleepily anywhere along the thousands of lakes whether this was an early departure and streams, acting as mother boat in turn to the canoe, with one or more cases. And over all this vat, ill-desciousness for an hour or two longer. fined district the hooch-runner had At last, when further sleep had be- almost unlimited sway, proving a come impossible, he sat up, struck a serious rival to the legitimate trading interests, since he carried his polson into the Indian's camping grounds and took his pick of the choicest furs.

His trade embraced a viler one. All along the fringe of white settlement it was active. It had sprung up like a fungus overnight, during the disorganization of the police in consequence of the war and the readjustment. The gang were steadily embittering the re-

lations between whites and reds. which had been amicable almost since the advent of the first pioneer. Whichever district the girl was

bound for, it was impossible to mistake the course that she would take initially. In front of Lee lay a long backbone of mountain, with only a single pass into the interior over a range of many miles.

Scanning the valley carefully, Lee saw, about a mile beyond the pass, a thin curl of smoke rising into the still air.

Satisfied that he had the girl in sight, Lee hesitated for a while, undecided whether to ride up to her, or to camp where he was, keeping a lookout for Pierre and Shorty. In the end boil, and had just gulped down a cup- and followed the trail along the bank of the river until he reached the camp. The girl had already set up her tent. her horse was tethered near the stream, and she was cooking her dinner at a fire which she had made. She looked very trim and business-

in a hurried manner, repeated his companion's gestures. For several moments the light of the camp fire silhouetted the calm faces of the girl

and Lee and the vindictive, scowling ones of the two men. Then Pierre leaped to the ground. "By gar, it's de feller dat tell me 'dat'll be all', " he shouted. "What you t'ink you're doing here, you d-n fourtlusher?"

"Maybe the same as you," said Lee. "Ho, ho, dat's good !" roared the taking him unawares. breed. "You t'ink we take you in as pardner, hein?" "Wouldn't go with you. I've got

ny own hand to play," Lee answered. "You won't play It here, then !" belowed Shorty. Oaths poured from his lips. "Pack

and vamose !" yelled Pierre. The two led on the trigger. He would fire as advanced on Lee with belligerent gessoon as it made the first hostile movetures. ment, as soon as it raised its weapon

Lee held up his hand as the fists threatened him, "Didn't I tell you I don't fight?" he drawled deceptively. "You don' fight? By gar, you're goin' to fight dis time or git!" yelled Pierre. "You 'fraid of gittin' whipped. eh?

"That's about the size of it." standing with the two ruffians, and laughed Lee. "That's why I shoot instead-quick and straight and sure, had the episode of the evening at the hotel been a performance staged for gentlemen !"

some particular purpose? His right hand made a movement in his coat pocket, but his automatic credible, but for the conversation that was in the holster at the back of his Lee had overheard beside the stove. hip, and there was nothing in the pocket more lethal than his pipe. In the light of that, Lee had to dismiss the credibility of his summise.

But Pierre, who was nearest. changed color. The man was a cur at heart, as Lee had suspected. He leaped back with a snarl. Shorty girl had gone to the confederates with stepped back, too, though not quite so his own story, had taxed them, and, violently, and the two, withdrawing of course had been persuaded that his out of range, proceeded to hold a whispered colloquy, at the end of convinced her that they were friends, which, turning away without another and that he had designs upon her. word to Lee, they proceeded to set

up their camp at a little distance. Lee turned to the girl, who had for any unexpected sound or movestood a silent spectator of the scene.

"I ought to have explained, perhaps," he said. "You recognized that prisoners whom he had brought man who insulted you last night: A single-handed out of the wilds had little later I happened to overhear the given him the faculty of sleeping in pair of them speaking of a plan they as complete watchfulness as a wild had formed for intercepting you 'to- animal; no enemy could surprise him night. I didn't want to alarm you, in while he dozed.

case they failed to appear, but that is same decision after the scene that has him the next morning. just taken place."

"Thank you, but I assure you that I am quite capable of protecting myself." answered the girl, and Lee saw her fingers stray toward a servicesize revolver holster at her belt.

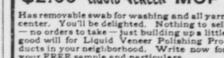
"Of course I don't want to intrude."

Very deliberately Lee drew his automatic from his belt. He had no doubt that Pierre and Shorty were planning mischief; most probably they meant to attack him as a preliminary to over-And he lay watching them and grimly walting for their stealthy onset. rom coast He felt more than a match for the pair to coast Minutes went by, however. The pair seemed an unconscionable time making their arrangements, and all the while the discussion, which was just audible without being intelligible, went on. Lee wondered how long he had MONARCH been lying there. It was too dark to see his watch. He wondered why they

had not waited till morning, when there would be a better chance of REID, MURDOCH & Co. COFFEE At last the black shadows separated. One of them was coming toward him BOSTON - NEW with stealthy footsteps, Lee guessed that it was Shorty, the more courage-

About one out of every thousand for The figure came slowly on. Lee puppies is born hairless, and, though aimed the automatic, his finger steadhealthy, remains hairless throughout life.



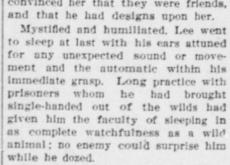


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And then, in amazement, he let the

muzzle of his automatic drop. For the

figure was not coming toward him, it

Had she then some secret under-

That might almost have appeared

The only possible explanation at

was going toward the girl's tent.

And it was the girl herself!

But there was no need for these why I proposed to camp beside you. I precautions for nothing disturbed him, think they are unscrupulous custom- and it was the sun, blinking on the ers, and you've probably reached, the edge of the horizon, that awakened

> The girl was already cooking her breakfast outside her tent when he emerged, and she returned his salutation with a stiff little bow, keeping her face averted.

Lee attended to his horse and then prepared his breakfast. He had finished before Plerre and Shorty came on the scene. They looked as if they had been drinking heavily the night before, but they made no movement toward either him or the girl until the horses were loaded and ready to start. the girl briefly declining Lee's assistance and handling her own gear like

which he could arrive was that the tale was false. Probably they had

powering the girl.

of them.

ous of the two.

to cover him.

instant wakefulness. the breed, Pierre Cauchon.

speaking. Then he discovered that the booch-runners up to Siston lake." voice came from the other side of the large, empty stove which stood at his

nor that he would be likely to have saying. But the name that had startled Lee been bought by that scum in Mont-

into wakefulness was that of Pelly. real?" he demanded. His subconsciousness, alert through slumber, had caught it and communicated the warning.

Before Lee had quite attuned his Captain Carcajou as they calls him? ears to catch Pierre's remark, Shorty, You heerd what he did to that camp the other man, Iroke in:

"You fool. Pierre, you nearly give I ain't sayin' nothin' and I am't speakthe game away tonight fer shore. You in' for meself, you understand. I'm You didn't s'pose she'd got our photy- here hotel." grafts in her pocket, did ya? The trouble with you is you cain't hold yer red-headed man?" liquor."

chanst to say a word before that four- lake." flusher butted in. I wish I'd beat him up now. Mebbe I'll git the chanst in Lee. the mornin'."

ya why. Because you saw he ain't the sand to stand up to 'em last night, expression of calm which was an atno four-flusher. He's tough, that fel- boy !" ler is, an' he was watchin' ya like a cat. Don't ya make no mistake about that. And it's lucky you didn't get no chanst to spill what ya was goin' to, or you'd shore have scairt the girl away.

"You listen here," he continued. "you keep out of this to-morrer till at the landlord's innuendo about the she's gone, and then we c'n ride hard R. C. M. P. But this soon yielded to and ketch up with her at sundown and anxiety about the girl. The disclosure explain that we're friends of hern."

Lee strained his ears to catch the im- versation he had overheard, convinced port of their conversation, but he him that they were planning to kidcould hear nothing but the low whis- nap and convey her there. per of their voices.

something to which the other clucked had been done by them. approval.

an' when we got her there we got her | walked or trotted his horse till noon, | where we want her."

snoring from the other side of the stove indicated that the pair had sucsleep was banished from Lee's brain.

There was the alternative of two be able to bring back Pelly, if the lat- darkness.

of one of the old-timers back from Lee recognized the voice as that of school or college. Or she'll be goin' up to the Moravian mission, like as For a moment or two he could not not. Yes. sir, that shore must be it. imagine from where the man was She wouldn't be goin' to any of them

"That's Rathway's joint, isn't It?" "So they say." A cunning look head, a little out from the wall. His came into his eyes. "I guess we gin't face and Pierre's were separated, botherin' our heads none about that therefore, by no more than the cir. Free Trader outfit since they're there cumference of the metal container, to stay. No. sir, it don't do to know though Pierre, of course, did not guess too much about Captain Carcajou, that Lee lay on the other side of it, now that the police is in with him." Lee almost betrayed himself as he any particular interest in what he was struggled not to display his indignation. "You mean the R. C. M. P.'s

"That's what they're sayin' in these

here parts. See here, stranger, ef that ain't so, why don't they git after that

of Indians last summer? Shore! Well.

ain't got no sense at all, buttin' in only sayin' what other folks say. Why, like that and frightenin' her away. there's two of Rathway's gang in this

"You mean the big breed and the

"Shore I do." The landlord winked Pierre growled: "I didn't have no at him. "Hooch-runners from Siston

"What're they doing here?" asked

"I guess they ain't here fer no good. "Well, and why didn't ya? I'll tell That's why I was wishin' you'd had started, then looked at him with an

CHAPTER III

An Unwelcome Guardian

Lee rode off hot with indignation that the two men were from Siston Their voices became inarticulate, lake and the recollection of the con-

Such a plan would seem inconcely-"Well, I guess you're right, Shorty," able but Lee knew that the gang, besaid Pierre after a while. "We got to lieving their organization firmly ensee she don't give us de slip, though." trenched in power, would stop at very Shorty snickered and whispered little. Other things equally sinister

"She cain't, neither," he said, more freely when he had left the went on with her meal, without paying "There's only one way into the range, squalid little town behind him. He any attention to him. gradually ascending toward the outopen country.

The snows might hold off for two or answered, and a minute later Pierre that well within that period he would rode into view through the gathering

courses of action: he could warn the ter were in the region, unless he took girl in the morning, placing himself at alarm, in which event of course Lee was almost ludicrous. He pulled his more or less in sight during his jour. Little Falls and prepare for a long looking from Lee to the girl in almost ney the following day, with a view to winter's chase. The new dominion comical surprise. Shorty, dismounting men's fire.

ald Lee. "But as long as these men are here. I think I ought to remain." She took a step or two toward him, looking at him fixedly. "Who and what are you?" she demanded with quivering lips. "How am I to know that you are not those men's friend. that this is not all part of an arranged plan?" "I am not a friend, or associate of those men," answered Lee indignantly.

"I never saw either of them until one of them insulted you in the hotel yesterday evening. I know that they are planning to do you some harm." "Well, and-you?" she asked, trying o keep her voice steady.

"You suspect me?" "I don't know, I trust nobody.

ask you why you are here." "My object in camping here beside rou tonight is simply to protect you," Lee equivocated. She answered, with an effort at

irony. "And my answer to you is that I do not need protection, but that this country is free for all-for those men and for you." She went back into her tent, leav-

ing Lee stupefied. The pair were albacon. They had been watching Lee and the girl furtively throughout the interview. Lee wondered whether the girl's demeanor had given them any inkling of its termination. He had never felt so foolish.

If they persuaded her that they were more to be trusted, the situation would be a serious one for her. Lee's position was certainly far more emparrassing than he had anticipated. It was almost as if the girl had decideó to throw in her lot with the pair

And, looking at the matter in a ommon-sense light, Lee realized that

he had acted wrongly. He should have warned her on his first arrival. He could not blame her for refusing to accept his word.

But what was at the bottom of her evident fear of him? The only thing left for him to do was to try to protect her in spite of

herself. The friendly forest had suddenly grown hateful and alien. And then Lee knew what the trouble was. It

was the submerged memories of Estelle. She meant nothing to him now, hand, his horse and the girl's less than nothing, and yet-well, that had been years ago, and he had gone cumbed to sleep. But all desire for three weeks yet, and Lee felt confident Cauchon and his companion Shorty through all that. Still, the Amprint was there--

Suddenly, as on the night before, he was startled by the low sound of her disposition; or he could keep her would have to bring his horse back to horse up short with an oath, and sat could just distinguish the shadowy plant after cutting in order to insure outlines of two figures against the

an expert. Then Shorty carne up to Lee.

"See here, pardner, what's the great idea?" he asked, in a tone that was meant to be conciliatory. "My partner and me was wonderin' if we couldn't fix up this little misunderstandin'. I guess you're barkin' up the wrong tree, ain't you?" "Meaning?"

"Meaning as how my pardner and

me don't mean no harm to this young lady. We're on a prospectin' trip, and nacherally we don't want no outsiders buttin' in on our property."

"How about this lady?" "Now, pardner, you got things sized up wrong, I tell you. Ef she's goin'

our way, why, nacherally, we ain't going to purtend not to see each other. Now I dunno where you're bound for, and I don't care, but I give you the best thp you ever had, ef you don't like trouble, which I understand you to say you don't. There ain't no gold in Stony range, and the best thing you kin do is to beat it back to Little Falls. That's all about it."

"If there's no gold in Stony range, why are you prospecting here?"

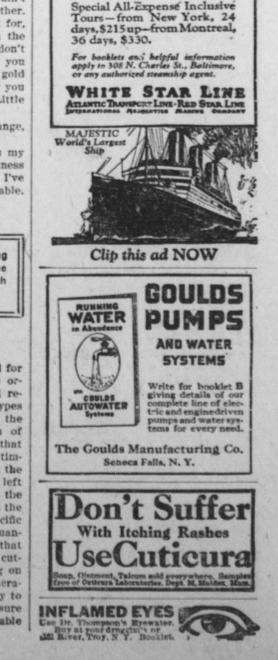
"Say," shouted Shorty, "I guess my pardner and me knows our business without no outsider buttin' in. I've put the cards face up on the table. Now how about It?" "Nothing doipe."

Mysterious and efficient young female, this girl! But can she take care of herself in such surroundings?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Regrowing Forests

The regrowth of timber provided for in the national forests where the original stand of timber is cut and removed varies with the forest types involved. In many forest types the regrowth is present in the form of seedlings or saplings at the time that the overstore of old and mature timber is removed. Where this is not the case carefully selected trees are left standing. From these trees come the seed that regenerates the area. In the case of Douglas fir on the Pacific coast, seed is stored up of such quantitles in the duff on the ground that the best results are obtained by cutting the area clean and depending on this stored seed supply for regeneravolces. Peering across the grass, he tion. In some cases it is necessary to a second crop within a reasonable time.





She Looked Very Trim and Businesslike With Her Sleeves Rolled Up to ready seated in front of their fire, Her Elbows and Her Air of Being munching slabs of bread and raw Completely at Home in These Surroundings.

like with her sleeves rolled up to her elbows and her air of being completely at home in these surroundings.

As Lee jumped from his horse she tempt to conceal a very obvious trepidation.

"Good evening," he called. "I'm travelling your way, and saw your camp fire, so took the liberty of joining you, if there's no objection."

She stared hard at him as if his advent were some long expected blow that had suddenly fallen. For a few

moments she seemed under the influence of an all-possessing fear. Then tility, mastering it, she answered with the same affectation of indifference:

"You can camp where you like, of course. The range is free for all."

Lee, a little staggered at the unwillingness, of this invitation, decided that it would be better for the present not to alarm her with any explanations and proceeded to pitch his tent near hers. While he was unloading his However, Lee began to breathe pack and watering his horse, the girl

Lee, feeling both uncomfortable and foolish, was beginning to wish he had No more was said, and soon the skirts of the range through a fairly waited, when a horse neighed close at

Pierre's behavior at the sight of Lee

of Free Trader agents. He had not succeeded in convincing her that their motives were evil, perhaps because he had not ventured to voice his real suspicions of them to her. And he had only succeeded in arousing her hos-