The Fighting Tenderfoot

William MacLeod Raine

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THE STORY

Garrett O'Hara, young lawyer, on his way to practice at Concho, wild western town, is shot at from ambush by Shep Sanderson, who mistakes him for Judge Warner, whom certain cattle interests wish to prevent holding court. Barbara Steelman, who thought the shot was directed at her, warns Garrett not to go to Concho because of the big cattle war. In town San-derson picks a fight with Garrett and is getting the worst of it when Ingram, cattle baron, interrupts. Steve Worrall tells Garrett about the cattle war between Ingram and Steelman, fa-ther of Barbara. Garrett tells Ingram he desires to remain neutral, but the latter declares there can be no neutrality. Bob Quantrell, young killer for Ingram, saves Garrett and an Englishman, Smith-Beresford, from being shot by Sanderson. The three become friends.

CHAPTER III—Continued

"Which will be three weeks from today. Send me a front-seat ticket, Shep." Quantrell's voice drawled on insolently. "Did you say you had to light a shuck outa here? Well, so long, Shep. We mustn't keep you from any pressin' engagement that's shoutin' for you. Adios, compadre."

Sanderson slouched out. The boy turned to O'Hara. "You've done wished on yoreself a man-size job. If you asked me personal I'd say you were gonna camp with Old Man Trouble."

"How long will it take me to learn to shoot?" O'Hara asked.

"If you practice real constant you'd ought to be a medium good shot in maybe twenty years. That is, if ever. Some fellows jest naturally never could be."

"But you're not that old, and they say-

"I've got a gift thataway," Quantrell admitted modestly.

Smith-Beresford cut into the conversation: "Will you tell me, laddie, how you cut the crest of that big turkey cock? He's big enough to eac you in two mouthfuls."

"I've heard it said the Lord made us in many sizes but Colonel Coit made us all equal," the youngster replied. "Only some of us more equal than others, you might say."

"If this Sanderson is just a bully who won't fight-"

"Don't make any mistake about that, sir. He'll fight," Quantrell said care-

The bartender leaned forward and spoke to Smith-Beresford. "He's killed two-three men."

"But bless my soul, if he's so dangerous, why did he take that talk from you, my lad?" the Englishman asked, much perplexed. "After all you know, you're only a boy."

The man behind the bar coughed warningly. This was dangerous ground. But Quantrell only laughed. "Oh, I reckon he didn't have his

fightin' clothes on today," he said. "What have his clothes got to do with it? I'm dashed if I understand you."

O'Hara laughed. "That's only an expression, Mr. Smith-Beresford, What Mr. Quantrell could tell you, if he were not too modest, is that Sanderson does not want to fight with him. The fellow would probably have killed us both if it hadn't been for Mr. Quantrell's interference. We both owe him

The young desperado shrugged this aside, a little annoyed, a good deal embarrassed. "Babes in the wood, both of you. An' anyhow, I happened to want to ride Shep some. He's too biggity. Let's drink."

This ceremony concluded, the lad sauntered out of the place. Then everybody began to speak to the Engdshman at once. He learned that eighteen-year-old Bob Quantrell was the most notorious killer in the territory.

Next morning the two tenderfeet bought some shells, saddled their horses, and rode out of town to a wooded draw where they used up fifty rounds of ammunition each.

After that, O'Hara and the Englishman packed their saddlebags. They rode with rifles strapped beside them. It was still a wild country. Occasionally Apaches left the reservation and went raiding. Others as bad as Indians had come in recently. But the real reason they carried rifles was that they expected to go hunting while at the ranch.

They struck Dead Horse creek and turned up it, following a wagon road that meandered back and forth with the winding of the stream. The ranch houses lay below them, a cluster of a dozen buildings set back fifty yards from the stream. Two or three men were in a corral working a dozen calves that blatted protest. At the blacksmith shop, which was outdoors under a tree, a young fellow was shoe-

ing a horse. The main house was a thick-walled Spanish house built of adobe bricks. A young woman was standing on the porch. She called a greeting to them. Smith-Beresford swung to the ground and went forward with the peculiar strut that characterized his walk,

"Well, we're here, Miss Steelman," he beamed. "All ready for the fatted calf, don't you know?"

"Are you the prodigal son-or Mr. O'Hara?" she asked,

"Touche," he laughed. "The answer is that we're both prodigal in our admiration of Miss Steelman."

Beneath the tan in the girl's cheeks the color moved. This young man's compliments were a little too pointed. She called to a red-headed cowboy who was passing:

"Will you take these gentlemen to the lower cabin, Red, and see they're made comfortable?" To her guests she added: "Supper at six if dad doesn't see you before them. He's out somewhere just now with Jack Phillips, I think. Please make yoreselves at home."

The days that followed were pleasant ones to both the tenderfeet enjoying the hospitality of the ranch. The life they led was a stimulating outdoor one. With the Hashknife cowboys they rode the range, chasing wild longhorns through the fragrant chaparral thickets. They assisted at branding and cutting out. They tried their hands at night-herding and trail-driving. Sometimes Wes Steelman and one of his long-bodied sons, or perhaps Barbara, rode with them and explained this unique society which cattle had created in the semi-arid West.

And every day, no matter what else they did, the two guests found time to practice with their Colts.

It cannot be said that O'Hara was easy in his mind. He had the temperament which found exhilaration in immediate danger, but the thought of peril deferred brought disturbing moments. Though he was learning how to use a six-shooter, there was no use deceiving himself into the error of thinking he stood an even chance with Sanderson. Moreover, it was likely enough that the man would shoot him down from ambush as he had tried to do once before. The knowledge that one is marked for death in the mind of a callous killer makes for de-

His personal feud with Sanderson began to merge itself in the general one between the houses of Steelman and Ingram. He had promised himself not to become a partisan, but he was one already in feeling. The Steelmans had thrown wide open to him the door of their home. He had partaken of their generous hospitality. Why deny to himself that he wished them well in the conflict with Ingram and his supporters?

CHAPTER IV

A Rendezvous

Smith-Beresford was watching Barbara Steelman. She was saddling her pony, though a wrangler was at hand doing nothing. A minute before she had roped the animal. That was like her. She had a self-reliant, independent streak in her. Usually she preferred to do her own catching and cinching. In this case the Britisher had offered to saddle for her and also to join her on the ride, and she had contrived without hurting his feelings to reject both proffers.

The Englishman called to O'Hara, who had just come out of their bunkhouse. "If you're ready, old chap, we'll be off," he called.

O'Hara was ready. Ten minutes later they took the trail up the creek. The wagon road ended at the ranch, but a zigzag path was well defined along the stream. They followed it out of the park to the rugged hills

Toward noon they separated, Smith-Beresford working up toward the divide and his companion taking the shoulder of a hill that presently brought him above a wooded draw.

O'Hara dismounted and tied his horse. Rifle in hand, he crept forward through the brush. For he had heard the sound of breaking twigs. There was the chance of finding a deer feeding in the hill pocket below.

What he saw was even more surprising: two saddled horses grazing among the pines. Voices drifted to him from just below. He was on a bluff and he moved cautiously to the edge of it and looked down. A woman was talking. He could not at first see her face, but the figure was slender and graceful, the voice young and vibrant, just now passionately re-

proachful. "I don't," she cried. "I don't, I don't. How could I when you're soso hateful?"

"I'm hateful, am I? But you love me just the same." A man laughed, slowly, contentedly, as though he rel-

ished the fact. "That's what you'd like-to make me love you anyhow," she went on resentfully. "It has to be all take an' no give with you, hasn't it? I'm just to be another triumph for you over my father. You want to take even his own daughter from him so as to gloat over him. Sometimes I hate you for being the kind of man you are."

The man looked down at her, his eyes close to hers. "An' sometimes you're wild about me for being like I am. Don't pull on yore picket pin, Barbara. Be reasonable. A man has got to play the hand that's dealt him. I'm not gonna lie down to Wes Steelman because he's yore dad. You know better than to ask it. Now listen. It'il be like this when we're married. You'll be Dave Ingram's wife. I won't be Barbara Steelman's husband. I'm no stray cat for you to drag home. What kind of a man would I be if I knuckled down to yore dad because you asked me to quit an' throw down all my friends? You'd

despise me for it." "I don't ask that," she cried. "All I want is for you to let him see that you're ready to compromise."

"No," he answered harshly. "Let him come to me if he feels thataway. Stop this foolishness, girl. Leave my business lay. I'll run it. Stick to this one thing an' chew on it, that I'm to be yore man an' you're to be my mate. The Bible says a woman is to leave her father an' her mother an' his kin and cleave to her husband."

"You're not my husband. You never will be if you feel thataway. I wouldn't marry you if-if you were the last man on earth," she flung passionately at him.

"No sense in sayin' that." He caught her wrists in his strong fingers. "What has drawn us together in spite of h-l an' high water? Why do you come to meet me, though you always fight an' quarrel against me because I'm like I am? You come because I'm the man you want for yore mate, because you get hungry to see me."

"No such thing," she flamed. "I s'pose you think you're so wonderful that any woman-"

He snatched her into his arms and kissed her, crushing her body to his. To O'Hara it seemed that the girl lay there a moment relaxed, drinking in his savage kiss, before she pushed him from her with all the energy of her strong arms. She flung one flaming look at him, then turned and ran toward the horses.

Ingram did not pursue her. He stood in his tracks, laughing trium-



The Englishman Was Clambering Over Boulders Toward Them.

phantly. "Wipe that out if you can," he called to her.

Barbara Steelman did not answer. She pulled the slip knot of her horse's bridle rein and climbed to the saddle. Swinging the animal around, she put it at the steep rock ascent which led circultously to the top of the bluff.

O'Hara woke up to action. Presently, emerging from the draw, she would reach the clump of pines where he had tied his horse. He was caught. He could not get away without being discovered. Perhaps he could deceive her into thinking that he had not known of her presence.

Swiftly he ran for the pines. Just before he reached his horse he could see her head and shoulders riding into view. With fingers all thumbs he uncinched and dragged the saddle from the cow pony's back. He did not look around, but made himself very busy examining a galled spot on the animal's back.

A stifled little cry made him turn. Barbara had apparently come almost upon him before becoming aware of him. She had drawn up her mount instinctively and was looking at him, That she had been weeping was so plain that he thought it better not to pretend to ignore it.

"What is it, Miss Steelman? Can I do anything for you?" he stammered. "Where did you come from? Where have you been?" she demanded.

"We've been hunting. I left Mr. Smith-Beresford to see if there was a mule deer in the hollow maybe."

"And what did you see there?" "I-I stopped to-to look at my horse's back," he said, turning a flery

"You're a poor liar," she told him bluntly. "You saw us down there in the head of the hollow, Dave Ingram an' I. Now you know what kind of a girl I am, that I rode nine miles to throw myself at the head of my fa-

ther's enemy." He was acutely distressed at her proud shame. Desperately he took the bit between his teeth and trod down his shyness.

"Yes, Miss Barbara, I know what kind of a girl you are, how bravely you've tried to keep peace between your father and Ingram. I-I honor you for everything I heard and saw." Amazed, she looked at him, the stains of the tears still on her brown cheeks.

"You don't think I came becausebecause I had to see Dave Ingram, because I couldn't live without seeing him?" she demanded.

"No, I don't think that." "Then you're a fool, for that's exactly why I came," Barbara blurted out in self-abasement.

Her humiliation, the scornful expression of it, shocked him. He could guess how much her pride was hurt. "I don't know why you came. That doesn't make any difference. All I know is that you are good and-and fine-and that I'd want my sister to be like you."

Tears swam in her eyes. His words had gone to her heart as rain does to the roots of thirsty grass.

"You're good," she said simply. She

He mumbled something inarticulate and turned to saddle his horse. She waited for him and they rode side by side along the hill shoulder. From floated down to them. "Greeting and salutations, likewise rousing cheers. Eh. what?"

The Englishman was clambering over boulders toward them.

. During his first week at the ranch Smith-Beresford had several long private talks with Wes Steelman. After the last of these O'Hara was invited into conference. The ranchman drew a cigar from

his waistcoat pocket and offered it to the young man. "Take a chair, O'Hara. Make

yorself comfortable. You've been with us now a week. What d'you think of ranch life?"

"Never enjoyed myself as much in my life before. It was good of you to ask me out."

Steelman waved that aside. "Onestion is, would you like to go into it as a business? You've got a little money, I understand. Here's the proposition. We've bought the Widow Cress place, our friend here an' I. Would you like to go in with us? I'll be a silent pardner. If you throw in with us I'll turn Jack Phillips over to you for a foreman. Jack knows cows. You'd ought to do well, though of course it's a gamble. I'm not givin' you any guarantee. I'll be riskin' my money along with you boys."

"You've got me interested," O'Hara admitted.

"Then I'll get down to cases." Steelman drew up to a table and gave facts and figures as to the cost of the land and cattle with which to stock the range. Briefly and clearly he explained the situation.

O'Hara smiled, "I know what my answer is going to be, but I don't want to say 'Yes' until I pretend to myself that I've thought it all over carefully. Will you give me an hour or two to digest your offer?"

"Take yore time, boy," the brown cattle man told him.

"I've spent several years preparing to be a lawyer. If I go with you on the ranch it must be understood that I'm to have the right to continue with my legal work. I may later want to set up an office at Concho."

"Suits me," acceded Steelman. "I can sometimes use a bright young lawyer in my business."

"And above all I'm a law-abiding citizen. I don't intend to get into this trouble with Ingram and his friends."

The ranchman's blue eyes crinkled to a smile. "You're all right, boy. But don't make any mistake about this thing. You're in wrong with Ingram right now. If you stay in this country the only question is whether you play a lone hand an' get bumped off or throw in with us an' get a run for yore money."

"I'm not ready to accept that view

of it. I've done Ingram no harm." "Been livin' here a week, haven't you? Talkin' about going into pardnership with me, aren't you? Garrett. don't fool yoreself. They've got you labeled right now, an' you can't talk 'em out of it."

The young lawyer drew up the papers of partnership and they were signed by the three parties to it. O'Hara and Smith-Beresford had their belongings moved from town to the log cabin vacated by the Widow Cress. Steelman shifted a bunch of cows to the range contiguous to Three Springs creek and the two tenderfeet busied themselves helping their cowboys burn on the Circle S. O. brand.

A young fellow drifted up the creek one day looking for a job. He reached the round-up ground at supper time and was invited by Jack Phillips to fall off and rest.

"Anything doing down Concho way?" Phillips asked casually of the visiting cowboy.

The lad hesitated, then spoke noncommittally. "There was a killin' last night. Fellow called Fitch shot Two-Ace Burke," "Not Tom Fitch," the foreman said

quickly. "Yep."

"He's one of the waddles at our lower ranch," Phillips explained to O'Hara before he asked the cowboy what the trouble was.

"Some says one thing, some another. They had a rookus at the Gold Nugget an' bawled each other out. Friends interfered. Burke was shot on the way home at the corner of the Longhorn corral."

"Shot from ambush, you mean?" "So they claim. Fitch was seen runnin' from the spot an' was recognized. He forked a bronc an' lit outa

judged her so after what they had town. That's what I hear. Can't prove it by me."

"Much talk buzzin' around town since the shootin'?" Phillips asked. The cowboy's eyes met those of the foreman. "Why, I slept late this mornthe rocks above a high cheerful call in', Jack, havin' had consid'rable of a bun on, an' I left Concho almost right away, as you might say."

Phillips took occasion to report the result of this conversation to O'Hara and Smith-Beresford next morning.

"H-l will start poppin', looks like. Banks, the sheriff, is swearin' in a posse to run down Tom Fitch. If they catch him he'll never reach Concho alive, not with the posse Banks is sendin' out. Ingram warriors, the whole caboodle. I'm sendin' word over to the Old Man by Shorty. I dunno as there's anything he can do about it, but I want him to know what's go-

in' on." After breakfast the two partners left their riders and returned to the cabin which was their ranch headquarters. As they rode up to the corral they noticed a strange horse tied to the fence.

"Some one here already," O'Hara said.

"Don't see him. Must be in the house," his partner answered. It was the custom of the country that if nobody was at home any rider who passed that way might cook himself a meal in the cabins used by the cowboys in temporary sleeping quarters on the range. By an extension of this right some cowboy might have made himself comfortable at the home ranch house.

The partners were talking together as they passed the window of the house and turned in at the front door. Abruptly they stopped on the threshold. A man stood in the room, revolver in hand. The weapon covered them. "Far enough," the man snarled.

'Stop right where you're at." He was a young man, almost a boy, but for the moment at least the look on his face was almost wolfish. His body was poised and crouched, knees bent, head thrust forward.

"Who are you?" he demanded. Probably O'Hara did not think of the maxim: When in doubt tell the truth. He told it instinctively. "My name is O'Hara. This gentleman is Mr. Smith-Beresford. We've bought this place."

The point of the revolver dropped toward the floor. "You're the tenderfoots I been hearin' about. Stayin' with Old Man Steelman, wasn't you?" "Yes. Till a week ago. What's the matter?"

"Sorry. I had to cover you, gents. Couldn't take a chance. My name's Tom Fitch, though that don't mean a thing to you."

"We've heard that you killed Two-Ace Burke yesterday." "Heard that, have you? What's the

story they're tellin'?" "The story we heard is that you had a quarrel with this Burke and later killed him from ambush," O'Hara said, looking straight at the man.

thataway." Fitch broke out vehemently. "Nothin' like that. I don't claim I hadn't been drinkin'. I had. So when Two-Ace began ridin' me because I was a Hashknife waddy I come right back at him. Well, one thing led to another, an' I knocked him cold with my fist, me havin' given up my six-shooter at the bar. He tried to to fences, crudely painted boards gun me from where he lay, but some of the boys stopped him. I was stayin' at old Manuel Chavez' house, an' on the way there I had to pass the Longhorn corral. It was dark as the inside of Jonah's whale. That's howcome he to miss me, I reckon, for he was close as that window. I could see him by the flash of his gun, an' got Old Tried an' True into action muy pronto. My first shot hit him, an' two of the others I've been told since, I was too busy to know whether he got a second shot at me or not, an' I hadn't time to stick around, seeing as folks were headin' that way fast. So I lit outa town, lay doggo at Old Man Cowdery's in a haystack, till I found out Two-Ace was sure enough dead,

an' headed for the hills." "You'd better eat your breakfast and ride across to Steelman's," O'Hara said. "If he thinks it's true he'll ad-

vise you what is best to do." "You're shoutin'. The Old Man will tell me what to do. I been drug into this. If I'd started trouble I wouldn't make no holler, but I didn't do any such thing. Still an' all, I expect I'd better hive out for parts unknown." Eitch ate his breakfast, rolled and smoked a cigarette, and said he reckoned he would be going. He swung to the saddle, waved a hand in farewell, and rode over the hill. Not one of the three had any premonition of the desperate adventure into which

they would be driven within the hour. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Famous Santa Fe Trail Linked With Coronado

It was in 1541 that Coronado followed the future line of the Santa Fe trail, probably as far as the site of Wichita, and that date, though the suggestion as to earlier years fails to response, deserves some sort of commemoration. The Santa Fe trail or portions of it, must have known the sweep of more than one ancient migration before Coronado's day-perhaps descending from the North, perhaps coming up out of the crowded old civilizations of the South-but its known history began with Coronado.

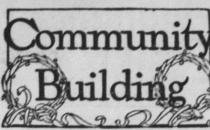
And what a history it was through more than 300 years! It was the first of the great beaten tracks which joined the American East and West. It never approached in populousness those later northern routes that went knew that some men would not have from the Mississippi to Oregon and

California, nor was its traffic notable for the riches carried. But where the other trails went into an almost virgin territory, the Santa Fe trail linked two opposing civilizations.

West and south along its course, following the ploneers, the traders and the buffalo hunters, went that tide from the Middle West which battled and finally supplanted and transplanted traditions and life of far-off Spain. -Boston Herald.

Men Have Died for Less The tennis girl is a wonderful optimist, says a writer. Yet she is a maiden all for lawn!

The elevator to success is not running; take the stairs.



Meeting Change Due to

Good Roads and Autos The old-time conception of a neighborhood is being magnified. Once it comprised in the country the number of homes within convenient walking distance of the district school. But even in the country, people walk but very little nowadays. With good roads and automobiles, the radius from the social center to the limits of the community is greatly lengthened.

All this was discussed at a meeting of the American Country Life association in Madison, Wis. Some of the country's foremost authorities in rural sociology told of the changes that are occurring in rural affairs and recommended ways for gulding them. The "Little Red School House" no longer is the farmer's social center, and too frequently nothing has been substituted for the social life that formerly was served by it.

There has been outlined a rather ambitious scheme for consolidating a rural community of dimensions suited to the new conditions. This includes a population of about 5,000, which, instead of supporting 25 or 30 rural schools and 20 churches, would have three consolidated farm schools, two elementary town schools and a single high school district for all, and not more than one church for each 1,000 of population.

This would permit reorganizing the town fire department and library to serve the entire area, and the extension of the electric light and power service as far as economically justifiable. And the solidarity of the larger community could be further promoted by maintenance of one community house and playground.

Clearing the Roadside of Unsightly Objects

Pennsylvania has stolen a march on most of the other states, which pretty generally agree that something ought to be done about the nulsance of unsightly roadside signs. Pennsylvania has begun to do it.

At the end of a six weeks' clean-up campaign the department of highways of that state announced the removal and destruction of more than 32,000 signs, including every type of "blur, daub, scrawl and tattered legend that came within the definition of illegal advertising." Under supervision of the department forester, who was in charge of roadside beautification, every mile of the state highways was scoured. All signs within the right of way were removed except those placed by the state for the information and protection of motorists. Representatives of the state visited owners of all roadside land and ascertained what signs were erected by definite permission or lease. Those not so erected

were removed. The main service of this method of attack were that the ugly clutter of small signs, of rusty tin plates hung nailed to posts and trees, posters and odd bits of ballyhoo slapped up thickly and at random, were largely eliminated at one stroke. As a beginning for the scenic beautification of our highways it is to be recommended.

Planning Home's Exterior

According to the National Association of Real Estate Boards the exterior of the home which is to be constructed should receive particular consideration before work is begun. The following recommendations are offered by this association: 1-Design the house to fit in with

2-An attractive exterior of permanent material is not necessarily expensive and will effect considerable saving in ultimate cost.

the natural environment.

simplicity. Do not use unnecessary knick-knacks. 4-Examine carefully the architect's details of your plans, as they can make or break the exterior ap-

3-True beauty is to be found in

pearance of the home, 5-Landscaping will increase both the value and attractiveness of a dwelling.

Playground Space

According to a report of the committee on city and regional planning of the American Institute of Architects, many cities are adopting the 19-25-40 standard-that is, 10 acres for each elementary school, playground and park, about a mile apart in metropolitan areas; 25 acres for junior high school and playfields about every two miles, and 40 acres for senior high schools and junior colleges three miles apart.

City's Problem

The problem in the years ahead is not alone to find cites for factories and mills, but to see to it that adequate provision is made for restdential districts to house the workers and for their recreation, as was pointed out not long since by J. L. Rogers of the United States Chamber of Commerce.

Helping the Motorist

A Pennsylvania district has eliminated state road traffic lights so that the motorist will meet one only every 34 miles on an average. Crossroad lights are apportioned according to peak load traffic.-Country Home.