



Reading for Women and all the Family



The Yukon Trail

By William MacLeod Raine

(Continued)

Macdonald's lieutenant got busy at once with plans to abduct Holt. "We'll send the old man off on a prospecting trip with some of the boys," explained Selfridge to Howland. "That way we'll kill two birds. He's back on his assessment work. The time-limit will be up before he returns and we'll start a contest for the claim."

Howland made no comment. He was an engineer and not a politician. In his position it was impossible for him not to know that a good deal about the legal status of the Macdonald claims was irregular. But in a wide-open Alaska, in the use of the territory by those who had settled it.

"Better arrange it with Big Bill, then, but don't tell me anything about it. I don't want to know the details," he told Selfridge.

Big Bill Macy accepted the job with a grin. He had never liked old Holt anyhow. Besides, they were not going to do him any harm.

Holt was baking a batch of sour-dough bread that evening when there came a knock at the cabin door. At sight of Big Bill and his two companions the prospector closed the oven and straightened with alert suspicion. He was not on visiting terms with any of these men. Why had they come to see him?

"We're going prospecting up Wild Goose creek, and we want you to go along, Gid," explained Macy. "You're an old sour-dough miner, and we all agreed we'd like to have you throw in with us. What say?"

The old miner's answer was direct but not flattering. "What do I want to go on a wild-geese mush with a bunch of bums for?" he shrilled.

Big Bill scratched his hook nose and looked reproachfully at his host. At least Holt thought he was looking at him. One could not be sure, for Bill's eyes did not exactly track.

"What's the use of snapping at me like a turtle?" Durdan says Wild Goose looks fine. There's gold up there—beeps of it."

"Let it stay there, then. I ain't seeing. That's flat," Holt turned to adjust the damper of his stove.

"Oh, I don't know. I wouldn't say that," drawled Bill insolently.

The man at the stove caught the glance in time and turned quickly. He was too late. Macy had thrown himself forward and the weight of his body flung Holt against the wall. Before the miner could recover, the other two men were upon him. They bore him to the floor and in spite of his struggles tied him hand and foot.

Big Bill rose and looked down derisively at his prisoner. "Better change your mind and go with us, Holt. We'll spend a quiet month up at the headquarters of Wild Goose. Say you'll come along."

"What are you going to do with me?" demanded Holt.

"I reckon you need a church to fall on you before you can take a hint. Didn't I mention Wild Goose creek three or four times?" jeered his captor.

Holt made no further protest. He was furious, but at present quite helpless. However it went against the grain, he might as well give in until rebellion would do some good. Ten minutes later the party was moving silently along the trail that led to the hills. The pack horse went first, in charge of George Howland. The prisoner walked next, his hands tied behind him. Big Bill followed, and the man he had called Dud brought up the rear.

Macy had released the hands of his prisoner so that he might have a chance to fight the mosquitoes, but he kept a wary eye upon him and never let him move more than a few feet from him. The trail grew steeper as it neared the head of the canyon till at last it climbed the left wall and emerged from the gulch to an uneven mesa.

The leader of the party looked at his watch. "Fast midnight. We'll

Bringing Up Father

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camp here, George, and see if we can't get rid of the 'slickers.' They built smudge fires of green wood and on the lee side of these another one of dry sticks. Dud made coffee upon this and cooked bacon while George chopped wood for the fires and boughed small fires for bedding. Big Bill sat with a rifle across his knees just back of the prisoner.

"Gid's a shifty old cuss, and I ain't taking any chances," he explained aloud to Dud.

Holt was beginning to take the outrage philosophically. He slept peacefully while they took turns watching him. Just now there would be no chance to escape, but in a few days they would become careless. The habit of feeling that they had him securely would grow upon them. Then, reasoned Holt, his opportunity would come. One of the guards would take a chance. It was not reasonable to suppose that in the next week or two he would not catch them napping once for a short ten seconds.

There was, of course, just the possibility that they intended to murder him, but Holt could not associate Selfridge with anything so lawless. The man was too soft of fiber to carry through such a program, and as yet there was need of nothing so drastic. No, this kidnapping expedition would not run to murder. He would be set free in a few weeks, and if he told the true story of where he had been his foes would spread the report that he was insane in his hatred of Macdonald and imagined all sorts of persecutions.

They followed Wild Goose creek all next day, getting always closer to its headwaters near the divide. On the third they crossed to the other side of the ridge and descended into a little mountain park.

The country was so much a primeval wilderness that a big bull moose stalked almost upon their camp before discovering the presence of a strange biped. Big Bill snatched up a rifle and took a shot which sent the intruder scampering.

"From somewhere in the distance came a faint sound."

"What was that?" asked George.

"Sounded like a shot. Maybe it was an echo," retorted Dud.

"Come too late for an echo," Big Bill said.

Again faintly from some far corner of the basin the sound drifted. It was like the pop of a scarcely heard firecracker.

The men looked at one another and at their prisoner.

"Think we better break camp and drift," asked Dud.

"No. We're in a little draw here—as good a hiding place as we'd be likely to find. Drive the horses into the brush, George. We'll sit tight."

Dud had been busy stamping out the campfire while Howland was driving the horses into the brush.

(To be Continued)

"THEIR MARRIED LIFE"

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"There's the telephone now," said Warren. "For heaven's sake stop crying and go and answer it."

Helen, who had finally succumbed to tears, looked at Warren indignantly.

"Haven't you any regard at all for my feelings?" she began.

"Warren shook his head. "Not in this case. You know very well you aren't the type of woman to bear malice—you couldn't if you tried. You know you're dissolved with curiosity this minute to find out why she acted this way and cut you as she did, and you know that in the end you'll forgive her. So why the useless tears and protestations?"

Helen was too angry and hurt at Warren's lack of sympathy to stop and reason that nearly everything he had said was true. Women seldom stop to reason when they are angry, and the fact that Warren could think the thing out logically and reasonably seemed to Helen unfair. The fact that he was seeing ahead a short distance to the point where Helen herself would see if the same way did not occur to her. Just now she was certain that Warren was all wrong and was simply talking to wound her further.

"Aren't you going to answer the telephone?" Laura asked.

"You know I'm not," Helen said quickly. "I'll ask Mary to do it."

"That's right; that's the woman of it for you; let your servants in on the most private of your affairs. And Warren strode across to the telephone quickly.

"Warren, don't you dare to say that I'm at home," said Helen in a half whisper. Warren had already taken the receiver off the hook and was talking in his usual brusque way.

"Yes, yes; hello! Oh, is this you again, Laura? Yes, Helen is home; do you want to speak to her now?"

"There was evidently a faint appeal from the other end, and Warren held out the receiver to Helen imperatively.

"I'm not going to talk to her," said Helen firmly.

"Come on," said Warren, "come on and get the thing over with."

Helen felt unspeakably foolish. She knew that Warren had caught her fairly. If she had answered the telephone in the beginning at least her pride would have been saved, but if she refused to go now her attitude would be ridiculous. She might have known that Warren would not stand by her.

"Hello, Laura," she said, speaking coldly; "did you want to speak to me?"

"Oh, Helen," came Laura's voice

Advice to the Lovelorn

Not Too Great a Difference

DEAR MISS FAIRFAX: I am nineteen and in love with a girl who is older than I. He wishes me to marry him, but my father strictly forbids, as he thinks the difference in our ages is too great. Is it wrong for a girl to marry a man so much older? PUZZLED.

Thirteen years is by no means too great a difference between the ages of a man and the woman he desires to marry. I cannot conscientiously advise you to disobey your father, but I want to appeal to him. A man of thirty-two is young, just arriving at years of maturity, at a splendid age to guide his wife and to give her a feeling of having married a man on whom she can lean, a man of mature, sane judgment—one who is not just a romantic boy with whom she is having a love affair, but who is a splendid, strong man in whom

You Must Decide

DEAR MISS FAIRFAX:

I am twenty-one and deeply in love with a man who is a widower, and has three children. Now these three children are nine, sixteen and twenty, so you will see the oldest is almost my age. They object to their father's marrying me on account of my youth, but as he loves me, and I love him, do you think I ought to brave their displeasure and marry him just the same?

I hope you will answer "yes," but I will follow whatever advice you may give me.

CLARA.

What will be your attitude toward this man's children if you married their father? Are you going to estrange him from them, or will you try to win them, to keep the household together and to take a responsible interest in them and to mother the youngest? Are you just thinking of this marriage in terms of your own emotions and selfish desire? Are

Don't

DEAR MISS FAIRFAX:

I am a stenographer in a law office where it occasionally happens that I am required to work late in the evenings, making it necessary for me to have my dinner near the office.

Will you kindly advise me whether on such an occasion it would be improper for me to accept an invitation from my employer (a married man) to dine with him. Such an instance has arisen, but I refused his offer, feeling that I would be doing wrong were I to accept.

UNCERTAIN.

A sensible, practical, middle-aged woman with no romantic notions might safely go out to dine with her married employer just on a business basis. But you are, I suppose, young and emotional, and I honestly be-

FIGHT FOR TREE

A battle for the life of Southern California's most famous tree began to-day, with the most noted citrus experts of the world on the firing line. After bearing the first nave oranges ever grown in the United States and being parent to groves producing \$67,600,000 in choice fruit annually, the tree at the head of Magnolia avenue in Riverside is believed to be dying.

The tree was planted in 1873 by Mrs. C. L. Tibbets, who obtained it from the government horticulture gardens at Washington. It came originally from Bahia, Brazil. The variety of fruit was named Washington navel, in honor of the nation's capital.

Can Desperate Germany Break Through?

Germany's profest contempt for America's war preparations is somewhat belied by evidences of her desperate determination to win before our soldiers arrive in force. Thus dispatches tell of westward-moving German troop-trains congesting the roads to Flanders, of Austrian forces shifted to the French front, and of a growing intensity of Teutonic artillery-fire along the whole Westernline. Advices that leak out from Germany all indicate that the Kaiser's only hope of victory lies in delivering a "knock-out" blow, before American forces can get into the field.

In THE LITERARY DIGEST for December 22d, one of the leading articles deals with the possibilities in the German drive on the Western front, and how it may affect the Allies chances of victory. Other features are:

Turning the Light On Our War Activities

Editorial Opinion Upon the Charges Before Congress of a Lack of Efficiency in Our War Administration

- Is the U. S. Government Competent to Run the Railroads?
- Germany's Deep-Laid Plot Against U. S. When the Germans Awake
- Building Cities While You Wait
- Wanted: A Clothes Administration
- Daylight in the Workshops
- Fooling the Enemy's Eye
- Christmas in the Redeemed Jerusalem
- India's Christians For Free India
- News of Finance and Industry
- A Revenue Tax That Passeth Understanding
- Fixing the Blame For the Halifax Tragedy
- German Wails Over Submarine Failure
- Transportation Evils and Remedies (Prepared by the U. S. Food Administration)
- The Best Food to Fight On
- Good Results From Poor Fuel
- Heifetz: New Wizard of the Violin
- When the Soldier "Goes West"
- Best of the Current Poetry

Many Striking Illustrations, Including the Week's Best Cartoons. This Week's Digest Cover Is Unusually Attractive, Depicting American Jackies Receiving Their Christmas Boxes at Sea

"The Digest" For Your Children

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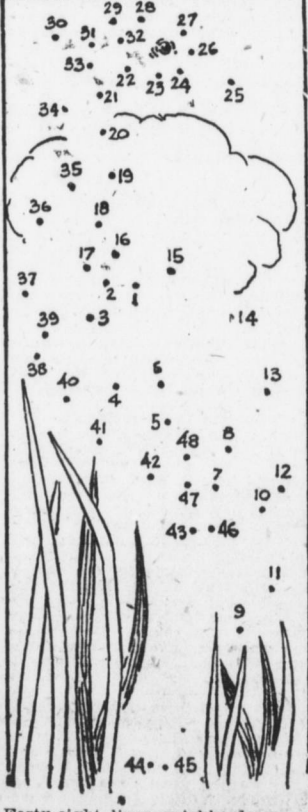
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