

NORTH OF FIFTY-THREE

By BERTRAND W. SINCLAIR

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"ROARING BILL" FINALLY ADMITS HE IS TAKING HAZEL TO HIS CABIN IN THE MOUNTAINS

Synopsis.—Miss Hazel Weir is employed as a stenographer in the office of Harrington & Bush at Granville, Ontario. She is engaged to Jack Barrow, a young real estate agent. Mr. Bush, Hazel's employer, suddenly notices her attractiveness and at once makes her his private stenographer. After three months Bush proposes marriage. Hazel refuses, and after a stormy scene, in which Bush warns her he will make her sorry for her action, Hazel leaves the office, never to return. Shortly after this Bush is thrown from his horse and killed. Publication of his will discloses that he left Hazel \$5,000 in "reparation for any wrong I may have done her." Jack Barrow, in a jealous rage, demands an explanation, and Hazel, her pride hurt, refuses. Hazel's engagement is broken and, to escape from her surroundings, she secures a position as schoolteacher at Cariboo Meadows, in a wild part of British Columbia. There, at a boarding house, she first sees "Roaring Bill" Wagstaff, a well-known character of that country. Soon after her arrival Hazel loses her way while walking in the woods. She wanders until night when she reaches "Roaring Bill's" camp fire in the woods. He promises to take her home in the morning, but she is compelled to spend the night in the woods.

CHAPTER V.

In Deep Water.

The dawn thrust aside night's somber curtains while they ate, revealing a sky overcast with slaty clouds. What with her wanderings of the night before and the journey through the dark with Roaring Bill, she had absolutely no idea of either direction or locality. The infolding timber shut off the outlook.

"Do you suppose I can get home in time to open school?" she inquired anxiously.

Roaring Bill smiled. "I don't know," he answered. "It all depends."

"You know where you are now, don't you?" she asked.

"Not exactly," he responded. "But I will before long—I hope."

The ambiguity of his answer did not escape her. She puzzled over it while Bill ambled sedately behind the other horses. She hoped that Bill Wagstaff knew where he was going. If he did not—but she refused to entertain the alternative. And she began to watch eagerly for some sign of familiar ground.

For two hours Roaring Bill tramped through aisles bordered with pine and spruce and fir, through thickets of berry bushes, and across limited areas of grassy meadow. Not once did they cross a road or a trail. Eventually Bill halted at a small stream to get a drink. Hazel looked at her watch. It was half past eight.

"Aren't we ever going to get there?" she called impatiently.

"Pretty soon," he called back, and struck out briskly again.

Another hour passed. Ahead of her, leading one pack horse and letting the other follow untrammelled, Roaring Bill kept doggedly on, halting for nothing, never looking back.

They crossed a ravine and slanted up a steep hillside. Presently Hazel could look away over an area of woodland undulating like a heavy ground swept at sea. Here and there ridges stood forth boldly above the general roll, and distantly she could descry a white-capped mountain range. They turned the end of a thick patch of pine scrub, and Bill pulled up in a small opening. From a cane swinging at his belt he took out a pair of field glasses, and leisurely surveyed the country.

"Well?" Hazel interrogated.

"Nothing in sight, is there?" Bill said thoughtfully. "If the sun was out, now, funny I can't spot that Soda Creek trail."

"Don't you know this country at all?" she said gloomily.

"I thought I did," he replied. "But I can't seem to get my bearings to work out correctly. I'm awfully sorry to keep you in such a pickle. But it can't be helped."

He took up the lead rope and moved on. They dropped over the ridge crest and once more into the woods. Roaring Bill made his next halt beside a spring, and fell to unslashing the packs.

"What are you going to do?" Hazel asked.

"Cook a bite, and let the horses graze," he told her. "Do you realize that we've been going since daylight? It's near noon. Horses have to eat and rest once in a while, just the same as human beings."

The logic of this Hazel could not well deny, since she herself was tired and ravenously hungry. By her watch it was just noon.

Bill hobbled out his horses on the grass below the spring, made a fire, and set to work cooking. He worked silently at the meal getting, fried steaks of venison, and boiled a pot of coffee. They ate. He filled his pipe, and smoked while he repacked. Altogether, he did not consume more than forty minutes at the noon halt. Hazel, now woefully saddle sore, would fain have rested longer, and, in default of resting, tried to walk and lead Silk. Roaring Bill offered no objection to that. But he hit a faster gait. She could not keep up, and he did not slacken pace when she began to fall behind. So she mounted awkwardly, and Silk jolted and shook her with his trotting until he caught up with his mate. Bill grinned over his shoulder.

"You're learning fast," he called back. "You'll be able to run a pack train by and by."

The afternoon wore on without bringing them any nearer Cariboo Meadows so far as Hazel could see. Traveling over a country swathed in timber and diversified in contour, she could not tell whether Roaring Bill swung in a circle or bore straight for some given point.

She called a halt at four o'clock.

"Mr. Wagstaff!"

"Bill stopped his horses and came back to her.

"Aren't we ever going to get any-

where?" she asked soberly. "I'm afraid I can't ride much longer. I could walk if you wouldn't go so fast. Aren't there any ranches in this country at all?"

He shook his head. "They're few and far between," he said. "Don't worry, though. It isn't a life-and-death matter. If we were out here without grub or horses it might be tough. You're in no danger from exposure or hunger."

"You don't seem to realize the position it puts me in," Hazel answered. A wave of despondency swept over her, and her eyes grew suddenly bright with the tears she strove to keep back.

"If we wander around in the woods much longer, I'll simply be a sensation when I get back to Cariboo Meadows. I won't have a shred of reputation left. It will probably result in my losing the school. You're a man, and it's different with you. You can't know what a girl has to contend with when no one knows her."

Roaring Bill looked up at her impassively. "I know," he said, as if he had read her thought. "But what's the difference? Cariboo Meadows is only a fleabite, and you know you're right, you can look the world in the eye and tell it collectively to go to the devil. Besides, you've got a perverted idea. People aren't so ready to give you the bad eye on somebody else's say-so. It would take a lot more than a flash drummer's word to convince me that you're a naughty little girl. Pshaw—forget it!"

Hazel colored hotly, but for the latter part of his speech she could have hugged him. Bill Wagstaff went a long way, in those brief sentences, toward demolishing her conviction that no man ever overlooked an opportunity of taking advantage of a woman.

"Well, let's get somewhere," he said abruptly. "If you're too saddle sore to ride, walk a while. I'll go slower."

She walked, and the exercise relieved the cramping ache in her limbs. Roaring Bill's slower pace was fast enough at that. She followed till her strength began to fail. And when in spite of her determination she lagged behind, he stopped at the first water.

"We'll camp here," he said. "You're about all in, and we can't get anywhere tonight, I see plainly."

Hazel accepted this dictum as a best she could. She sat down on a mossy rock while he stripped the horses of their gear and staked them out. Then Bill started a fire and fixed the roll of bedding by it for her to sit on. Dusk crept over the forest while he cooked the supper, making a bannock in the frying pan to take the place of bread; and when they had finished eating and washed the few dishes, night shut down black as the pit.

They talked little. Hazel was in the grip of utter forlornness, moody, wishful to cry. Roaring Bill humped on his side of the fire, staring thoughtfully into the blaze. After a long period of abstraction he glanced at his watch.

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apparently tireless. She asked no questions. What was the use? He would eventually come out somewhere. She was resigned to wait.

After a time she began to puzzle, and the old uneasiness came back. The last trailing banner of cloud vanished, and the sun rode clear in an opal sky, smiling benignly down on the forested land. She was thus enabled to locate the cardinal points of the compass. Wherefore she took to gauging their course by the shadows. And the result was what set her to thinking. Over level and ridge and swampy hollow, Roaring Bill drove straight north in an undeviating line. She recollected that the point from which she had lost her way had lain northeast of Cariboo Meadows. Even if they had swung in a circle, they could scarcely be pointing for the town in that direction. For another hour Bill held to the northern line as a needle holds to the pole. A swift rush of misgiving seized her.

"Mr. Wagstaff!" she called sharply. Roaring Bill stopped, and she rode Silk up past the pack horses.

"Where are you taking me?" she demanded.

"Why, I'm taking you home—or trying to," he answered mildly.

"But you're going north," she declared. "You've been going north all morning. I was north of Cariboo Meadows when I got lost. How can we get back to Cariboo Meadows by going still farther north?"

"You're more of a woodsman than I imagined," Bill remarked gently. He smiled up at her, and drew out his pipe and tobacco pouch.

She looked at him for a minute. "Do you know where we are now?" she asked quietly.

He met her keen gaze calmly. "I do," he made laconic answer.

"Which way is Cariboo Meadows, then, and how far is it?" she demanded.

"General direction, south," he replied slowly. "Fifty miles more or less. Rather more than less."

"And you've been leading me straight north?" she cried. "Oh, what am I going to do?"

"Keep right on going," Wagstaff answered.

"I won't—I won't!" she flashed. "I'll find my own way back. What devilish impulse prompted you to do such a thing?"

"You'll have a beautiful time of it," he said dryly, completely ignoring her last question. "Take you three days to walk there—if you knew every foot of the way. And you don't know the way. Traveling in timber is confusing, as you've discovered. You'll never see Cariboo Meadows, or any other place, if you tackle it single-handed, without grub or matches or bedding. This is a whopping big country. A good many men have got lost in it—and other men have found their bones."

He let this sink in while she sat there on his horse choking back a wild desire to curse him by bell, book and candle for what he had done, and holding in check the fear of what he might yet do. She could not escape the conclusion that Roaring Bill Wagstaff was something of a law unto himself, capable of heaving to the line of his own desires at any cost. She realized her utter helplessness, and the realization left her without words. He had drawn a vivid picture, and the instinct of self-preservation asserted itself.

"You misled me," she found her voice at last. "Why?"

"Did I mislead you?" he parried. "Weren't you already lost when you came to my camp? And have I mistreated you in any manner? Have I refused you food, shelter or help?"

"My home is in Cariboo Meadows," she persisted. "I asked you to take me there. You led me away from there deliberately. I believe now."

"My trail doesn't happen to lead to Cariboo Meadows, that's all," Roaring Bill coolly told her. "If you must go back there, I shan't restrain you in any way whatever. But I'm for home myself. And that,"—he came close and smiled frankly up at her—"is a better place than Cariboo Meadows. I've got a little house back in the woods. There's grub there, and meat in the forest, and fish in the streams. It's home for me. Why should I go back to Cariboo Meadows? Or you?"

"Why should I go with you?" she demanded scornfully.

"Because I want you to," he murmured.

They matched glances for a second, Wagstaff smiling, she half horrified.

"Are you clean mad?" she asked angrily. "I was beginning to think you a gentleman."

Bill threw back his head and laughed. Then on the instant he sobered. "Not a gentleman," he said. "I'm a plain man. And lonesome sometimes for a mate, as nature has ordained to be the way of flesh."

"Get a squaw, then," she sneered. "I've heard that such people as you do that."

"Not me," he returned, unflinched. "I want a woman of my own kind."

"Heaven save me from that classification!" she observed, with emphasis on the pronoun.

"Yes?" he drawled. "Well, there's no profit in arguing the point. Let's be getting on."

He reached for the lead rope of the nearest pack horse.

Hazel urged Silk up a step. "Mr. Wagstaff," she cried, "I must go back."

"You can't go back without me," he said. "And I'm not traveling that way, thank you."

"Please—oh, please!" she begged forlornly.

Roaring Bill's face hardened. "I will not," he said flatly. "I'm going to play the game my way. And I'll play fair. That's the only promise I will make."

She took a look at the encompassing

woods, and her heart sank at facing those shadowy stretches alone and unguided. The truth of his statement that she would never reach Cariboo Meadows forced itself home. There was but the one way out, and her woman's wit would have to save her.

"Go on, then," she gritted, in a swift surge of anger. "I am afraid to face this country alone. I admit my helplessness. But, so help me heaven, I'll make you pay for this dirty trick! You're not a man! You're a cur—a miserable, contemptible scoundrel!"

"Who?" Roaring Bill laughed. "Those are pretty names. Just the same, I admire your grit. Well, here we go!"

He took up the lead rope, and went on without even looking to see if she followed. If he had made the slightest attempt to force her to come, if he had betrayed the least uncertainty as to whether she would come, Hazel would have swung down from the saddle and set her face stubbornly southward in

sheer defiance of him. But such is the peculiar complexity of a woman that she took one longing glance backward, and then fell in behind the packs. She was weighted down with dread of the unknown, boiling over with rage at the man who swung light-footed in the lead; but nevertheless she followed him.

All the rest of the day they bore steadily northward. Hazel had no idea of Bill Wagstaff's destination. She was too bitter against him to ask, after admitting that she could not face the wilderness alone. She knew nothing of the North, but she thought there must be some mode of communication or transportation. If she could once get in touch with other people—well, she would show Roaring Bill. Of course, getting back to Cariboo Meadows meant a new start in the world, for she had no hope, nor any desire, to teach school there after this episode. She found herself facing that prospect unmoved, however. The important thing was getting out of her present predicament.

Roaring Bill made his camp that night as if no change in their attitude had taken place. To all his efforts at conversation she turned a deaf ear and a stony countenance. She proposed to eat his food and use his bedding, because that was necessary. But socially she would have none of him.

Thereafter, day by day, the miles unrolled behind them. Always Roaring Bill faced straight north. For a week he kept on tirelessly, and a consuming desire to know how far he intended to go began to take hold of her. At last they dropped into a valley where the woods thinned out, and down the center of which flowed a sizable river. This they followed north a matter of three days. On the west the valley wall ran to a timbered ridge.

Then the stream they followed merged itself in another, both wide and deep, which flowed west through a level-bottomed valley three miles or more in width. Roaring Bill halted on the river bank and stripped his horses clean, though it was but two in the afternoon and their middy fire less than an hour extinguished. She watched him curiously. When his packs were off he beckoned to her.

"Hold them a minute," he said, and put the lead ropes in her hand.

Then he went up the bank into a thicket of saskatoons. Out of this he presently emerged, bearing on his shoulders a canoe, old and weather-beaten, but staunch, for it rode light as a feather on the stream. Bill seated himself in the canoe, holding to Silk's lead rope. The other two he left free.

"Now," he directed, "when I start across, you drive Nigger and Satan in if they show signs of hanging back. Bounce a rock or two off them if they lag."

Her task was an easy one, for Satan and Nigger followed Silk unhesitatingly. The river lapped along the sleek sides of them for fifty yards. Then they dropped suddenly into swimming water, and the current swept them downstream slantwise for the opposite shore, only their heads showing above the surface. Hazel wondered what river it might be. It was a good quarter of a mile wide, and swift.

Roaring Bill did not trouble to enlighten her as to the locality. When he got back he stowed the saddle and pack equipment in the canoe.

"All aboard for the north side," he said boyishly. And Hazel climbed obediently amidships.

On the farther side, Bill emptied the canoe, and stowed it out of sight in a convenient thicket, repacked his horses and struck out again. Hazel drew upon her knowledge of British Columbia geography, and decided that the big river where Bill hid his canoe must be the Fraser where it debouched



Bearing on His Shoulders a Canoe.

from the mountains. And in that case she was far north, and in a wilderness indeed.

Her muscles gradually hardened to the saddle and to walking. Her appetite grew in proportion. The small supply of eatable dainties that Roaring Bill had brought from the Meadows dwindled and disappeared, until they were living on bannocks baked a la frontier in his frying pan, on bean and coffee, and venison killed by the way. Yet she relished the coarse fare even while she rebelled against the circumstances of its partaking.

"Do you realize," she broke out one evening over the fire, "that this is simply abduction?"

"Not at all," Bill answered promptly. "Abduction means to take away surreptitiously by force, to carry away wrongfully and by violence any human being, to kidnap. Now, you can't by any stretch of the imagination accuse me of force, violence or kidnaping—not by a long shot. You merely wandered into my camp, and it wasn't convenient for me to turn back. Therefore circumstances—not my act, remember—made it advisable for you to accompany me. Of course I'll admit that, according to custom and usage, you would expect me to do the polite thing and restore you to your own stamping ground. But there's no law making it mandatory for a fellow to pilot home a lady in distress. Isn't that right?"

Hazel, arriving at "Roaring Bill's" cabin, learns that she cannot hope to get word to anyone in the outside world before spring and that she must make the best of the situation, which she finds not so bad as it might be, owing to "Roaring Bill's" consideration for her. The next installment tells of Hazel's introduction to this new life in the wilds.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

BALLOON LIKE BIG TADPOLE

Latest French Aircraft for Observation Purposes Requires Fifty Men to Maneuver It.

Among the latest triumphs of the French aerial service is an observation balloon, named "Le Caquot," writes a Paris correspondent. In shape it resembles a great tadpole. Whereas other types are inconvenienced by a wind of from 50 to 55 feet a second, Le Caquot can remain in the air unless the wind exceeds 65 to 75 feet per second.

It takes 50 experienced men to maneuver it, for as soon as it leaves the shed great attention must be paid to the wind currents, so as to save the envelope from being torn. Attached to the balloon is a wicker car, in which the observer is installed with his maps, charts, arms, barometers, and telephone, the latter fixed over his ears so as to leave his hands free. He is also provided with glass and a white silk parachute for an emergency.

When the balloon attains an altitude of from 2,000 feet to 3,000 feet the windlass to which the cable is fixed is drawn by horses or motor car at a moderate pace to a point near the enemy lines, where a refuge excavated in the soil has been prepared. This accomplished, the observer transmits his instruction by telephone.

Two anti-aircraft posts are established nearby to keep off enemy airplanes. If the balloon is menaced the crew bring it down from 5,000 feet in seven to ten minutes.

Kate Field's Prophecy.

When a good many years ago, Kate Field wrote those clever verses beginning: "They talk about a woman's sphere as though it had a limit," little she guessed how tremendously that sphere was destined to be enlarged by the coming of the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventeen. As a matter of course, observes an exchange, the great world war is responsible for the very rapid advance the women are making in every sphere of the world's work. We are no longer surprised to find that women are doing anything and everything that men can do, from driving warplanes to shining shoes. A shoe-polishing "parlor" in which only women are employed is now doing business in Boston, yet even this innovation scarcely challenges attention in these times of shifting conditions.

Our Beliefs.

Ain't it the truth, exclaims a contributor to an exchange, that we believe what we like to believe? That's not an original observation, but its truth was made manifest to me one day last September. We were walking in the fields, a young woman and I. (This is not a sentimental tale—be calm.) And she picked a brown-eyed Susan and began plucking off the petals, one by one, murmuring softly to herself as she did so.

"He loves me—he loves me not—he loves me—he loves me," she whispered.

"Do you believe in that stuff?" said I, scornfully.

"Why—or—wait till I see how it comes out," she answered.

Maize From Venezuela.

As a result of a suggestion from the American consulate, based upon the higher prices for maize in the New York market than in Venezuela, shipments of maize from Venezuela to the United States have been undertaken for the first time on record, and already 80 tons have been sent. If present New York prices hold until the new crop of maize comes in there may be large shipments, as the crop is extraordinarily good.

JESUS SETS NEW STANDARDS OF LIVING.

LESSON TEXT.—Mark 10:1-11. GOLDEN TEXT.—Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matthew 6:33. DEVOOTIONAL READING.—Ephesians 6:10-20. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS.—Genesis 1:27; 2:18-25; Exodus 20:2-7; Matthew 18:1-14; 19:16-30; Luke 18:15-29. PRIMARY TOPIC.—Jesus and the children. LESSON MATERIAL.—Mark 10:13-16. MEMORY VERSES.—Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.—Mark 10:14. JUNIOR TOPIC.—How God would have us live. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL.—Exodus 20:4-7; Leviticus 19:11-18; Matthew 23:24-46.

1. Regarding Marriage (vv. 1-12).

The question touching divorce, which the Pharisees temptingly put to Christ, brought forth teaching which exhibits marriage in its true light.

1. Should not be degraded by divorce (vv. 1-6).

Divorce was not instituted by God. The marriage relationship is indissoluble. Moses suffered divorce, limited and regulated it. Its existence, its practice, is indicative of the coarseness and perverseness of man. Sin is its real cause.

2. Marriage is God's primal law (vv. 6-9).

The ideal law of life for the subjects of the kingdom of marriage. This is proven by the fundamental fact of sex. The union of the male and female natures is physical, mental and spiritual. In marriage, the male and female natures are mutually complemented. God's intention is that man should not be without the woman, nor the woman without the man (1 Cor. 11:11).

3. Remarriage of the divorcer is adultery (vv. 10-12).

The marriage relationship can only be broken by death and sin. In view of the fact that marriage is for life, men and women should not enter this relationship without very serious consideration. Divorce for other than marital infidelity does not give the right to remarry.

II. Regarding Children (vv. 13-16).

The union of the male and female natures, according to God's purpose, lays the foundation for family life. The issue of such union is children. In connection with the divine law of marriage, it is fitting that Jesus should set forth his estimate of children and interest in them. The disciples considered it beneath the dignity of the Master to spend time with the children. Those who think it beneath their dignity to give attention to children should ponder well the words of Jesus. This will give the disciples proper consideration for work among children, and also to the nurture and discipline of their own children. Christian men and women will regard children as the property of the Lord, and will esteem it a high and holy privilege to train them for him. Due attention to Christ's teaching regarding children would transform the home life of society.

III. Regarding Riches (vv. 17-31).

1. The young ruler's question (v. 17). This question reveals a void in his heart. He was a young man with a lovable character. The Savior's affections were enraptured by him. He was moral, honest, earnest and courageous. He had a wrong conception of eternal life. He thought that eternal life could be obtained by good works. Though he claimed to have kept the law, he was conscious of something lacking. He was willing to do something to fill up that which was lacking; therefore he came to Jesus making inquiry as to that lack.

2. Jesus' reply (vv. 18, 19).

He knew the young man's heart, and put his finger on the weak spot. When it came to parting with his possessions in order to help his neighbor he parted with the Lord, going away sorrowful. This revealed the fact that he was a covetous man, a violator of the tenth commandment.

3. Lacking one thing and yet lost (vv. 21, 22).

When the Lord pointed out to him that the defect in his life was the love of his money, he was unwilling to pay the price. When the time came in his life to choose between eternal life and riches, he chose wealth and parted company with Christ, perhaps, forever.

4. The peril of riches (vv. 23-31).

The difficulty does not lie in the fact that a man possesses riches, for a man may possess great riches and still be an heir of the kingdom. Wealth is a mighty power. In itself it is good. It will provide bread for the widow and orphan, amelioration for the suffering, and send the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth. The step from possessing riches to trusting in them is a very short one. Tendency of growing wealth is to destroy the nobler life of the soul. Many of the most useful men in ancient and modern times have been men of wealth; but they, like Abraham, chose to live in tents, looking to the heavenly city which hath foundations. As long as a man possesses riches he is safe, but as soon as riches possess the man he is in deadly peril.

Life for Daily Wear.

"The life hid with Christ in God" is a life meant for daily wear. It is meant, it is made, to be lived out in its sweet, cheerful, hallowed brightness, "at all times and in all places." Everywhere and always this contact is to bear fruit.—Bishop of Durham.

How God Works.

I remember that God has at all times worked by weak and small means. All history shows this to be his mode, and so I believe if he will he may work by me.—General Gordon.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By REV. P. H. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.) (Copyright, 1918, Western Newspaper Union.)

LESSON FOR MAY 5

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